

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING MINUTES
TOWN OF EPPING, NEW HAMPSHIRE
December 13, 2021**



ATTENDANCE

Chairman Mike Yergeau; Selectmen Bob Jordan, Joe Trombley, Tom Gauthier and John Cody; Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge; Executive Secretary Joyce Blanchard.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mike Yergeau called the public meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

ENTER IN TO NON-PUBLIC 91-A:3 II. (a) compensation (b) hire

Motion by Chairman Yergeau to enter in to Non-Public Session in accordance with 91-A:3 II. (a) compensation (b) hire. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0. Roll call vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to exit the Non-Public Session. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

RECONVENE

Chairman Mike Yergeau reconvened the public meeting at 7:00 PM in the Town Hall meeting room and via ZOOM.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Minutes from the November 29, 2021 Selectmen meeting was submitted for approval.

Minutes from the December 6, 2021 Selectmen meeting was submitted for approval.

Payroll Manifest for the pay periods ending December 1, 2021 in the amount of \$350.40, December 9, 2021 in the amounts of \$134,606.31, and \$53,871.39 were submitted for approval.

Accounts Payable Manifests for the week ending December 9, 2021 in the amount of \$1,244,766.37 and December 13, 2021 in the amount of \$77,875.00 (1,000,000.000 is for the School Payment, \$77,875.00 is for the Bond Interest Payment and \$244,766.37 is for the town) were submitted for approval.

Abatement to 415 North River Road, map and lot 005-023 in the amount of \$10,216.79 was submitted for approval.

Abatement to Heather and Monica Stimmel, 5 Chautauqua Avenue, map and lot 024-026-058 in the amount of \$578.44 was submitted for approval.

Abatement to Betsy Adams, 62 Dearborn Road, map and lot 014-018-002 was submitted for denial.

Supplemental to P & P Real Estate Management, LLS, 256 Main Street, map and lot 022-062-001 in the amount of \$1,066.41 was submitted for approval.

Abatement and Supplemental to 54 Dearborn Road, map and lot 014-019 in the amount of \$2,989.20 was submitted for approval.

Abatement and Supplemental to 38 Waterview Road, map and lot 026-003 in the amount of \$1,675.86 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to remove the minutes of November 29, 2021 and December 6, 2021 from the Consent Calendar. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the consent calendar with the minutes of November 29, 2021 and December 6, 2021 removed as submitted. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the minutes of November 29, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 3-0-2. Selectman Yergeau and Jordan abstained.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the minutes of December 6, 2021. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

BUSINESS

POLICE

Purchase order to Glacier Computer to mount and install the antenna, printer and computer in the new Police Cruiser in the amount of \$1,584.00 was submitted for approval. This is a budgeted item.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve purchase order to Glacier Computer to mount and install the antenna, printer and computer in the new Police Cruiser in the amount of \$1,584.00. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Purchase order to Adamsons Industries Corporation for the installation of equipment in the 2021 Ford Explorer Cruiser in the amount of \$15,866.55 was submitted for approval. This is budgeted item.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve purchase order to Adamsons Industries Corporation for the installation of equipment in the 2021 Ford Explorer Cruiser in the amount of \$15,866.55. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

Purchase order to Neptunes Uniform & Equipment for 2 Ballistic Shields in the amount of \$9,955.00 was submitted for approval. This is not a budgeted item until next year. Police Chief Wallace was going to use monies from the equipment line to add these to the department.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve purchase order to Neptunes Uniform & Equipment for 2 Ballistic Shields in the amount of \$9,955.00 using monies from impact fees. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

COPS GRANT

Police Chief Michael Wallace explained the COPS grant that was awarded to the Town of Epping. This is a federal grant and only 2 other towns in NH were awarded the grant. This hire would be used for a position called "Community Policing", similar to the School Resource Officer. The position would be filled this summer. The grant is guaranteed for 3 years with the town having to retain the position for one additional year. Chief Wallace is requesting the Board of Selectmen to support this warrant article.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding town growth, applicant shortage, community pride, flex time and hiring for the 2 open positions. Selectmen Gauthier stated he would like the Chief to inform the Board of Selectmen when these grants are applied for.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to place the Additional Full Time Police Officer funded through a Federal Cops Hiring Grant as a Warrant Article. Seconded by Selectmen Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

FIRE

Chairman Yergeau momentarily left the meeting.

Purchase order to Monarch Electric to rework branch power for the public safety complex in the amount of \$9,106.72 was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve purchase order Monarch Electric to rework branch power for the public safety complex in the amount of \$9,106.72. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 4-0.

Request for pay rate increases for Haley Townsend and Alex Cray from \$15.50 to \$16.00 due to attaining Firefighter Level 2 certification was submitted for approval.

Chairman Yergeau returned to the meeting.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the request for pay rate increases for Haley Townsend and Alex Cray from \$15.50 to \$16.00 due to attaining Firefighter Level 2 certification. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Requests to hire Nicholas Murphy as a part time Firefighter/EMT at \$16.00 an hour and Casey Needham as a part time EMT at \$14.50 an hour were submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the requests to hire Nicholas Murphy as a part time Firefighter/EMT at \$16.00 an hour and Casey Needham as a part time EMT at \$14.50 an hour check pending background checks. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Selectman Cody would like to have future new hires come to the meetings for introductions.

Deputy Forest Fire Warden appointments for Michael Sitar II, Rob Aliberti and Jessica Janas were submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Jordan to approve the Deputy Forest Fire Warden appointments for Michael Sitar II, Rob Aliberti and Jessica Janas. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Assistant Fire Chief Joe Lombardo requested approval to put a bid on a heavy rescue truck that would handle large vehicle/truck roll overs. The truck would have helped with last years oil truck roll over. At present the department relies on mutual aid. This vehicle will replace the box truck that will be given to DPW. The monies will come from the revolving fund for purchasing.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to authorize Mr. Lombardo to bid on the rescue truck not to exceed \$35,000. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Assistant Fire Chief Joe Lomardo would like to notify the Board of Selectmen that he is applying for a grant for two-three firefighters. He will know about the grant being awarded this summer. These two hires would make the Fire Department Full Time.

TRANSFER STATION

Request to Hire Kevin Gilmore as a part time Transfer Station Attendant at \$16.50 an hour was submitted for approval.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to approve the hiring of Kevin Gilmore as a part time Transfer Station Attendant at \$16.50 an hour. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

WARRANT ARTICLE REVIEW

Clerk and Tax Collector Erika Robinson came before the board requesting they take the "Quarterly Tax Payments" off of the Warrant. Discussion regarding the increase of cost to implement quarterly bills, new software, restructuring bill and liens continued. Due to the growth of town, if this were to be passed she would run for the elected position of Town Tax Clerk and the Tax Collector would be separate and appointed.

ARTICLE: QUARTERLY TAX PAYMENTS

To see if the Town of Epping will adopt the provisions of RSA 79:15-aa allowing towns and cities to have quarterly billings for property tax with payments due on July 1, October 1, January 2, and March 31.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to not put the "Quarterly Tax Payments" on the Warrant. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 4-1-0. Selectman Trombley voted nay.

Clerk and Tax Collector Erika Robinson briefly discussed the 2% deduction for early tax payment warrant. The tax payers will need to make up for the 2% savings so the warrant is not going to help.

ARTICLE: PROPERTY TAX DISCOUNT – BY PETITION

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to authorize the Tax Collector to allow a 2% deduction from property tax when payment is made prior to the due date. It is the responsibility of the taxpayer to take the deduction; deductions not taken by the taxpayer on or before the due date will not be refunded.

80:52 Discount – Any town may, by vote at the annual meeting, direct a discount to be made to those persons who shall pay their taxes within such periods as the town may limit; and every person so paying shall be entitled to such discount; provided, that no discount shall be granted on resident taxes.

Source RS 45:17,CS 48:17, GS 54:17, GL 58:17, PS 60:18, 1925, 61:1. PL 66:43. RL 80:44. RSA 80:52. 1973, 486:7, eff. Aug. 29, 1973.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to not recommend the “Property Tax Discount” by Petition. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

Chairman Yergeau stated a petition warrant article passed last year extending the hours at the polls, opening at 7 AM. Even though this will lengthen voting day for the workers and volunteers he feels we should open one hour earlier.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to extend polling hours and add an hour in the morning, opening at 7 AM. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : ACCRUED BENEFITS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Accrued Benefits Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Trombley. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENT EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : HIGHWAY EQUIPMENT CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : WATSON ACADEMY REPAIRS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Watson Academy Repairs Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Jordan to recommend the Watson Academy Repairs Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : RECREATION FACILITIES EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to keep the warrant article for the Recreation Facilities Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : LANDFILL CLOSURE CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Landfill Closure Capital Reserve Fund.

Motion by Selectman Jordan to recommend the Landfill Closure Capital reserve Fund. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 4-1-0. Selectman Gauthier voted nay.

ARTICLE : GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND

To see if the Town of Epping will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000.00) to be placed in the previously established Government Buildings Expendable Trust Fund. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Government Builds Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0. Conversation continued about combining the Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to reconsider the Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to reduce to the Town Hall Improvement Expendable Trust Fund to \$10,000. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : EPPING YOUTH ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) in support of the Epping Youth Athletic Association. This sum to come from unassigned fund balance. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Epping Youth Athletic Association Warrant Article. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : HIGHWAY GARAGE ADDITION

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) for the purpose of constructing a 50' x 75' addition to the existing Highway Garage. The Highway Garage is located at 129 Coffin Rd., Map 24, Lot 96.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to remove the Highway Garage Addition Warrant Article. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE : ADDITIONAL FULL TIME POLICE OFFICER

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Forty-Six Thousand Dollars (\$46,000.00) for the hiring of an additional Full-Time Police Officer including benefits for six months. Approval would call for a total estimated cost of Two Hundred Ninety-Three Thousand, Five Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$293,550.00) in fiscal years 2022, 2023 and 2024. A total of One Hundred Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (125,000.00) to be funded through an already approved 3 year Federal COPS Hiring Grant, with Thirty Four Thousand, Five Hundred (\$34,500.00) of that for year 2022.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to recommend the Additional full Time Police Officer. Seconded by Selectman Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

ARTICLE: CONSERVATION

Shall the Town of Epping vote to adopt the provisions of RSA 38-A:4-a I (b), to authorize the conservation commission to expend funds for contributions to “qualified organizations” for the purchase of property interests, or facilitating transactions related thereto, where the property interest is to be held by the qualified organization and the Town will retain no interest in the property.

Selectman Trombley explained the Conservation Commission will meet Wednesday to approve this Warrant Article.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to add the verbiage, to fund out of LUCT Fund balance. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion by Selectman Trombley to add the Fireworks Warrant Article in the amount of \$10,000. Seconded by Selectman Gauthier. Motion carried 5-0.

DEFAULT BUDGET

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to approve the 2022 Default Budget of \$10,087,280.00. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 4-1-0. Selectman Cody voted nay.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge was asked to announce the wonderful Christmas light display on Victoria Drive.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge stated there is no meeting next week. The Board requested a light agenda on Dec 27th but that doesn't look possible.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge said the first meeting in 2022 will be on Tuesday January 11th for final warrant review.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge publicized the Public Hearing with the Budget Committee will be on January 12, 2022 and on the 13th if needed.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge requested permission to have the Deliberative Session at the Town Hall on Feb 8th for the town and the 10th for the school.

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to have the Deliberative Sessions here at the Town Hall. Seconded by Selectmen Cody. Motion carried 5-0.

Town Administrator Gregory C. Dodge wished everyone a Merry Christmas!

INDIVIDUAL SELECTMEN'S REPORTS

Selectman Tom Gauthier

Selectman Tom Gauthier – Merry Christmas!

Selectman Joe Trombley

Selectman Joe Trombley - Merry Christmas!

Selectman Bob Jordan

Selectman Bob Jordan – Merry Christmas!

Selectman John Cody

Selectman Cody would like to discuss a 2023 anticipated budget for a professional hiring and search for Mr. Dodge's retirement. We will need some money for a transition period.

Selectman Cody – Merry Christmas and stay safe.

Selectman Mike Yergeau

No Report

ADJOURN

Motion by Selectman Gauthier to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Jordan. Motion carried 5-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

**Joyce Blanchard
Executive Secretary**

Mike Yergeau, Chairman

Bob Jordan, Selectman

Joe Trombley, Vice Chairman

John Cody, Selectman

Tom Gauthier, Selectman

Date: December 27, 2021