

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD and FINANCE COMMITTEE  
BUDGET  
MINUTES

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Date: February 23, 2022

Time: 1:30pm

Place: Town Hall  
Egremont

Present in-person at Town Hall were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, and Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen, Members Frank Penglase and Dan Blitzer. Present via zoom were Finance Committee members Thomas Berkel, Bryan Frank and Bruce Turner, and Mary McGurn.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

Selectboard Chairman George McGurn said that the review would move forward similar to the Town Meeting, section by section, with members of both Board's holding any item that needed discussion. Items not held would be considered approved for placement on the Town Meeting Warrant.

More information will be sought from the Planning Board as to their need for an increase specific to technical assistance.

Discussion of a new part-time, un-benefitted, position titled Grant Administrator revolved around the extension of the work being done by the ARPA Administrator, her knowledge of grants from her time working for Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the number of grants available to the Town, the lack of time that the Office Administrator can give to searching for then writing and administering grants. Proposed is 10 hours per week at \$30 per hour, but a budget amount of \$10,000 was proposed for the first year.

Discussion of a new part-time, un-benefitted, position titled Public Information Officer revolved around the requirement under emergency planning guidelines and the need for a centralized person to handle all information being put out by the town on social media sites and town domain.

It was noted that the audit fee which is up by 3%, may have to increase by another \$3500 so auditors can prepare the required federal audit as the Town is administering the \$1.3mil Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). A federal audit is required if a town expends more than \$750,000 in one year of federal funding which the CDBG grant is. Chairman McGurn enquired whether the CDBG grant would cover these expenses.

More information will be sought from the French Park and ARPA Grant Administrator on the request for \$10,000 as a matching amount for a grant to remove invasive plants from the Park.

In discussion of the Highway Department budget, there was speculation that increased costs of fuels and supplies might require an increase in the budget requests, and if the \$150,000 proposed for blacktop was in fact enough funds.

Discussion about the Police and Highway Collective Bargaining agreements noted that though wage increased are 3.9%, the total increase is larger. Future consideration might be given to staggered terms.

Wages for all town paid personnel, not in the Unions, have not been determined yet, but should be at the Selectboard's March 1 meeting.

The Council on Aging budget includes rental of space. It will be confirmed if that means rental of the space at the Barn where they hold many of their functions.

Health insurance premium rate increase is 3.53%, with dental decreasing 4.51%. There was also a change in membership from a single policy to a family policy in the current year.

Southern Berkshire Regional School District (SBRSD) has not presented a budget yet and it may be delayed as they have had to re-bid the transportation contract.

A discussion of retiree benefits and OPEB took place. The Town is looking at several retirements in key town positions in the next 7 to 10 years.

The Water Department budget seeks increases in hours and pay for current employees, and the addition of a new employee, as well as \$60,000 truck. As there is not detail to the request, the Water Commissioners and employees will be invited to the March 9 budget meeting.

The next joint budget meeting will take place on March 9 at 1:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 3:09pm.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.22/feb23budget

*The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.*