

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
JOINT MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MINUTES

\*\*\*\*\*

Date: March 21, 2022  
Time: 1:30pm  
Place: Via Zoom Meeting  
Egremont

Present in-person were Selectboard Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Board member Mary Brazie, Finance Committee Chair Laura Allen, members Dan Blitzer, Frank Penglase and Bruce Turner, and Water Commissioners Poly Lanoue and Ray Palmucci. Others participating via zoom: Mary McGurn, Finance Committee members Thomas Berkel and Bryan Frank, Water Department Clerk Will Brinker and Water Department Operator Nate Stalker.

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

Water Department:

Will Brinker explained that the Department of Environmental Protection encourages and supports a second operator on premises for safety. There is a shortage of licensed operators. The part-time second operator would guarantee coverage if current operator leaves.

Legal Fees were lowered to \$2,500. One customer was taken to court his year and there are two other customers that may go to court. The cost for one case is about \$900.

Operator 1's proposed increase is higher then other Town employees and would increase his rate to \$27.25 per hour to try to bring his rate more in line with other operators throughout the state. The increase also includes \$3,900 for additional pay for weekend coverage. The operator works 30 hours two weeks every month and 36 hours two week every month.

Specifications and an estimate have not yet been received for the new truck.

There is no information on water line repair/upgrade along Main Street. It was stressed that this was important to do in conjunction with the Main Street reconstruction project.

Discussion took place over rates, revenue, establishing a stabilization fund, and budgeting to increase retained earnings. The statues governing enterprise funds needs to be reviewed.

The Water Department had thought the truck would be purchased outside the Water Enterprise Fund by the Town.

It was agreed that the Water Department would bring final budget figures to the next joint meeting on March 30<sup>th</sup>.

Pollinator Garden:

The special article for \$5,212 to complete and maintain the Pollinator Garden at French Park was approved. The Agricultural Commission expense budget will increase from \$500 to \$800.

Road Repairs:

It was voted unanimously by both the Selectboard and the Finance Committee to increase the Road Repairs special article to \$200,000 from \$150,000. Free Cash may possibly be used for the additional \$50,000.

French Park Committee:

There is still no detail on the Committee's request for \$10,000 to be used for the town's match for a grant for invasive removal.

Police Department:

The Police Chief has not asked for funds for body cameras. It is possible that if these become mandatory there would be state funds available.

Mount Washington Fire Services Fee:

Word has been received unofficially that Mount Washington will not pay for capital expenses. Laura and George will meet with Mount Washington officials.

Wages:

The Human Resources Committee is making a recommendation to the Selectboard for its next meeting. The budget has figures plugged in at 4.2%.

Transportation Department:

Laura will discuss with Transportation Administrator Melanie Torrico before the next meeting.

Grant Administrator:

The Human Resources Committee seems split on the need for and the number of hours. ARPA administration vs other grants and where payment could come from.

Public Information Officer:

Meant to be the official voice of the town in all situations so that information that was put out to the public would go out on appropriate venues, be professional and factual. It was agreed that more thought is needed so the item will be removed from the budget.

School Budget:

There is no certified school budget. The district had to certify the budget on March 10<sup>th</sup>, but there is no transportation contract and no finalized union contracts. The estimated budget figure is for Egremont almost \$200,000 more than the prior year. There is concern that because of steep increases in transportation and possibly union contracts, cuts are being made in instruction and other student based areas.

The Finance Committee voted unanimously to approve a \$2500 request for reserve fund for Police Vehicle Expenses. Delivery of the new cruiser was delayed thus repairs not budgeted for had to be made.

Meeting adjourned at 3:38pm.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.22/mar21

*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.*