

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Approved with changes: \_\_\_\_\_  
Unapproved: \_\_\_\_\_

**Effingham Budget Committee Minutes**  
**68 School Street, Effingham**  
**November 12, 2019**

**Members Present:** Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (vice chair), Theresa Swanick, Chuck Fuller (selectmen's rep), & Tim Eldridge, Tom Hart.

**Members Absent:** Jory Augenti.

**Others Present:** Nate Fogg, John Meisner (selectman), Mike Cahalane (selectman), Ian MacMillan (police sergeant), Erik Jones, Richard Thompson (fire warden)

The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm.

**Minutes**

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the October 29<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to approve the October 29<sup>th</sup> minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Tom Hart. The vote was 6-0 in favor of the motion.**

**Budget Meeting with GWRSD**

The budget committee will meet with December ~~4<sup>th</sup>~~ 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm to have a presentation from the GWRSD School Board Chair Jack Widmer. His presentation will be followed by questions and answers.

Dave Strauss is also working to arrange a meeting with Michelle from DRA. When he has a date, he will notify the budget committee.

**Budget Reviews**

Budgets approved to date will increase the overall town budget by \$8,633.

Last year's ~~expected town~~ tax increase was \$0.40/thousand. We ~~are were~~ expecting an increase of \$3.50/thousand ~~including the Eversource payment and assessment change~~. In 2021 we expect an increase of ~~\$150~~ \$1-\$1.5/thousand including the school and ambulance increases.

The Board of Selectmen are working on a letter to explain the tax rate to the voters.

**4290 Forest Fire Warden – presented by Richard Thompson**

Current budget \$5,000. Budget request \$4,500.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the budget as requested. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion.**

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Mr Thompson is very concerned about the budget this coming year. Taxpayers cannot support another \$5.00/thousand increase this coming year. He is looking to get hand tools, such as a winch for the army truck they have purchased. He is willing to wait to receive a grant to purchase such an item. He suggested that the Firefighter Reimbursement line could be cut to \$500 from \$1,000. The Firefighter Reimbursement line is used for their yearly training and includes mileage reimbursement.

A suggestion was made to add a Mileage line to the budget to make it similar to other sections of the town budget. It is currently lumped in with the reimbursement line. The consensus was to make that happen in next year's budget.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to reduce the Firefighter Reimbursement line to \$500. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

**Dave Strauss amended his previous motion to approve the amended budget request of \$4,000 for the Forest Fire Warden. Theresa seconded the amended motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

**4290 Emergency Management – presented by Randy Burbank.**  
Current budget \$1,510. Requested budget \$1,990.

The budget includes maintenance of the 3 town generators and mileage reimbursement for Chief Burbank to attend meetings. A Trust Fund is in place with money for an actual emergency.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the budget as requested. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

**4220 Fire & Rescue – presented by Randy Burbank.**  
Current budget \$80,500. Requested Budget \$80,400.

Members pay used to be a stipend. This line will be overspent because of the new, correct way that firefighters are paid. The Chief felt that the Fuel line can be reduced by \$500 because he will receive another delivery this year and start the next year with full tanks. After discussing radio installation, he also feels that the Radio line can also be reduced by \$500. The budget includes \$4,000 to outfit and train 2 new firefighters and \$4,000 to install dry hydrants around town to provide better distributed sources of water.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the budget as requested. Tim Eldridge seconded the motion.**

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**Dave Strauss made a motion to reduce the Fuel line by \$500 and the Radio line by \$500. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

**Dave Strauss amended his motion to approve the budget as requested at \$79,400. Tim Eldridge seconded the amended motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

The Fire Department is putting forth a warrant article for \$22,000 to purchase an UTV and equipment. The budget committee will not be recommending the warrant article for next year.

Theresa Swanick will look into the purpose of the Fire Department Equipment Trust Fund to be clear on what the funds may be spent to purchase.

**4210 Police – presented by Sergeant Ian MacMillan.**

Current budget \$194,213. Requested budget \$196,091.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the budget as requested. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion.**

The town currently is in the process of interviewing individuals to serve as the police chief. The budget and salary may be locked down before the end of budget season to provide solid numbers. The salary for the chief is capped at \$73,450.

The Police budget is one of the largest budgets in town and the budget committee looked at many options to try to reduce the overall budget. New software purchased for the police department allows the police to do a great deal of their reports while on patrol. This provides more coverage and more exposure for the police department.

The budget committee and Sergeant MacMillan discussed the possibility of cutting hours for the chief, sergeant, and part-time patrol officers. Certain tasks, such as investigation and prosecution require extensive hours and would be greatly diminished by part-time officers.

They also discussed eliminating the police department and contracting with the Sheriff's Department or State Police. Dave Strauss has spoken with Sheriff Richardi and Forarty from the State Police. Either option will greatly increase response time to police calls and would reduce the ability to investigate and prosecute individuals.

**Tim Eldridge made a motion to reduce the requested budget to \$192,413 from \$196,091. The reduction would come from a combination of salary lines. Tom Hart seconded the motion. The vote was 5-1-0 in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- N~~y~~ea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

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**Dave Strauss amended his motion to approve the budget as amended to \$192,413. Tim Eldridge seconded the amended motion. The vote was 5-1-0 in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- ~~Nayea~~, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

### **4414 Dog Officer – presented by Sergeant Ian MacMillan.**

Current Budget \$500. Budget request \$2,400.

**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the budget as requested. Tom Hart seconded the motion.**

Currently the police department takes care of dog issues. The current budget of \$500 is no where close to what the town actually spends in investigating and handling dog issues. The town is requesting to hire a private consultant (JoAnne Gayer) who will handle all dog issues for a fixed sum of \$2,400. This includes writing violations and following up on dog registrations.

**Dave Strauss ~~amended his motion took a vote~~ to approve the budget as requested. Tom Hart seconded the motion. Unanimous in favor. Roll call vote: Strauss- Yea, Racine- Yea, Eldridge- Yea, Fuller- Yea, Hart- Yea, Swanick- Yea.**

### **Other Business**

Non-Profits

Copies of the requests are available at the town offices for the budget committee to review. These budgets will be reviewed on 11/26/19.

### **Next Meeting Dates**

The Budget Committee has budget review meetings set for November 19, & 26, and December 3 & 10. Meetings are at 6:30pm.

### **Adjournment**

**A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Dave Strauss. The vote was unanimous in favor.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55pm.