

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

**Effingham Budget Committee Minutes**  
**68 School Street, Effingham**  
**November 10, 2020**  
**Live and Conference Call**

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

**Members Absent:** None.

**Others Present:** Nate Fogg, Mike Cahalane (selectman), Tom Hart (selectman), Audrey Fraizer (town administrator).

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm.

**Minutes**

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the October 27, 2020 meeting.

**A motion was made by Dave Strauss to approve the October 27, 2020 minutes as printed. The motion was seconded by Tim Eldridge. Roll call vote: David Strauss- Aye, Leo Racine- Aye, Tim Eldridge- Aye, Chuck Fuller- Aye, Ben Eldridge- Aye, David Garceau- Aye, Theresa Swanick- Aye. The motion passed (7-0).**

**Outstanding Taxes**

The BC looked at the outstanding taxes still unpaid to date. The total unpaid taxes as of 11/10/20 are \$484,326. Mike Cahalane noted that approximately half of the unpaid taxes are from previous years.

**Process Instructions**

Dave Strauss noted that the BC is now in section 4.5 of the process instructions and are following the instructions closely to stay on track.

**Committee Business**

The unreserved fund balance is at \$822,664 and the tax rate is at \$21.25 (previously \$26.90.) Mike Cahalane noted that they are able to make all payments on time and are working to build the unreserved fund balance back up to the Division of Revenue Administrations (DRA) recommended 17% level.

Dave Strauss noted that the budget has been groomed very hard the past 2 years. He feels that the BC should be focusing on new budget items more than typical ongoing budget expenditures that he feels that the BC knows are reasonable.

Tim Eldridge noted that he feels the BC should look at all the budget numbers because that is what they were elected to do.

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Theresa Swanick noted that she felt there should be no ‘rubber stamp’ for any budget, however agreed that new expenditures should be looked at more closely.

The Board of Selectmen (BoS) has now provided their full budget request recommendation for all departments and expenditures to the BC. All BC members found this very helpful for analyzing where they were in the overall budget numbers.

Mike Cahalane noted that the BoS has been placing some lapsing funds into trust funds rather than being returned to the general fund to lessen the need for more taxes.

This overall budget sheet does not include the P/T firefighters that will be presented to the voters as a warrant article this coming March. The fire department (FD) is also presenting a warrant article for a defibrillator as a one-time replacement unit. Our fire department does not carry the required medications that go along with its use. The BoS has not yet supported either of the FD warrant articles.

The BoS are presenting a budget for 2021 which is approximately \$44,000 LESS than last year’s budget, this is extraordinary considering that there are areas in the budget where they can count on increases. These include assessing, insurance, and trash removal.

Theresa noted that having the BoS estimated amount of the overall budget sheets as a reference was very helpful in the budget process.

Mike Cahalane noted that he has been working closely with Michelle from DRA and has found her recommendations very helpful for the BoS.

The BoS have spoken with Jeff Libby, the Town Forester (Department 4619). He bills for time and mileage. When he reaches his \$1,000 budget, he stops billing the town. He feels that he wants to give back to the town.

**Budget Review (4414) Dog Officer represented by Joe Dechesne (in person)**

Joe Dechesne noted that he is looking to add \$1,000 to the budget this year for Humane Society fees. Effingham send dogs to the Lakes Region Humane Society. There vet costs are approximately \$250 per dog. They have been spending \$250 per dog for vet fees. He has used \$1,800 of the \$2,400 budget this year of which \$800 was for the Humane Society.

**A motion was made by Dave Strauss to approve the 4414 budget at \$3,400. The motion was seconded by Ben Eldridge. Roll call vote: David Strauss- Aye, Leo Racine- Aye, Tim**

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**Eldridge- Aye, Chuck Fuller- Aye, Ben Eldridge- Aye, David Garceau- Aye, Theresa Swanick- Aye. The motion passed (7-0).**

### **Budget Review (4210) Police Department represented by Joe Dechesne (in person)**

Joe Dechesne is the incoming police chief. He will be part-time. The savings in salary, retirement, and insurance will be a significant savings to the department. He is proposing adding additional part-time officers to provide more patrols on the street. He would also like to increase the sergeant's salary to be more in line with other departments in the area.

The department has 3 cruisers, one of which is brand new. The chief will have a car, the sergeant will have a car, and the third car will be kept at the police station for part-time patrol officers to use. All three vehicles have Mobile Digital Terminals (MDT) in them to allow officers to have faster access to county data for traffic stops, and also to allow them to complete their reports from the vehicles to keep them on the road.

The new Chief will be working 26 hours/week; previously 40 hours/week was budgeted for the Chief. His budget proposal would take the 14 hours per week savings and add that to the part-time officer line. This keeps his requested budget level compared to last year.

The BoS proposed moving the \$40,500 savings from the Chief not needing retirement/insurance into the part-time salary line as a means to keep the amount-in the budget should the town need to go back to a full-time chief.

The BC debated the usage of the savings from retirement/insurance and noted that the BoS proposed overall budget SAVINGS was still more than \$40,000 savings keeping this retirement/insurance savings in the budget. It was felt this prevented spikes in the property tax if removed and needed to be included. Additionally the BC expressed to the Chief that it expected money back from this action at the end of next year. The BC agreed that some could be used for additional part-time manning if the Chief felt it was prudent.

Tim Eldridge asked why we couldn't keep half of the savings for patrols and save the other half.

Theresa Swanick respects what the incoming Chief is trying to do and is willing to give it a try.

Ben Eldridge is willing to try it for a year and reevaluate.

David Garceau thinks we should give it a try.

**A motion was made by Dave Strauss to approve the 4210 budget at \$232,913. The motion was seconded by Ben Eldridge. Roll call vote: David Strauss- Aye, Leo Racine- Aye, Tim**

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**Eldridge- Aye, Chuck Fuller- Aye, Ben Eldridge- Aye, David Garceau- Aye, Theresa Swanick- Aye. The motion passed (7-0).**

### **Budget Review (4290) Emergency Management represented by Randy Burbank and his son (in person)**

No change in the Emergency Management budget for the coming year. The generator maintenance contract is the major part of the budget.

**A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to approve the 4290 budget at \$1,990. The motion was seconded by Chuck Fuller. Roll call vote: David Strauss- Aye, Leo Racine- Aye, Tim Eldridge- Aye, Chuck Fuller- Aye, Ben Eldridge- Aye, David Garceau- Aye, Theresa Swanick- Aye. The motion passed (7-0).**

### **Budget Review (4220) Fire & Rescue represented by Randy Burbank and his son (in person)**

The FD has a small decrease in the budget. The P/T fire personnel will be put forward to the voters as a warrant article, separate from the budget.

The P/T fire fighters would have a list of duties to perform when they are not responding to calls.

The FD is almost always first to medical calls. While the department is not trained to operate the defibrillator they plan to purchase. Setting up the machine will monitor the patient and alert the responding medical team as to what level of personnel are need for the call (EMT verses Paramedic). The current defibrillator has been used 3 times in 5 years.

It was noted that the Fire/Rescue budget minus the proposed warrants was less than last year. It was noted by the Chief if the part-time warrant was passed the mutual aid line of his budget would be reduced by \$7000.

**A motion was made by Tim Eldridge to approve the 4220 budget at \$77,050. The motion was seconded by Ben Eldridge. Roll call vote: David Strauss- Aye, Leo Racine- Aye, Tim Eldridge- Aye, Chuck Fuller- Aye, Ben Eldridge- Aye, David Garceau- Aye, Theresa Swanick- Aye. The motion passed (7-0).**

### **Other Business**

Dave Strauss checked the conference line and email several times during the meeting for any questions or input. None received.

The BC reviewed the B2A, which has had corrections made. No new questions have been asked.

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Representatives from 5 non-profit organizations are planning to attend the meeting on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The next meeting will be to review the BoS budget request.

Theresa Swanick reported that the CIP will be finalized and possibly adopted by the planning board on November 19<sup>th</sup>. The CIP spreadsheet with the CIP numbers will be presented to the BC.

**Next Budget Committee Meeting**

The next BC meeting is scheduled for November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020 beginning at 6:00pm.

**Adjournment**

**Tim Eldridge made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ben Eldridge seconded the motion. Roll call vote: DS- Aye, LR- Aye, TE- Aye, CF- Aye, BE- Aye, DG- Aye TS-Aye. The motion passed (7-0). The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.**