

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

**Effingham Budget Committee Minutes**  
**68 School Street, Effingham**  
**May 18, 2021**  
**Live and Conference Call**

**Members Present:** Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (vice chair), Tom Hart (selectmen's rep), David Garceau, Theresa Swanick, Jim Giguere

**Members Absent:** Jay Krysa

**Others Present:** Nate Fogg, Chuck Fuller (selectman).

The meeting was called to order at 6:07pm. A roll call confirmed those present.

**Election of Officers.**

Leo Racine nominated Dave Strauss as Chair of the Budget Committee. There were no other nominations.

**A motion was made by Leo Racine for Dave Strauss to continue as Chair of the Budget Committee. The motion was seconded by Chuck Fuller. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tom Hart- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye, Jim Giguere- aye. The motion passed (6-0).**

**Dave Strauss nominated Leo Racine as vice-chair of the budget committee. Theresa Swanick seconded the motion. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tom Hart- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye, Jim Giguere - aye. The motion passed (6-0).**

**Dave Strauss nominated Theresa Swanick as back-up recording secretary of the budget committee. Leo Racine seconded the motion. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tom Hart- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye, Jim Giguere - aye. The motion passed (6-0).**

**Board Business**

Dave Strauss noted that he felt that the committee should follow CDC Guidelines for their meetings. All members present agreed by consensus, no masks required and public will be allowed using the Select Board guidance.

**Minutes**

The Budget Committee (BC) reviewed the minutes from the February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 meeting, which was the public hearing for the 2021 budget.

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**Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Leo Racine seconded the motion. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tom Hart- abstained, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye, Jim Giguere - abstained. The motion passed (3-0-3).**

**Board Business**

David Strauss noted that we have a small office staff and to be sure that we are not asking for the same information more than once, and to make sure that the full committee receives the same information, all questions to the office should go through him. Dave Strauss is in contact with the town office frequently and is pleased to ask questions for any member.

Another item is to never reply all to any budget committee related email. This can be perceived as an illegal meeting. Reply to the Chair and he will make sure that all members receive the same information.

The town is expecting a tax increase of \$3.05, with @2.55 coming from the school district.

The town will be saving on our ambulance bill because the other towns in our group did not want to change the town split, which saves Effingham money.

The Budget Chair would like to give the Board of Selectmen (BoS) a percent increase for personnel. The BoS would then decide how to distribute that overall increase to the town employees. The percent was 3% for the 2021 budget.

Five years ago the town looked at the overall wages and looked at who need more of an increase to bring them in line with similar positions in similar towns.

Last year the BoS had the total budget increase calculated prior to review of the town budget. The BC found this extremely helpful in reviewing the budget.

Non-profit support is running at just over \$21,000.

We will closely follow the Budget Committee Process Instructions. We are currently at section 4.1. Following the process has worked well for several years and makes sure that we take care of all of the basic BC items.

The Unreserved Fund Balance was \$822,624 back in October. \$118,802 of the balance was approved to be allocated at town meeting to help fund the budget. This leaves us with a fund balance of \$703,000.

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The town office will begin providing the BC with a monthly revenue report. This will include unpaid taxes.

The Town Administrator is working with a CPA to make sure that our QuickBooks reports are accurate.

A Budget to Actual (B2A) report has been provided. Please review the report and send any questions to Dave Strauss, who will get an answer.

**Police Department**

The Police Departments K-9 unit has begun training in Portsmouth. The BC will need information to evaluate the cost and benefits of the K-9 unit. Dave Strauss has prepared a letter to the Chief of Police requesting certain information to be provided to the BC. A Police Association Non-profit is being formed, which will allow them to raise funds and apply for grants for the K-9 unit.

The BC agreed by consensus that we could sent the letter that Dave Strauss drafted to the Police Chief.

**Fire Department**

The town approved \$48,600 for part-time firefighters in the town. The BC has been told that budget line 4220 (member pay) will drop as a result. The part-time firefighters will be doing elderly checks.

Dave Strauss has prepared a letter to the Fire Chief requesting certain information to be provided to the BC to help with 2022 budget preparation. The BC agreed by consensus that we could sent the letter that Dave Strauss drafted to the Fire Chief.

A draft Budget Schedule has been created. Selectmen's Rep Tom Hart will take this to the BoS and review.

Chair Strauss asked for members who would be willing to review the 2022 budget sheets for accuracy. Leo Racine, Dave Garceau, and Jim Giguere.

The Capital Improvement Plan will be updated this year during the Planning Board work sessions.

**Public Comment**

Chairman Strauss checked several times during the meeting and no members of the public called in to join or listen to the meeting.

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**Next Meeting**

The next Budget Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 6:00pm.

**Adjournment**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dave Strauss. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine. Roll call vote: David Strauss- aye, Leo Racine- aye, Tom Hart- aye, Theresa Swanick- aye, David Garceau- aye, Jim Giguere - aye. The motion passed (6-0). The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 7:25pm.**