

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

**Effingham Budget Committee Minutes**  
**68 School Street, Effingham**  
**September 27th, 2022**

**Members Present:** Dave Strauss (chair), Leo Racine (Vice Chair), Jim Giguere, Steve Regal, Rosemarie Wissenbach, David Garceau, Vicki Kirkwood (Selectman's Representative).

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** Lenny Espie (Selectman), Chuck Fuller (Selectman), Audrey Fraizer (Town Administrator) and members of the public.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm. A roll call confirmed those present.

**Minutes**

Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the July 19, 2022 minutes. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine.

Vicki Kirkwood requested a change to Page 3, the word Executive be placed prior to 4130 contracted services.

Dave Strauss made a motion as amended. The motion was seconded by Rosemarie Wissenbach.

**Motion Vote: Leo Racine-aye, Chair Strauss-aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye, David Garceau-aye, and Vicki Kirkwood-aye (passed 7-0-0).**

**Public Attendance**

Dave Strauss asked the members of the public to introduce themselves and welcomed them. Scott Hilsman and Maureen Hilsman introduced themselves and said they are interested in understanding the process and possibly getting involved in the future.

**Committee Business**

Dave Strauss brought the Committee's attention to Page 5 of the packet, internal process instructions. Paragraph 4.4 is highlighted and the agenda for tonight's meeting.

The Police Report, page 6, was reviewed. The report reflects the number of calls by officer and the type of calls, i.e., incidents, arrests, assisting, citations, etc.

The Fire Chief responded to specific information on which is provided on page 7 and provided a Fire Department report, page 8 – 9. The report isn't quite what the budget committee wants but the report is close.

On the report, the calls are identified as medical, fire, etc. The majority of the calls are medical. Steve Regal asked if the suburban is being used for medical responses. Dave Strauss responded in the negative, an engine is going. Dave Garceau asked if police also respond on each call. David Strauss assumes the Police only respond to the vehicle calls.

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Dave Strauss then moved into reviewing the budgets to date. He has received several draft budget sheets (Budget, Election Official, and Treasurer). Audrey Fraizer reviewed the budget she has received and will submit them to the budget committee.

Dave Strauss reviewed the Budget Committee's budget (page 10). There was a reduced to one book and the workshop was reduced because online is less expensive. It is anticipated the cost of a secretary will be more expensive. Dave Strauss made a motion to approve the 2023 (4151) Budget Committee budget as presented in the amount of \$1,312.00. The motion was seconded by Dave Garceau.

**Motion Vote: Leo Racine-aye, Chair Strauss-aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye, David Garceau-aye, and Vicki Kirkwood-aye (passed 7-0-0).**

Dave Strauss then reviewed Page 12 of the packet, estimated 2023 projected increases. Specifically, the vehicle and heating fuel costs are anticipated to escalate. He also covered the increases in Town Clerk and Tax Collector budgets. It was noted the legal is a moving target and depends on the type of case.

Jim Giguere asked if legal services were under contract. Dave Strauss replied in the negative, there is no contract. Dave Strauss has spoken to Ossipee and they are operating with just a memorandum of understanding. Jim Giguere asked when was the last time the Town has shopped around for an attorney. It was not known if this was ever put out for bid and the current attorney has been here for over 20 years. Ossipee is also shopping around and have received more expensive rates. Jim Giguere asked if the lawyer had given an estimate of the Misty Mountain case. It was not known. Jim Giguere feels there should be better way to come up with an estimate. There was discussion about potential future cases and the desire to have a better method to estimate. Selectman Kirkwood reiterated that the Board of Selectmen is reigning in the legal fees. Dave Strauss agrees that finding out how other towns handle their legal fees may be helpful.

Dave Strauss also detailed the estimated increased for several items including Highway and Solid Waste. Selectman Espie thought the crack sealing was high and should be level. Dave Garceau asked about the road construction, knowing the cost of Green Mountain Road provides an estimate for future work. It is dependent on the price of oil.

The 2023 road project is probably going to be Elm Street. Dave Garceau asked if Bailey Road was included in the Road Reconstruction figure. Dave Strauss replied in the negative, it is only Green Mountain Road.

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Leo Racine asked about the recreation budget increase of \$5,000. Dave Strauss replied it is correct; he and Selectman Fuller are negotiating a \$5,000 per year for 5 years contract. The presented estimated increases will cause 2023 taxes to rise approximately \$.57 per \$1K. Dave Strauss showed how he tracks the increases from year to year on Page 13 of the budget packet.

Dave Strauss then introduced the Unassigned Fund Balance (UAFB) figures on Page 14 of the budget packet. Blue color text is the owed taxes. Per the 2021 Audit, beginning 2022 the UAFB is \$1,755,485. However, \$779,671 was owed taxes bringing the actual UAFB is \$975,814. It is further reduced by the warrant articles committed at Town Meeting in the amount of \$668,500. This leaves a balance of \$307,314.00. The only way to change this figure is to collect owed 2020/2021 taxes. When taxes are paid, it is added to the \$307,314. Today the estimated UAFB is \$814K. Last year the unspent operating budget covered some of the trust fund contributions. Dave Strauss doesn't anticipate that will be the case in 2023. The goal is to maintain around \$700K in the UAFB. Dave Garceau asked if we will get better at estimating the numbers. Dave Strauss said yes, every year we get better.

Dave Strauss then presented Pages 15 and 16 regarding Effingham using Ossipee Recreation program and facilities. The negotiations now include adult participation and the parks and lakes that everyone can use, i.e., walking trails, pickle ball, etc. There was discussion about Effingham's involvement, support is about the kids. People questioned the adults being factored into the usage as it was felt adults should pay their own way. Dave Strauss explained he and Selectmen Fuller are working on something to control cost escalation. More nuts and bolts will be coming out later. Ossipee reported there are 91 participants in the programs they track, not necessary kids. Steve Regal would be interested in knowing how many adults are using the program. More discussion will be coming.

Dave Strauss reviewed the outstanding questions the Budget Committee had on the budget to actual on pages 17 and 18 of the budget packet.

Attention was then moved to the Budget to Actual report dated September 7, 2022. Dave Strauss reviewed the Executive Contracted Services; it is over budget due to three of the charges are for HEB engineers for culvert evaluations which were not anticipated during the previous budget season. The Town received a grant for the Wilkinson Swamp Road which was an awarded grant. Selectman Espie clarified \$5K of the HEB expense can come out of the grant money.

The Board of Selectmen (BoS) will be starting to review department budget on October 4th, 2022. Either Dave Strauss or Leo Racine will attend the BoS meetings. The Budget Committee will start reviewing budgets on October 25, 2022. The schedule can be escalated.

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Dave Strauss will send a schedule to the departments for October 25<sup>th</sup> budget meeting. Drafts will be distributed ahead of time.

One non-profit has been received. Dave Strauss distributed a copy to each member and recommended they keep a packet as there will be several more. They will be using the same rating sheet for the non-profits as they used in the past. There will also be an excel sheet that summarized the organization's overhead rates.

Dave Strauss will be emailing, calling or texting Budget Committee members individually if there is delay or cancellation of any meetings. There will no longer be group text messages.

There is a new Transfer Station Committee in place. Selectman Fuller summarized their activities. They have talked to Waste Management, the Wakefield Transfer Station Manager, and the Tamworth Transfer Station Manager. Selectman Fuller is putting together documents of pros and cons of the Transfer Station Committee's recommendations. There is a meeting in a couple weeks that anyone can attend. Hopefully recommendations will be coming to the BoS at the end of October. If the Town applies for the grant, the application has to be submitted by the end of December. Steve Regal asked if the Waste Management charged to attend meetings. They do not. Dave Garceau said many of the changes have associated cost savings for the future.

The Capital Improvement Plan Committee has not met yet.

**Public Comment**

Mr. Hilsman asked why taxes are bi-annual. Dave Strauss said the State dictates the schedule.

**Next Budget Meeting**

October 25, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

**Adjournment**

Rosemarie Wissenbach made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Leo Racine.

**Motion Vote: Leo Racine-aye, Chair Strauss-aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye, David Garceau-aye, and Vicki Kirkwood-aye (passed 7-0-0).**