

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

Members Present: Dave Strauss (Chair), Vicki Kirkwood, Steve Regal, Rosemarie Wissenbach, Jim Giguere, Scott Hilsman, and Leo Racine (Selectman Representative).

Members Absent: None

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and a roll call confirmed all present.

Others Present: J.T. Fire Chief, Lenny Espie (Selectman) and Goran Romanovic.

Minutes

Chair Strauss directed the board to the minutes to make the following corrections.

- Pg. 3 should read 13/39 rule.
- Pg. 5 4150 should read Treasurer and first sentence “treasurer”.
- Pg. 7 Planning board the name should read George Bull
- Pg. 8 Budget to actual the following should read 76.70 % and 76.3%

Chair Strauss made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as corrected for October 27, 2023. The motion was seconded by Leo.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

Budget Process

The Chair went over the steps and process the committee will follow, and only allowing for one motion to be handled at a time. The Chair also explained that changes can be made with the final review prior to the public hearing or during the public hearing. The chair directed the board to pg. 2 of the agenda package and explained the updates to the spreadsheet, everything has been updated except the trust and non-profit which still need to be approved and then this brings the projected increase to approximately \$0.40/thousand for the town side.

4210 Police

Chair Strauss made a motion to approve the budget at \$246,259.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Rosemarie.

The Chair welcomed Chief Joe to go over his budget. Chief Joe explained that the increases he is looking at are the 3% cost of living increase and for the part-time officer pay to increase to \$28.00 an hour. The training cost increased and cost of tires, needing 3 new sets, have increased the budget. The Chair explained the salary for the patrol officer being hired at \$30.00 and would only increase to \$30.90 and asked the Chief about the patrol cars. The Chief explained two cars

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

are in good shape and the Chief's would need to be replaced when funds are available. The Chair asked if any questions and Vicki asked the name of the secretary, the Chief stated Chris Canney. Jim questioned the salary difference from 2023 and 2024 and Sergeant Eldridge explained when he was promoted, he did not receive the additional 3% increase. Steve questioned the overage on the part-time budget. The Chief explained there was a personnel issue and had to use additional part-time coverage due to employee loss. The Chair explained that the 13/39 rule applies and the increase would not take effect until April 1st once approved at the town meeting, so this would bring the Chief's amount to \$49,835.00 and Patrol to \$63,904.00 with bottom line being \$245,426.00. Vicki questioned the amount of equipment and budget to actual and the Chief explained that equipment had to be purchased. The Chair explained that if they need to go over it could come from the Trust Fund if necessary. The Chair asked about the K-9 and the Sergeant gave an update on the progress and training. The Chair explained on the budget to actual for the K-9 was \$1,500.00 but the donation received (pg.11 and 12) covers the cost.

The Chair made a motion to approve the BoS approved amount of \$246, 259.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-nay, Leo Racine-nay, Steve Regal-nay, Vicki Kirkwood- nay, Jim Giguere-nay, Scott Hilsman-nay, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-nay (Failed 0-7-0).

4210 Police Adjusted

The Chair made a motion to approve the adjusted budget amount of \$245,426.00 due to the 13/39 rule and Steve seconded the motion.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4414 Dog Officer

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$11, 350.00 as approved by the BoS and Jim Seconded the motion.

The Chair asked the Chief reason for increase, and he explained it was for the salary stipend. Leo asked how many calls have come in for dog officer and he explained it averages around 7 a month and majority came from one property. Vicki questioned the budget for the Humane Society was \$1,000.00 but the budget to actual was over and he explained that was due to the one residence and it should be all taken care of now. The Chair explained that this falls under 13/39 as well and should bring the dog officer to \$8,775.00 and bottom-line amount to \$11,025.00.

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$11,350.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-nay, Leo Racine-nay, Steve Regal-nay, Vicki Kirkwood- nay, Jim Giguere-nay, Scott Hilsman-nay, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-nay (Failed 0-7-0).

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

4414 Dog Officer Adjusted

The Chair made a motion to approve the adjusted amount of \$11,025.00 due to the 13/39 rule and Leo seconded the motion.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4290 Forest Fire Warden

The Chair made a motion to approve the budget as approved by the BoS for \$2,000.00 and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair welcomed J.T. and Dan Felix and asked J.T. to give any particulars. The Chief explained the budget was not used last year and no state/national grants were available due to shut down so there were no changes. The Chair clarified the truck was covered under the fire department maintenance. Steve asked if any uniforms were used, and J.T. stated no they are covered under the fire budget.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve \$2,000.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4290 Emergency Management

The Chair made a motion to approve the budget amount of \$2,500.00 as approved by the BoS and Steve seconded the motion.

The Chair explained that the line for the town repeater that would go into the library tower was removed, the BoS agreed to make this into a warrant article, and this would give the ability to fund from the UFAB. Dave went over line items; 3 generators and a trust fund is set up for generator replacement. J.T. has met with FEMA and submitted damages from the town and so far, has received around \$10,000.00.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the budget amount of \$2,500.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

Approved: _____

Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__

Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

4220 Fire & Rescue

The Chair made a motion to approve the budget amount of \$180,575.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair asked J.T. to give an update on the budget from this year to last year. The Fire Chief stated that the funds are level funded and Chair directed the board to an additional sheet of information provided by the Chief. J.T. explained the decrease in the off-duty member pay where they have not used the amount and an increase in the mutual aid dues and the radio line.

The Chief also explained the radio line increased and they have had radio grants so as the age they can proactively purchase new ones. The previous grant purchased radios were not fire rated and the new radios will be fire rated. Steve questioned the time frame for purchasing and J.T. stated about 3 a year with a cost of \$3,000.00 each. The telephone line also covers a purchase of a second IPAD that has been detrimental to inspections in the field and the information is stored in the cloud.

The Chair asked if the pay scale of \$14.50 - \$18.50 with Chief at \$21.00 still going to be the same and J.T. stated yes that it will be, and current employees would receive the cost-of-living increase. The Chief explained the difficulty with filling shifts and how the pay is a large factor in staffing.

The Chair explained to the board that 3yrs ago it was determined to fund for two firefighters per shift with one being an EMT at \$15.00hr and in December the budget spent was at 45% so it was asked to increase the pay to \$25.00hr for the December holiday to try and help fill the shifts which did not ~~fill~~ fill the shifts. In the next budget year, the pay rate was increased to \$15.77 and then that was increased by approval by BoS, and shifts were still not fully manned. This year the pay was increased by scale and shifts are still undermanned. The town currently uses an ambulance company called Action at \$125,000.00 a year, the Chair asked J.T. to explain. The Chief explained that Action has three ambulances and at any point if all three were unavailable we would then use the town ambulance. The ambulance was put into service with budget funds of \$1,500.00 to make the updates and to be used only as a backup. J.T. also explained that Dave and he met with an ambulance billing company and with town approval it would allow us to send bills for non-taxpayers. Leo asked how long has the town ambulance been in service and J.T. stated just about a year with 3 transports in the last 6-8 months. The ambulance would need a crew of two for service. The Chair questioned the difference between equipment maintenance vs vehicle maintenance and J.T. explained he separated the two due to the differences in the types of maintenance and to show where money was being spent. The Chair stated vehicle maintenance covers the chief's car and the ambulance. The Chief was asked if there are any plans to replace them. The Chief stated there is no plan at the moment and the lines would be specific to the item, and an idea on the table is to try and change wording to use the Fire Truck trust funds. As to replacing vehicles, Engine 2 is up for replacement next year and looking at the replacement cost of \$750,000.00 he is looking into making repairs to the current engine at \$250,000.00 that could extend life to twenty years. He currently is receiving bids to refurbish Engine 2 as it is the oldest fire truck. Leo questioned removing the truck from service there are

Approved: _____

Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__

Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

still two vehicles technically. J.T. explained that the tanker needing refurbishment holds 3,000 gallons of water whereas Engine 1 only holds 1,000. They have offers from mutual aid stations to borrow equipment or they can beef up run cards. The Chair questioned the condition of Engine 1 and other vehicles. J.T. stated Engine 1 has leaking valve issues that can be repaired but overall, in good shape. The 1997 ambulance body is decent with a small amount of corrosion, the command vehicle from North Conway lost the motor and due to body condition not worth replacing. It will be put up for bid next week and they have currently purchased a 2010 Suburban from Tuftonboro for the Chiefs car. It has 120,000 miles but the motor was replaced at 75,000 miles and has small amount of body rust. This year it will have the underbody coated and when the budget is reset for next year it will have the minor repairs done and the purchase cost was \$7,500.00 with all the equipment included. Steve asked the Chief if he thinks the staffing will be getting any better and J.T. stated it is hard to say, and Steve questioned decreasing the budget to \$60,000.00 and J.T. stated that would be underfunding the department budget. The Chair explained the cost of filling the shifts. Jim stated it would be better to leave as it is and have the extra \$30,000.00 rather than be short. The Chair explained the town voted to have day shift coverage and although it is not working as intended, he feels the Chief needs another year to straighten the coverage out. Dan Felix stated as a taxpayer with inside knowledge he feels it is 100% working as intended because otherwise during the day we would have no coverage. The discussion continued regarding daily coverage based on what the town voted to have and agreed that it is not 100% with at least one person on shift a day. The Chair explained to the board the town's current tax situation with delinquent taxes and that the budget committee has a responsibility to look at the budgets and determine what can be decreased. Leo suggested the possibility of putting the excess funding that goes back to the general fund at the end of the year and putting some of that money into the trust fund for the fire department for equipment. The discussion continued on reducing the fire department budget and the chair explained it would be limiting the shift coverage and the town voted for fire coverage with two people on shift. Lenny stated that on the overage in the daytime shift, they asked the Chief to save money and he did by covering with one person, a request from the selectman and he still showing an overage. The Chair explained that the letter from BoS was not sent out until September and really did not affect it by that much and asked, do we want to tie his hands by taking away the \$30,000.00 and putting it in the trust fund which you cannot take back out for coverage. Dan questioned if this year there is an overage of \$30,000.00 and if voted at town meeting by warrant, rather than taking the money out of taxation and putting it into a trust fund could it be put back into fire equipment fund, would it have to come out of the general fund. The Chair explained there is no surplus and will need grants to purchase vehicles and any excess should go into the trust fund and using the UAFB. The Chief stated as they talk about Engine 2 refurbishment and an additional allotment will be needed and the equipment is aging. The Chair asked what the current amount is in the trust fund and found it has \$165,900.00 with another \$20,000.00 being put in at the end of the year. The Chief explained to order a fire truck it would take a few years and the same for refurbishment. The Chair stated to the Chief that a warrant article would be needed for the refurbishment of the fire truck.

The chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$180,575.00.

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4195 Cemeteries

The Chair made a motion to approve the budget for \$2,000.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair stated the budget was level funded and with the stipend of \$500.00. The chair asked selectman Lenny why no money has been spent and he stated he believes the mowing is coming out of the government building fund and has asked Todd to do a breakdown on mowing to adjust budget sheets correctly. Scott questioned what the stipend was for, and Lenny explained it is for the supervisor time involving meeting with lot purchases for example.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve ~~\$2,500.00~~ \$2,000.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4197 Advertising & Dues

The Chair made a motion to approve the budget for \$3,500.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Vicki.

The Chair asked if there were any questions and Steve questioned why in 2022, they spent \$4,700.00 and the budget is for \$3,500.00. The Chair stated he would need to look back at the notes and see if they did extra advertising. Rosemarie questioned if each committee have their own advertising and the chair explained this is for if they are advertising for a job. Steve questioned if they anticipate any more advertising and dues in the coming year, could we lower the amount to \$3,000.00. The Chair asked any further questions, none.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve \$3,500.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4313 Bridges, Bridges Maintenance & Repair

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$1,000.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Jim.

The Chair explained this covers bridge washing and repairs.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$1,000.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

4316 Street Lighting

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$4,000.00 as approved by the BoS and seconded by Rosemarie.

The Chair stated that there is a total of 13 streetlights. Leo stated the budget to actual shows 25 lights and that would need to be corrected.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$4,000.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4442 General Assistance

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$12,000.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair stated that he received an email from Michele that the zoning officer has a phone and that a line item should be added for a phone at \$50.00 a month. Increasing the total to \$12,600.00. The Chair explained that this amount has worked, and the town has to pay for a family needing assistance. There is a process they go through which helps them get on the state funded assistance.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$12,000.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-nay, Leo Racine-nay, Steve Regal-nay, Vicki Kirkwood- nay, Jim Giguere-nay, Scott Hilsman-nay, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-nay (Failed 0-7-0).

4442 General Assistance Adjusted

The Chair made a motion to approve the adjusted amount of \$12,600.00 and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$12,600.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4583 Patriotic Purposes

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$750.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Steve.

The Chair explained this is to put flags on the graves.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount of \$750.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

4711 Debt Service

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$1.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Vicki.

The Chair explained that this is to keep the line open.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve the amount \$1.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

4723 TAN Interest

The Chair made a motion to approve the amount of \$1.00 as approved by the BoS and the motion was seconded by Vicki.

This is a tax anticipation note for if money needs to be borrowed.

The Chair put the motion on the table to approve \$1.00.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).

UAFB

The Chair directed the board to the updated excel sheet for the UAFB calculation sheet per the process instructions and explained previously he noted that an adjustments for unspent state funds, grants and carryover money needed to be deducted. This was not taken into account on the projected amount at the 10/24/23 meeting. The chair stated he had caught this error from seeing history notes from last year. The updated UAFB estimate is approximately \$996,000.

The Chair directed the board to the sheet where it shows the total minus unspent state funds, grants and carryover money.

The Chair explained what this means is at the end of the year when the auditors come in, they look at the revenue and the amounts carried over are already spent and should be removed. .

The Chair explained it is prudent to keep the UAFB amount around \$800,000.00.

The Chair explained he has sent draft warrant articles to the BoS to show what we would like to fund with the proposed amounts including UAFB usage. The Chair explained how using the unreserved fund is more for a one time use and not using it to lower your taxes, and the general fund balance fluctuates. The Chair feels comfortable using the \$185,000.00 from the UAFB and asked if everyone has any questions.

Approved: _____
Approved with changes: __11/21/23 DS__
Unapproved: _____

Effingham Budget Committee Minutes
68 School Street, Effingham
November 7, 2023

Leo asked what the amount is for amount is for unpaid taxes and the chair stated the amount is \$255,000.00 in back taxes. The Chair stated the tax rate is not set as of yet.

Budget to Actual

The Chair is meeting with Michele in the morning to get the items taken care of and if asked if anyone has any additional questions, none received.

Non-Profit

The Chair contacted the nonprofits and there is a new person for VNA and will not be requesting funds from Effingham this year. Red Cross is also not going to be asking for funding. There are still two nonprofits looking at submitting petition warrant articles. The Chair reminded the board to bring the packets for the meeting on December 5, 2023.

Public Question/Comments

The chair asked if there were any questions from the public, there were none.

Next Budget Meeting

November 21, 2023 @ 6 pm.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Leo at 7:56 pm. The motion was seconded by Dave.

Motion Vote: Chair Strauss-aye, Leo Racine-aye, Steve Regal-aye, Vicki Kirkwood- aye, Jim Giguere-aye, Scott Hilsman-aye, and Rosemarie Wissenbach-aye (Passed 7-0-0).