

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD
MINUTES

Date: February 14, 2023
Time: 10:00am
Place: Via Zoom Meeting
Egremont

Present in-person were Selectboard Chair George McGurn, Selectboard Vice-Chair Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Selectboard member Mary Brazie, Finance Committee member Thomas Berkel, Road Superintendent James Noe, Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Tom Reynolds and for part of the meeting Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad(SBAS) representatives Jim Santose, Joe Krejci, Douglas Robbins, Kalib Stone, and John Halbreich, .
Others participating via zoom: Mary McGurn, Dan Blitzer, Peg McDonough and for part of the meeting Rebecca Turner.

It was announced that the meeting is video and audio recorded.

BUDGET REVIEW:

The Board discussed with members of the Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad the request for funds in the amount of \$45,144.19 for FY 2024. SBAS transitioned from a volunteer service to a not-for-profit in 2014 with all paid paramedic staff. SBAS has found it can not sustain its readiness service without additional financial help from the 6 towns with contracts for services. SBAS needs to cover \$350,000 for FY 24 from sources other than insurance and grants. Egremont has no other ambulance service it can rely on. A joint meeting of the SBA and all 6 towns is tentatively planned for February 21 at 6:00pm. The Board voted unanimously to approve the request as submitted and investigate alternative means and restructuring in light of a current unsustainable business model and collaborate with the Towns before budgeting for an FY 2025 assessment with the understanding that a more sustainable business plan be researched for 2025 and beyond.

Historical Commission Chair Rebecca Turner answered questions about the Historical Commission's need for a web site separate from the Towns. The annual costs are about \$200. The Board voted unanimously to approve the budget amount of \$2050 with the caveat that if the separate web site could be merged into the Town's the budget could be lowered by \$200.

Fire Chief Joe Schneider explained that the Department has some new computer software that formulates standard operating procedures and guidance and trains department personnel. The old used air compressor is failing and parts are no longer available. The only local service provider has retired. A new one costs about \$44,000. This is an essential piece of equipment that each Fire Department has to fill their air tanks on a weekly basis. The Department will put up half of the funds if the Town will fund half.

The Board discussed the need for regionalization in the Fire Department since the current model is not sustainable. Discussions around regionalization of Fire Departments is important and Joe was urged to follow up on this. Joe will get the Board a figure for its February 28 meeting for a wage for the Town's first paid emergency staff who could also do administrative duties and research regionalization options since both SBAS and Egremont Fire Department are struggling with the sustainability of its current business models. There is a grant that opens in the fall that may help with costs for this position. Chief Schneider is well aware of the difficulties in staffing and lack of new volunteers.

The Board reviewed with Road Superintendent James Noe the Highway Department budget requests. Construction and Maintenance costs are up about 3%, Vehicle expenses are level funded though the cost of fuel is up, the cost of repairs with the new truck in service is down. A new 2-wheel drive dump truck is being sought though delivery may not be for a year after order. Trucks are on a 10-year replacement schedule though in this case the truck being replaced is a 2012. The Board voted unanimously to accept the FY 24 budget requests as submitted. Jim was asked to make sure that enforcement of transfer station stickers is being done by the attendants.

The Board confirmed its prior approval of the Buildings and Grounds budget requests with Buildings & Grounds Superintendent Tom Reynolds. There is the need for an additional full-time laborer who could possibly mow the cemeteries and plow snow, but it was agreed that the new building is the priority because there is no space in the current shop for another person. The budget includes funds to blacktop the Library when construction on the building is complete.

GRANTS:

The Board voted Chairman McGurn and Vice-Chairman Vermeulen voting aye, Selectboard member Brazie voting nay, to apply for the dam repair grant for the Prospect Lake Dam. Deadline is February 17th.

The next budget meeting will take place on February 28, at 10:00am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:55am.

Mary Brazie,
Office Administrator

minutes.23/feb14budget

The recording of the minutes is on record at the Town Hall for 90 days. Anyone who wishes to may obtain a copy or listen to the recording at Town Hall. Attachments are on file at Town Hall.