

TOWN OF EGREMONT, MASSACHUSETTS  
MEETING OF THE SELECT BOARD ACTING AS WATER COMMISSIONERS AND BUDGET  
MINUTES

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Date: March 10, 2022  
Time: 10:00am  
Place: Via Zoom Meeting  
Egremont

Present in-person were Select Board Chairman George McGurn, Vice-Chairwoman Lucinda Fenn-Vermeulen, Select Board member Mary Brazie, Poly Lanoue, Ray Palmucci, Water Operator Nate Stalker, Water Clerk Will Brinker, and Finance Committee member Frank Penglase. Others participating via zoom: Mary McGurn, Grant Administrator Peg McDonough, Personnel Director Cara Becker.

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

NEW BUSINESS:

The Water Department pick-up truck is in use. Markings that match the other town vehicles with the designation of Water Department will be put on the doors. Since the vehicle will be used for plowing as needed, the Snow & Ice Budget will be funded for a two-way radio, plow foil, outdoor lights and sander. Jim Noe is working on pricing. Maintenance will be paid for by the Water Department. The Board agreed to allow the vehicle to be parked at Nate's home which is across from the town's maintenance shop. An express transponder may be obtained for travel to official business sights.

March 20 through 26 is "fix a leak" week. Information about leaks will be included in the upcoming newsletter.

A leak at 9 Westerhook was recently discovered and repaired.

OLD BUSINESS:

The old water main has been capped and the leak in the driveway at the plant has been found and repaired. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will be notified that these issues have been corrected.

The Annual Statistical Report is being reviewed and will be submitted later in the day.

The FY 2024 budget is final with the exception of wages. The Board will have to consider the use of retained earnings in order to keep the budget stable.

Peg McDonough reported that the feedback on the expression of interest for the Municipal Vulnerability Program action grant clearly stated that the grant will not pay for deferred maintenance items, but did report favorably on studies needed to move forward with repairs and upgrades. Peg will follow up and will place emphasis on the capital improvement plan report. Peg was given permission to speak with Tighe & Bond about drilling a well for a back water supply as well as to reach out to Great Barrington about possibly serving as a back water supply. However a water line to Great Barrington will be very costly so the Board thought it best to focus on a well instead. An appraisal of the Water Department may be covered under the Asset Management Plan that grant funds will be available for in the coming year.

A user rate cannot be finalized until the budget is final. The current proposal is an average rate of \$121 per month, an increase of \$22.50 per month for the average user.

The Board approved the monthly billing commitment in the amount of \$19,858.

The Board clarified that the current hierarchy of the Water Department. Water Operator Nate Stalker reports directly to the Board as Commissioners. The Water Department currently employees 1 full-time employee and has a vacant full-time position. The Water Clerk supports the Water Operator in the running of the Water Department. Water Clerk Will Brinker added that he also does what has to be done immediately.

At the May Annual Town Meeting voters will be asked to reaffirm that the Select Board can serve as Water Commissioners.

The next meeting of the Water Commission will be April 26 at 10:00am.

At 10:43 the Water Commission part of the meeting was closed and the Select Board continued review of the FY 2024 budget commenced.

Road Superintendent James Noe and Police Chief Jason LaForest joined the meeting.

The Board approved the Town Accountant Expense budget in the amount of \$1,500 as Town Accountant Paul Lisi has confirmed he plans to attend Accountant school this spring.

The Board discussed the Fire Department budget again. It seems that costly software may have been purchased without approval of the Board. The Board would like to know how the stipend to members is distributed. Some members of the Board feel that there may be autonomy and accountability issues. The Board unanimously approved an expenditure of \$7,500 from American Rescue Plan Act funds to contract with Municipal Resource, Inc. to look at the current status of the Fire Department and make recommendations for moving forward.

The Board reviewed, and approved, the proposed FY 24 Police Department budget request with Police Chief Jason Laforest. The updated budget includes the recent Union agreement reached to increase FY 24 wage increase from 3.9% to 6.1%. Capital items being requested are \$7,500 for new hand guns to replace ones that are 10 years old and \$1,900 for a new AED defibrillator. The Chief is not requesting body cameras at this time as they are very expensive. The Town is being asked to contribute \$5,000 to a new Mental Health Clinician that will be shared by Great Barrington, Sheffield and Monterey. Egremont utilized the former service 6 times in the past year. It may be possible to get this funded through a grant.

The Board approved the following budget requests:

Social Security/Medicare	\$22,000
Unemployment	\$10,000
Pension	\$252,750
Property & Casualty Insurance	\$134,435
Longevity Pay	\$4,025
Sick Leave/Vacation Pay	\$5,000
Reserve Fund	\$25,000
Vocational Education	\$6,800

Budget and town meeting warrant article review will be added to the Board's regular meeting schedule. The next budget meeting will be held on March 28 at 10:00am.

Meeting adjourned at 11:36am.

Mary Brazie,  
Office Administrator

minutes.23/mar10waterbudget

*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.*