

The Epping Taxing Times

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VOTERS PUT ON ALERT INCREASED SPENDING—REDUCED REVENUES Threaten Potential \$2.82¹ Increase In Property Tax Rate

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A free people
firmly united, in a just
cause, can never despond
of either inspiring a
respect for their rights,
or of maintaining
them against hostile
Invasions.

_James Madison

REMEMBER TO VOTE
Tuesday March 9th
Epping Middle High School
8AM—7PM



**DON'T LET YOUR WALLET GO TO
TOWN MEETING WITHOUT YOU!**

COST OF TOWN WARRANT ARTICLES		Tax Increase Per /\$1000
<i>Based on \$660,000.00 = \$1 on the TaxRate*</i>		
Art. 5: 2010 Proposed Budget	\$5,552,976	.80
2010 Default Budget	\$5,440,690	.63
Art. 7: Land Fill Closure Fund	\$5,000	.01
Art. 8: Reval. Reserve Fund	\$38,5000	.06
Art. 10: Police Cruiser Lease	\$15,600	.03
Art. 12: Highway Truck Fund	\$30,000	.05
Art. 13: Fulltime Fire Chief	\$47,380	.07
Art. 15: Paramedics Comp.	\$10,000	.02
Art. 16: Lamprey River Soccer	\$2,000	.003
Art. 17: E.Y.A.A.	\$3,000	.01
Art. 18 to 23: Social Serv. Orgs.	\$29,802	.05
COST OF SCHOOL WARRANT ARTICLES		Incr /\$1000
Art. 1: Teachers Contract (2 years)		.16
Yr 1: \$102, 155		
Yr 2: \$265,328		
Cumulative Total (2 Yrs):	\$469,638	
Art. 3: Proposed Budget:	\$16,324,011	1.56
Default Budget:	\$16,307,568	1.54
<small>* Town uses \$660,000,000 as a net assessment value. The School uses \$674,268,000 as a net assessment value. Use of the higher value lowers the school budget tax impact to 1.24 / 1.22 respectively. And the teachers' contract impact to .15/\$1000.</small>		

1: The tax impact as forecasted assumes the 2009 net assessed value of the town. Actual tax rates are set in the Fall: after a) increases or decreases to the Town's net assessment can be verified (after April 1); and, b) when town and school expenditures and revenues can be more accurately estimated. Therefore, any increase or decrease to the tax rate will not be known until the NH Dept. of Revenue sets the rate for the November tax bill. Warrant article projections shown in the adjacent table are based upon \$660,000 = \$1.00 on the tax rate. Note, the school uses a different net assessment value (See last row of table).

Voting recommendations shown on the insert to this publication reflect a majority view of the ERPG membership. A *your call* recommendation indicates a tie vote and thus no clear position. Moreover, the recommendations given herein do not reflect any one particular member's view.

Of the people, By the people and For the People: the Role of the ERPG

For those who do not already know, the letters ERPG stand for Epping Residents for Principled Government. The members strive to support those who otherwise would have not opportunity for having their voice heard by their elected officials. Anyone is welcome to contact us and can do by visiting our website at: www.eppingnospinzone.com.

For all intents and purpose, the ERPG evolved out of the Epping Taxpayer Association which was formed back in the early 1990s. Our goal then is the same as it is now, to give the least influential resident an equal voice in how Epping government is run. We do not have any special interest; we have only general interest.

A case in point being the adoption of RSA 40:13, more commonly referred to as "SB2." Because of the untiring efforts of the ERPG, you

are now able to vote your preferences in the privacy of a voting booth without having to endure the pressure and intimidation of the traditional Town Meeting forum.

If the Town had to bear some legal costs as a result of our efforts to level the playing field, as some like to attribute to the ERPG, just know that those legal costs could have been easily avoided if the Town's representation listened to the PEOPLE they are elected to serve; or, merely informed themselves better of the laws that govern their roles as public officials and **follow them**; and, most of all, if they simply used good, unbiased judgment toward every resident all of the time.

In other words, these public officials need to resist seeing their role as greater than it is; they are, after all, public SERVANTS. Government-

(Continued on page 4- Role of the ERPG)

Town Meeting Warrant Articles...Bits and Pieces

Article 2: Changes for Permitted Use

- Multi-Family Construction
- Workforce Housing
- Burdens Schools
- Burdens Town Facilities
- Provides low income housing for other area Towns to benefit by.
- Pushed by Regional Planning Commission.

PLEASE VOTE NO!!!



Article 3: Land Purchase Bond

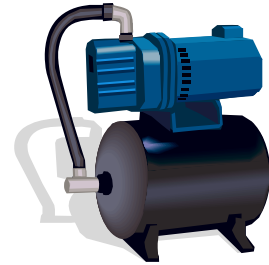
- A future water supply
- Established wells / high output
- Water quality considered good
- **No impact to tax rate in 2010**
- \$2.5 million price tag
- Never officially appraised
- Needs more price negotiation
- **2011 Tax impact approx. 35¢**

Bad timing / economy

VOTE: NO

Article 4: Sewer Pump Station

- Replaces 40-year old Mill Street pump station
- **No impact to tax rate**
- Financed in part by ARRA Funds
- Balance to be paid by Water & Sewer funds



VOTE: YES

Article 5: Town Budget

- Proposed Budget
- **Incr. Of \$216,365**
 - Property Reval. \$ 38,500
 - Police Cruiser \$ 34,735
 - New Debt/Int \$104,913
 - Up 5%
 - **80¢ tax rate impact**
- Default Budget
 - \$112,277 < proposed 2010
 - **63¢ impact to tax rate**

VOTE: NO

Article 6: Town Hall Improvement

- \$10,000 Appropriation Request
- **Funded out of General Fund surplus**

VOTE: YES

Article 7: Land Fill Closure Fund

- \$5000 Appropriation
- **.01 tax rate impact**
- Engineering closure plan

VOTE: YES

Art. 8: Reval. Cap. Reserve Fund

- \$38,500 Appropriation Request
- **6¢ impact to tax rate**
- In proposed budget
- If passed—reduces proposed budget by a like amount.

VOTE: NO

Article 9: Public Safety Bond Payment

- \$108,009 Appropriation
- **NO IMPACT to tax rate**

VOTE: YES

Article 10: Police Department Vehicle

- \$15,600 Appropriation Request
- **\$47,000 total 3-yr lease**
 - \$1.00 buy out end of lease
 - Tax rate impact .024¢**
 - Proposed budget contains a cruiser—but must pass to purchase
 - Passage of this article would guarantee the PD one cruiser.

? YOUR CALL ?

Article 11: Fulltime Police Officer

- \$43,500 Appropriation Request
- **\$65,245 Full year**
- \$195,730 Total 3-yr term
- **Federal Funds—Cops Grant**
- No tax impact until 2013
- \$80,120 ESTIMATED cost to fund in 2013



VOTE: NO

Article 12: Hwy Truck Capital Fund

- \$30,000 Appropriation Request
- **5¢ tax rate impact**

VOTE: NO

Art. 13: Full Time Fire Chief

- \$47,380 Appropriation Request
- **7¢ tax rate impact—1st yr**
- **FD needs FT administrator**
- **\$95,000 Salary w/ Benefits: 2011**

? YOUR CALL ?

Bits and Pieces...Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 14: Public Safety Revolving Fund

- Redirects ambulances fees into a revolving fund that
- To Spend:
 - No approval from Town Meeting necessary
 - Requires Selectmen approval
- Pays bond payment on Safety complex
- Surplus funds aggregate to purchase department equipment
- Takes people out of the loop

VOTE NO

Article 15: Compensation for Responding Paramedics

- \$10,000 Appropriation Request
- Expected to return \$3-5 for each \$1 spent

VOTE: YES

Article 16: Lamprey River Soccer

- \$2000 Appropriation Request
- **.003 impact to tax rate**

VOTE: YES

Article 17: E.Y.A.A.

- \$3000 Appropriation Request
- **.005 impact to tax rate**

VOTE: YES

Article 18: Meals on Wheels

- \$3,988 Appropriation Request
- **.006 impact to tax rate**

VOTE: YES

Article 19 through 23: Social Services

- Lamprey Health Care: \$ 3,800
- Rock. Comm. Action: \$11,314
- Richie Mc Farland: \$ 4,200
- Child & Family Svcs: \$ 4,000
- Family First Health: \$ 2,500
- **TOTAL: \$25,814**
- **4¢ impact to tax rate**
- No validation of services
- **Improper** use of taxation

JUST SAY NO!

Article 24: Rescind the Board of Fire Wards

- Rescinds 1978 vote that established the Fire Wards
- Appears politically motivated
- Fire Wards are an unpaid Board—no cost to the Town
- Provides a valuable service and offloads the Selectmen
- Recommendation is to **KEEP** the Board of Fire Wards

VOTE NO!

Article 25: Return of LUCT Monies

- IF passed:
 - Conservation Commission would receive up to \$75,000 per year of LUCT money!
 - Conservation Commission takes your money to negotiate land purchase deals that give outside groups deeded land rights to Epping based property.
- **ALL** LUCT monies should be returned to the General Fund to offset the property tax.

VOTE NO!

“Holding Their Feet to the Fire”

Article 26: Elderly Exemption

- **Estimated tax rate impact is 3¢**
- Changes to current plan:
 - Age 65-74: raises exemption from \$62,500 to \$120,000
 - Age 75-80: raises exemption from \$75,000 to \$130,000
 - Age 80 & over: raises exemption from \$87,500 to \$140,000
- Applicants must meet residency & ownership requirements & fall within certain income and asset limits.

VOTE: YES

The Epping Residents for Principled Government organization (ERPG) often comes under fire for those with special interests, a specific agenda or simply seeking personal political power and control. However, because of the efforts of the ERPG, more of you get to participate in Town and School government on voting day than under the traditional Town or School District Meeting.

However, with rights, come duties. Meaning, enough of the people may not understand the importance of their being involved even before voting day in order to ensure that government works as it ought for everyone.

The people need to be active participants in their government. For example, the ERPG, as the former Epping Taxpayers Association, fought long and hard, even to spending their own money, to pass RSA 40:13 (SB2) which allows official ballot voting in the privacy of a voting booth, all day, as well as absentee

voting, on **ALL** warrant articles, not for just the candidates and zoning articles period. Now you have the same right that you could only exercise in a 2-3 hour Town or School District meeting, which you lost if you were unable to attend.

Still, the present system is not perfect and would be significantly improved if a more diverse cross-section of voters attended the Deliberative Session, the preliminary meeting where the warrant articles are accepted as is or amended before submission to the Official Ballot.

This is a most important part of the Town Meeting process as there is a history of warrant articles, particularly citizen petitioned articles, being eviscerated (through amendments) at the Deliberative Session to the extent that the original intent is destroyed. This tends to be the rule now since the special interest voters seem to be the only regular attendees at the Deliberative Session, with the obvious intention

(continued next page)

“Holding Their Feet to the Fire”

(continued from page 3) of looking out for their own interests. This must indeed change if the system is to stay working for you. Higher attendance at this important meeting by voters who simply want to ensure that government functions at its best and nothing more is needed. The ERPG, as a watchdog body, is working to help correct this problem so that a handful of self-serving residents cannot negate your voting right to decide each article in its original submitted form.

But each of us must take an active role in our government. Otherwise, someone else, or some other group of like minded voters will band together to decide Epping’s leadership, the cost of Town and School government and adopt for the rest of us, the rules we all must then live by.

“Candidates’ Night” is another opportunity in which the people can easily participate. It is a welcomed opportunity to have these meetings made available on television, so that we can view them in the comfort of our own homes. But, active participation is again needed by those who are so able. If you watched this year’s candidates night you must have been aghast at the type of personal attack questions directed at only certain of the candidates. The low participation allowed the same people to dominate the meeting with an obvious goal of using the meeting to settle personal vendettas.

Is this what this public forum will be reduced to in the future? What is needed to correct this situation, is again, a good cross-section of voters asking questions pertinent to how the candidate has prepared for the office he or she seeks. Petty and vicious neighborhood in-fighting has no place at his forum, nor the unfounded or bias accusations which reveal an accusers’ own ineptness and venom.

For years, Epping has had a shameful reputation for harboring a nasty political climate. So, when candidates are attacked and blamed for legal expenses incurred by the Town because that candidate happens to be affiliated with a group that stands up in defense of a principle or a law, perhaps the truth should be known. For when abusive and prejudicial activities on the part of government go unchallenged, such actions tend to run rampant.

Insofar as Epping is concerned, there has yet to be a judicial decision that determined any such as “frivolous.” If there had been, all of the related costs would have been placed on the party initiating the suit. Check the record, this has not happened!

Fair governing practices do not generate legal action; therefore, no legal expenses either. The ERPG strives to “hold the feet of our elected officials to the fire.” They do so out of general interest to benefit all.

This article submitted and endorsed by Wilfred and Mary Cloutier based on forty years of personal experience confronting the abuse of power in Epping politics.

**REMEMBER TO VOTE
TUESDAY—MARCH 9TH
EPPING MIDDLE SCHOOL GYM
8AM TO 7PM
DON’T LET YOUR WALLET GO TO THE
POLLS WITHOUT YOU!**

SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT ARTICLES**Article 1: Teachers’ Contract****Cost to you:**

- Year 1: \$102,155
- Year 2: \$265, 328 + first year cost of \$102,155

Total Contract cost (2 years):**\$367,483****VOTE: NO****Article 2: Reconsideration of Article 1 if it’s defeated:****Don’t make easy!****Send them to court to prove
Emergency!****VOTE: NO***(Continued from page 1 Role of the ERPG)*

was instituted to HELP the people work through their problems; therefore, government should avoid being a creator of problems.

We do not hesitate to get out front with criticism when we recognize abuse of power, excessive spending or personal aggrandizement.

To that end, we recommend and support candidates and warrant articles that best serve all the residents of Epping. We rely on the laws that govern our town, the New Hampshire State Statutes, the New Hampshire State Constitution, and the United States Constitution for guidance. Our wise founding fathers who gave us these enduring principles, surely expected that each succeeding generation would work to protect and preserve what they held most dear, the freedom and personal liberty of the people.

Article 3: SCHOOL BUDGET

- Proposed Budget \$16,324,011
- **Spending Increased \$386,375**
- **Revenue Losses: 449,612**
- **Total Increase: \$835,987**

**Shouldn’t the spending have
stopped to offset revenue
losses?****The \$835,987 is in ADDITION
to the first year cost of the
Teachers’ Contract**

- **Includes 3% raises for Administrators and non-union staff!**

VOTE: NO**Article 4: Create A Co-op
Planning Committee****Don’t be fooled by
explanations that indicate
the School Board is *just*
“looking at all the options!”**

- **Been there—done this –twice**
- **Don’t let them get started**
- **Tuition agreements better deal for Epping Taxpayers!**

VOTE: NO**Letter to the Editor
Candidates’ Night Observations**

As a resident sitting at home watching the Epping Candidates night, I was struck by several facts that jumped at me with regard to the folks who want to serve our town.

I think it is commendable that there is so many people who want to serve but what troubled me was the fact that there was so few actually prepared to serve in those positions. Today in our society, when you go to apply for a job you must have some education or working knowledge in order to qualify for a position. I saw only a handful of people who actually had a working knowledge or the education that would qualify them for public office.

I hope that when we go to the polls in March that we take that into consideration. These are very complex time we live in and we need folks who are qualified. For those folks who don’t have the qualifications, I hope they pursue, with a passion, the knowledge and education that is needed to serve. After doing so, come back in subsequent years and try again.

Another issue that bothered me very much is the fact that there was a small group of folks that decided to use this time to air their obvious discontent with Mr. Pagnani. I realize that we all have a right to ask a candidate questions about themselves and to call into question issues that may disqualify a candidate from the position he/she seeks. But these questioners threw out accusations without producing any evidence to support their claims. I know candidates are fair game but unsubstantiated slander is still illegal in this country. Because one may disagree with another’s opinion or stand on a position that is unpopular, that doesn’t make that individual a criminal. And frankly, what does Halloween have to do with anything? This is really bad, bad politics, beyond even small Town politics.

As for Selectman Mr. Archambault, with all due respect, who does he represent? The people or his own agenda?

Let’s all go to the polls and vote for those who are qualified to serve the best interest of the good people of Epping.

_Publius

**TO MAKE GOVERNMENT WORK AS IT
OUGHT TO FOR EVERYONE...
ITS PEOPLE MUST PARTICIPATE IN IT!**