

**ASHLAND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING  
THURSDAY, SETEMBER 11, 2014  
ASHLAND TOWN HALL  
6:30 PM**

**MINUTES**

Chairman DeWolfe called the meeting to order at 6:50PM with a roll call. Fran Newton, Steve Felton, Norm DeWolfe present. Jeannette Stewart was absent with notice. Phil Preston was absent without notice

Others Present: Steve Heath

S. Felton presented the revised letter he had drafted to Mr. Salvoni explaining the recent decision of the Board of Selectmen to remove the white rocks along Owl Brook Road. F. Newton made a motion to approve the revisions and N. DeWolfe seconded the motion. All members approved the motion. The letter would be given to P. Crowell for printing on letterhead and made ready for selectmen's signature the next day.

The board was unable to discuss the previously reviewed police department budget because salary figures were not yet updated.

S. Heath presented the fire department budget for review and discussion. He noted that the year to date expenditure figures he has do not agree with those provided by finance. His figures are up to date, whereas finance has only up to the end of August.

Line items in the proposed budget were discussed as follows:

- The ambulance contract is fixed and the same as last year.
- Salaries are up somewhat (\$108,350 to \$114,200) because of the full year of 29-hour/week salary for S. Heath. This year, the schedule is only for June through December. However, current year projections show that spending will come in below budget (~\$90,000 as opposed to \$108,350). A suggestion was made to lower the request to a figure that more closely matches actual expenditures, perhaps \$105,000. S. Heath noted that lower expenditures this year reflect a lower call volume than last year and this can't be accurately forecast. There are no grade raises pending and fewer step raises predicted.
- Training projections are low. Expenditures this year were covered in part by a grant. Training for the remainder of the year will include EMT and Recertification. Remaining expenditures are expected to be an additional \$4,000. No grants are available next year for training. It is the fire department policy to not allow training out of the region until a firefighter has one year of service.
- Detail expenses are for the Circle Triathlon. S. Heath donates his time. The firefighter's detail expenses are offset by matching revenues, paid by the Circle Triathlon organizers (B. Gaw).
- Contracted Services expenses (computer maintenance, fire alarm monitoring, emergency generator service, etc.) were previously included in the equipment line. The new line more accurately describes the use of these funds. NFPA codes on line access contract previously came out of chief's expenses, which is no longer a budget line item. Two contract items, Zoll maintenance and response notification program, are new. The notification program allows all staff to know who is available to answer a call as well as equipment failures.

- Electricity has the same budget as last year. However, the fire department has been upgrading fixtures with more efficient LED lights and photocells to automatically turn lights on and off.
- Heating – oil tanks are now full. Oil is purchased through a consortium with the school. The line includes the cost of propane, which is used to run the emergency generator.
- Equipment maintenance includes replacing old batteries for radios and pagers. Radios (24) were all put in service in 2002. Motorola will no longer be making replacement parts. It will be important to put money aside over time to replace them at a cost of \$2,400 each. The line is expected to come in at about \$6,000 this year, below budget.
- Vehicle maintenance – the ladder truck brakes need repair. The cost is expected to be about \$500-\$600. Other expected expenses are for ladder testing (~\$1200) and water tank repair (~\$1900). The line total is projected to be about \$9,000 for 2014, below budget. Next year's expenses include new tires.
- Phone – the budget proposal is a reduction. The chief is considering eliminating the cell phone in the ambulance. Staff tends to use their own personal phones when necessary. Speare Hospital does not have the technology to receive electronic signals (e.g., ECGs).
- General expense EMS – includes oxygen bottles, currently rented. The department is looking into options to save money. Other supplies must be replaced when outdated. Currently, this is done with little cost through an agreement with Speare Hospital.
- Protective gear – includes helmets, gloves, and uniform shirts. Line should come at about \$4000 this year, well below the budget of \$7000. The department is awaiting a quote for extrication gear.
- Fuel – call volume is down this year so fuel costs are lower than predicted. Projection is for about \$3100. Budget is \$4500, which is requested for next year as well.
- Physicals – it is the department policy to provide physicals for new hires and recommend annual physicals (not funded). Funds requested (\$1000) will cover testing if necessary (e.g., for exposures) and inoculations.
- Fire Department Equipment – worn out or faulty equipment (e.g., hoses, SCBA masks) should be replaced as necessary. Projection for 2014 expense is \$5600. Request for 2015 is considerably lower than 2014 budget (\$6000 as opposed to \$15,125) because contracted services have been removed from this line.
- Mutual Aid dues – fixed by agreement. Mutual aid covers dispatch services, training and testing services.
- Building and grounds expense covered the boiler cleaning. Remaining funds will be earmarked for necessary repairs to plumbing fixtures. A new heat pump for air conditioning and heating is proposed for the fire station meeting room at a cost of \$4900. It was the consensus of the board that this is a desirable item given the high use of the space and the fact that the station is one of the public cooling stations in high heat emergency situations. Consideration will be given to putting out a warrant article next year to accomplish this.

F. Newton made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 PM, which was seconded by N. DeWolfe. All approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Newton  
4-11-14