

**ASHLAND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2014
ASHLAND TOWN HALL
6:00 PM**

MINUTES

Chairman DeWolfe called the meeting to order at 7:12AM with a roll call.

Norm DeWolfe, Fran Newton, Jeanette Stewart, and Steve Felton were present. Phil Preston was absent without notice. (Arrived at 6:47)

Tim Paquette discussed the bridgework for Moo Corners. He indicated that he believes that it is critical that we do the work before winter based on the report from Arnold Graton who said it should be done sooner rather than later. However, he did not label the work as an emergency. Tim believes that putting the contract out to bid would unnecessarily delay the work. The draft notice currently has October 20 as the cutoff date and the Board indicated that we could shorten the time. In addition, the bid from Arnold Graton has already been published in the paper and this could provide competitors with an advantage. Mark Ober has also examined the bridge and has expressed concern. We were informed that there is only one house on the property that is unoccupied during the winter and only used occasionally in the summer. N. DeWolfe suggested that we could close the bridge and road for the winter for that reason, but this should be checked out with the fire department. In addition, Mark Ober checks on the property regularly for the owners and must cross the bridge. The bridge is currently not listed as being inspected by the state. Paquette was asked about other town bridges and informed us that the Owl Brook Bridge is red-lined on the town list as needing repair. N. DeWolfe has contacted the state DOT and they said they would inspect the bridge free of charge. T. Paquette was asked to contact the state (Nancy Mayville, nmayville@state.nh.us) and arrange this inspection. F. Newton moved that the Board delay the bid request pending further information. S. Felton seconded the motion and all approved (4-0).

T. Paquette also presented an estimate of \$7625 from BH Hydroseeding for sidewalk construction from the Dollar General Store to School Street. They are going to be doing the sidewalk work in front of the store and are willing to extend the work. Funds would be taken from the highway fund line item. S. Felton moved to approve the work, seconded by N. DeWolfe. All voted in favor (4-0).

S. Felton raised concern over the recent closing of the town hall for P. Tucker and P. Crowell to attend a seminar. He reminded the Board that we had agreed that any closings had to be approved by the Board in a posted session with advance notice. Furthermore, it was learned that this seminar was not related to business so time off should have been requested and the hours should not be charged for work. Felton agreed to draft a letter to be issued to the town hall staff restating our agreement on the procedure.

P. Preston arrived at 6:47.

Felton noted that we have not received revenues for end of August, only expenditures. DeWolfe will ask Paul to request these and ensure that we get them on a monthly basis going forward.

The Board then reviewed the budget items not previously agreed to line-by-line. Unless noted below, the Board agreed to the TA Revised numbers.

Executive: Admin Assistant salary request represented an 8% increase. The Board voted to limit the increase to 3%, at \$36,227. Overtime (for minute taking at Board meetings) will be \$1420 based on 3 hours per meeting, 2 meetings per month, 12 months. Executive health insurance number is left for discussion awaiting more information. General expense and CIP was reduced from \$2150 to \$1500.

Election and Registration: ER Clerk has requested a 5% salary increase to cover extra duties and increase in employee contribution to health insurance. The Board needs clarification about her duties that justify the increase. Clerk training was reduced from \$600 to \$500.

Financial: Tax collector salary request was the same as ER Clerk. For reasons discussed above, this will be decided at a later date. The Financial Officer has requested an increase in hourly rate from \$35 to \$40. The Board held the increase to 3% or \$36 making the salary line \$37,180. General expense was reduced from \$500 to \$300.

Property Taxation: Based on information received from the Town Administrator, Paul Branscombe, the Assessing Expense will be \$12,250 and revaluation will be \$20,000.

Land Use Boards: The Land Use Boards are requesting \$20,000 for an assistant. F. Newton will request a narrative, justification and cost breakdown for discussion at the next meeting.

General Government: General repair request of \$23,650, which includes lighting, air conditioning and carpeting was reduced by \$7000, cost of carpeting, to \$16,650. Safety equipment was reduced from \$2000 to \$1500 based on history.

Police Department: Salary line was reduced from \$282,265 to \$267,265. Part-time officer wages was reduced from \$45,000 to \$40,000. Uniforms were reduced from \$5000 to \$3500 and Equipment from \$2000 to \$1500. Training was reduced from \$4000 to \$3000 based on history.

Fire Department: Salaries were reduced from \$114,200 to \$105,000. Water was reduced from \$350 to \$250 and sewer from \$300 to \$200. General expense was reduced from \$3500 to \$3000. Building and grounds expense was reduced from \$11,000 to \$8500.

Public Works: Director salary request was for \$55,000. The Board limited the raise to 3% or \$53,045. The total salary line was incorrect in the printout since it only listed the director's salary. Staff salaries are per union contract. The total salary line should be \$155,630. Overtime salaries were reduced from a requested \$20,000 to \$18,000 based on history.

Highways and Streets: Advertising was reduced from \$500 to \$300. Uniforms were reduced from \$1400 to \$1200. Radio expenses will be discussed pending additional information.

Town Mechanic: The salary request is still outstanding and will be discussed later.

Transfer/Recycling: The salary request is still outstanding and will be discussed later. General expense (disposal of electronics, shingles, etc.) was reduced from \$6000 to \$5500 and Hauling was reduced from \$80,000 to \$72,500 based on history.

General Assistance: Director salary request was for an increase from \$33.65 to \$41.66. The Board limited the rate to \$40, making the line \$5992. The assistant had requested a stipend of

\$3300. The Board calculated the hourly rate of \$25 and time spent and made the stipend \$2600. It was noted that the assistant line was listed as overtime and this should not be labeled as such. General Assistance requested figure of \$55,000, which was last year's budget, was reduced to \$30,000 given that expenditures have been held much lower than budget.

Parks and Recreation: The Director is requesting to have his position returned to full time including associated benefits. P. Branscombe supported the salary request. The Board voted (3-2) that the position should remain part time, but hours extended and limited to 29. The hourly rate is uncertain and the line will be filled once this is determined. The benefit lines (health and life insurance) were accordingly reduced to 0. Vacation bussing was reduced from \$3000 to \$2000 based on history. Memorial Park electricity was reduced from \$850 to \$500.

The next meeting will be on Friday, October 3 at 7 AM.

Newton moved that the meeting be adjourned and it was seconded by Preston. All approved (5-0) and the meeting was adjourned at 8:47 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Fran Newton