

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

October 3, 2013

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: C. Cilley, S. Coleman, I. Heidenreich, F. Newton, D. Ruell, M. Scarano, J. Stewart, (BOS), D. Toth

OTHER BOS MEMBERS PRESENT: N. DeWolfe (also Budget Committee Alternate), P. Preston

MEMBERS ABSENT: M. Badger, with notice, Renee Liebert (Alternate school board, with notice)

Others Present: P. Branscombe, R., Donaldson, L. Davis, S. Weinberg, A. Staples, P. Tucker, A. Abear, B. Hoerter, E. Badger, S. Felton, J. Mazzone, P. Mazzone, A. Cilley

Meeting was called to order at 6:00 P.M. in the Ashland Elementary School Library and a quorum was present. The Select Board also convened a separate concurrent meeting.

J. Stewart noted that the minutes of August 8 said that she was absent without notice. She had in fact notified the board. Minutes from July 31, August 8 and Sept 12 will be reviewed at the next meeting.

First Review of the Town Budget

M. Scarano apologized that he was unaware the Select Board had already reviewed budget with the department heads.

P. Branscombe introduced Rita Donaldson. Ms. Donaldson, who is under contracted service with Municipal Resources Inc., has joined the town office as the new Financial Officer. She is a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) with extensive auditing and budgeting experience. Presented financial statements current as of today. She will be providing statements on a monthly basis going forward in hard copy or electronic as requested.

N. DeWolfe noted some errors in printout provided to the Budget Committee as follows: On page 1 of 41, the TA revised figure for elections should be \$35,709 and on page 2 of 42, the TA revised figure for bond should be \$71,206. The total budget should therefore be \$270,1454. Replacement pages are forthcoming.

Tax Collector/Town Clerk - P. Tucker

P. Tucker reviewed figures. She had requested a 5% salary increase for both town clerk and tax collector role but this was reduced to 3%. Her previous raise was a 1.5% increase in 2011.

She noted that there is now a separate line for deputy, which was previously under clerk expense. Election Registration (ER) Clerk requested \$3,300 but that was revised to \$2,300. It was noted that a \$2,000 expense has not come in yet, and thus it is expected that expenditures will exceed those of 2012. The Select Board will likely revise the ER Clerk line given this new information. Three elections will be held in 2014 (a state primary, general election and town election), thus there is an increase in the budget.

The tax rate is expected to be announced soon. The town is awaiting school board figures before final paperwork can be filed. The revaluation figures have been finalized.

Trustees

Not present. They requested \$600, which will stand given no additional information.

Library

2014 - D. Ruell discussed changes from last year. The overall budget request is for \$800 more than last year. He noted an increased demand for audio books. Code compliance will increase because the Scribner Trustees are not paying for fire extinguishers and this expense must be in the budget. The downloadable books fee increased. Dues, programs, software and supplies expenses are also increasing. The new salary schedule was provided which shows minimum wage progression and changes. Salary increases currently proposed will bring them up to the proposed schedule of increases by 2015. Some are currently below suggested level. 2014 is a transition year. Payroll line will not, however, be increased because the director and assistant director are working fewer hours. A. Staples reviewed 2013 use statistics.

Budget Committee

The expense of \$150 for Local Government Center (LGC) training does not show up on the budget sheets. R. Donaldson will investigate to see if the expense went on a separate line. The other expense was \$110 for advertising. The PBCam expense for the financial forum was paid privately by an individual and thus not in the financial statement. Last year the Budget Committee requested \$400. D. Ruell moved that we ask for \$400 for 2014 and the motion seconded by F. Newton. S. Coleman suggested that we buy two copies of this year's budget book for reference. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on October 10 for review of Administration budget. P. Branscombe will send any updates in advance of that meeting. S. Felton will send out a 1-page recap of CIP recommendations for upcoming budget season including budget vs. warrant articles suggestion.

D. Toth will take minutes at the next meeting.

F. Newton moved to adjourn, seconded by S. Coleman and the motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:22.

Respectfully submitted

Fran Newton