

**Ashland Budget Committee
Draft Minutes
November 21, 2013**

Budget Committee Members – Present [8 voting]

David Ruell (Acting Chair)

Christine Cilley

Mardean Badger

Renee Liebert, Alternate (non-voting)

David Toth

Sandra Coleman

Fran Newton

Ingrid Heidenreich

Jeanette Stewart

Normand DeWolfe, Alternate (non-voting)

Budget Committee Members – Absent

Mark Scarano (with notice)

Town Employees -- Present

Paul Branscombe, Town Administrator

SAU Employees – Present

Trish Temperino, Asst. Superintendent

Members of the Public -- Present

Eli Badger, Alan Cilley

The Budget Committee meeting was called to order by David Ruell, at 6:00 pm.

→ Review of School Proposed Budget with Trish Temperino

The document “2013-2014 Budget Report Year to Date for: Ashland General Fund” was distributed to the Board by Ms. Temperino, and she reviewed the document with the Board.

Ms. Temperino commented that the Regular Education account is in good shape.

Under Special Education – Tuition other LEAS in State and Tuition to Private Schools is high due to unanticipated preschool placements and unanticipated tuitions that went out after the budget was developed. Ms. Temperino stated that it is very hard to budget Special Ed. Ms. Coleman asked whether there are guidelines with respect to who is special ed? Ms. Temperino responded that there are lots of criteria and there is a process to determine who is special ed. It is also a group decision.

Under Bilingual, Ms. Temperino commented that there are none so far this year.

Ms. Temperino commented that Athletics, Guidance Services, Health Services, Psychology Speech Services, Physical & Occupational Therapy, Curriculum & Development, Office of the Principal, Building & Equipment, Care of Grounds are all on target.

With respect to Technology, Ms. Temperino commented that there are lots of changes being made and it’s moving forward in a nice way.

Ms. Temperino commented that Library & Media Services is on target, but it’s a little over due to a change in insurance.

School Board Services – District Meeting line is slightly over due to a special meeting.

Audit Services is slightly over.

Operation of Plant – Saving in salaries due to a change in insurances which was due to a change in staff.

SPED Transportation is way over, but it couldn’t be budgeted. Mr. Ruell asked if it approached catastrophic aid? Ms. Temperino responded that she doubted that it would. The school can receive catastrophic aid when costs exceed 3.5 times the state average tuition – and even then the state will only reimburse around 45%. Mr. Toth asked if there has been an increase in the number of special ed kids that we’re serving? Ms. Temperino responded that it’s

not an increase in the number, but their needs are greater. Ashland is consistent around 13%. Ms. Stewart asked about the SPED Transport hike from \$300 to \$13,480 on page 6 of the packet. Ms. Temperino responded that legally we need to provide transportation for out of district placements.

Ms. Coleman asked about the number of teachers retiring this year and whether there is a maximum amount that can retire? Ms. Temperino responded that 2 had given notice, but the teachers have until 12/1/13 to notify of retirement. Only 2 teachers who retire can receive incentive, but the School Board can waive that number. If more than 2 retire those who will receive the incentive are the ones that have had the greatest years of service and who are oldest.

Ms. Temperino remarked that the 2013-2014 packet she handed out is not up to date because there is still open enrollment for health insurance. There is a large balance available for medical insurance due to premium holiday from HealthTrust. The 2010 premium holiday came as a surprise and that's why there is so much available.

Ms. Temperino informed the board that as of today 90% of the budget is encumbered or expended.

Mr. Ruell inquired about the food service for this year. Ms. Temperino responded that it is still early in the year, but feedback is that the food is better. It will end the year in a slight deficit, but things have improved. More kids are eating/participating.

Ms. Temperino informed the Board that the SAU meeting on the budget is on December 12 in Meredith.

Ms. Temperino left at 6:29.

Ms. Stewart gave a brief update on CIP. She said that they reviewed 10 year projections and they looked back through 2002 for trends.

The Financial Forum is scheduled for December 9 at 7:00. Ms. Stewart recommended getting advertising out early and she informed the Board that the PBCam can be there.

Ms. Stewart informed the Board that the Ashland's Women's Club is hosting the Meet the Candidates Night on February 10th at 7:00.

Mr. Ruell moved onto the subject of Warrant Articles and Revenues.

With respect to the Warrant Article for the Police Vehicle, Ms. Newton asked if the article is approved, can it include the outfitting of the vehicle as written. Ms. Stewart replied that she checked with legal and it can.

Warrant Article 1: regarding the 5 year lease purchase of a mini loader. Ms. Stewart said that it should say "transfer station" and not just "transfer".

Ms. Newton asked if all the Warrant Articles should have rate impacts like in the past. Ms. Stewart replied that yes, they should.

Mr. Ruell said that there were 2 older vehicles in the CIP. Ms. Stewart said that they were going to replace them separately, but then decided to get one vehicle to replace both.

Warrant Article 2: Road Improvements. Ms. Stewart said that this is the third year for this Warrant Article.

Warrant Article 3: Police Department vehicles. Mr. Ruell stated that this is moving ahead of CIP. Ms. Stewart replied that CIP suggests replacing the vehicle in 2015. Chief Randall has decided to do half in 2014 and half in 2015. Mr. Ruell said that if the purchase is made in 2015 then the schedule is the same.

Warrant Article 4: Establish and Amend Fees. Mr. Ruell asked how close this was to passing last year? Ms. Stewart replied that it was close, but worried that people are not informed about it in the Town. Ms. Coleman stated that the Town can impose any fee following a hearing, and that each fee should be established separately and not at the will of the Selectmen.

Warrant Article 5: Auto Registration Fee. Ms. Stewart said that it was defeated last year. Mr. Ruell said he thinks that the fee is a good idea. Ms. Stewart remarked that the fee goes to roads. Mr. Ruell commented that it's too bad there are so many things listed in the warrant article, but he understands that those things are required by law to be there.

Warrant Article 6: This warrant article sets up a capital reserve fund for the fees collected if Article 5 passes. Mr. Ruell asked if this article fails and 5 passes, what happens to the money collected? Ms. Stewart said that it has to go to the purposes listed in 5. Ms. Heidenreich stated that it won't be in a fund, so it has to be used up that year. There was still some questions on this, so Ms. Stewart stated that Patsy Tucker has been dealing with the State and should be able to clarify this issue for the Board.

Warrant Article 7: Pickup truck. Mr. Ruell said that this was originally slated for 2015 but is being moved up one year. Ms. Stewart said that Tim feels he needs it because he uses the loader to plow but he can't get into close spaces with it. Ms. Newton asked if the sidewalk plow could be used for those areas. Ms. Stewart and Mr. Branscomb didn't think that it could. Ms. Badger suggested that an explanation would be given as to the condition of the current pickup. Ms. Stewart said that it's in poor condition.

Mr. Ruell asked if there will be any mailings for the deliberative session? Mr. Branscomb said that they will try to do one if the money is available. Ms. Stewart said there will also be information available at the SB2 meeting. Mr. Ruell said that it would be a good idea to get information out to everyone. Ms. Cilley said that direct mailing is cheaper and suggested speaking with Andrea at the Post Office.

Warrant Article 8: \$50,000 for Fire Department Vehicle. Ms. Badger asked about the date in the article – 2012 or 2013? Mr. Branscomb said that it was a mistake and should be 2013. He asked if the Board would recommend the Article. Ms. Newton said that the Board will vote on the Article when we have our discussion. Ms. Badger remarked that she would like to see the final wording from legal. Ms. Stewart said that they have already checked with legal on most of the Articles.

Mr. Ruell moved on to Revenues. It was decided to table the Revenues until the following Tuesday when more current figures will be available to the Board.

Next meeting is on November 26, 2013, 6:00 pm, at the Elementary School Library. Ms. Newton volunteered to take the minutes at that meeting.

A motion was made (Ms. Heidenreich) and seconded (Ms. Newton) to adjourn the Budget Committee meeting at 7:05 pm.

Minutes taken by Renee Liebert