

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

Minutes
July 24, 2014

Present Members [9 voting]

David Ruell, Chair	davidruell@gmail.com
Harold Lamos	mail@jdprinting.net
Renee Liebert	rlliebert@yahoo.com
David Toth	tothdj@roadrunner.com
Normand DeWolfe	ndewolfe@ashland.nh.gov
Sandra Coleman	no email address
Mark Scarano	mscarano@me.com
Christine Cilley	christineaustin03217@yahoo.com
Mardean Badger	msbadger@mac.com
Glen Dion, Alternate	grdion13@gmail.com

Absent Members

Steve Felton, Alternate sfelton@ashland.nh.gov

Town Officials Present - Chiefs Tony Randall and Steve Heath

The Budget Committee meeting was called to order by David Ruell, Chair, at 5:38 pm.

Review Minutes of April 23, 2014 meeting

Regarding the past meeting minutes, Chair Ruell noted that Scarano's absence at the last meeting was "with notice" but the term should be considered "excused." There was no objection to the change.

The minutes indicated a mistaken year (2013) for approval of the last minutes.

On the last page during the motion to adjourn, Ms. Liebert's name was misspelled.

On page 2, during the questioning of Ms. Paquette, Ms. Coleman asked if other departments within the Town contribute to the audit and workers' compensation and the answer was no.

On page 2, the Budget Committee merely "discussed" but did not "recommend" establishing a budget for the Cemetery Trustees.

On page 2, Mr. DeWolfe and Ms. Coleman mentioned that the property tax revenues were not accurately portrayed in the Town's financials and whether actual property tax revenues could be reflected in future reports.

Ms. Badger made a motion to accept the minutes of July 17th as amended. Mr. DeWolfe seconded. Motion passed 9-0

Police Department Mid Year Review

Chief Randall stated that his budget was good for the mid year and mentioned his efforts to adequately pay for part time officer wages and that he expected to be able to cover them with lowered overtime pay. Many of the accounts that are mostly spent have been for one time expenses and will not be further expended. There was 50.8% of this budget remaining for the rest of the fiscal year. Mr. DeWolfe mentioned that, when reviewing past year's costs, the part time officer wages was on target.

Mr. DeWolfe asked about the Plymouth Prosecutor's account and that it looked like it might be overspent. Chief Randall mentioned that the payments are done on an installment and that the third quarter's payments were made in June. The account would come in as budgeted.

At DeWolfe's questioning regarding the Detail account, Chief Randall explained that all expenses are net neutral as the Town bills for detail services outside of Ashland. Chief Randall promised to poll neighboring towns as to what they charge for Detail services and perhaps the Town could raise its billing rates.

Fire Department Mid Year Review

Chief Heath distributed a report on his mid-year budget review. He reflected that wages, while unpredictable based on emergencies, were lower than in the past. Chief Heath mentioned that the Department has a new policy that allows new prospective fire fighters to attend meeting and join the Department for a year before training. This was to be sure that they were a "good fit" for the department and be worthy of the expenses associated with training.

On Fire Department Contracted Services, the account greatly exceeded the budget as the default budget did not have an account for a photocopier. In the past, such expenses were in the "New Equipment" account. Electricity was up during one month earlier in the year as the blowers in the truck bays were operational more than necessary. A fixed thermostat has since solved the problem.

Under "Equipment Maintenance," the SCBA's cylinders need to be hydro tested at the station. These will increase the account. A minor problem with the Department's extrication device for vehicles was solved.

Telephone is on target as is EMS supplies. Mr. Scarano questioned Chief Heath on the lack of any expenses associated with "Fire Dept Uniforms/Protective Gear." Chief Heath stated that he expected to spend this account during the last half of the year.

Mr. Scarano asked if the Town was in a spending freeze and Mr. DeWolfe indicated that the freeze has not been lifted.

Chief Heath stated that his Postage account would be spent as most represents half of the cost to maintain the post office box. "Fuel" for vehicles was over 50% but that Chief Heath expressed optimism that that account would not go over budget.

Chief Heath stated that he would like to review the chart of accounts in order to make them more descriptive and appropriate to the expense.

"Physicals" would remain at zero since firefighters have their own doctors provide a report. "Fire Dept. Equipment" was at 80.7% expended but, while there were many pieces of equipment the Department needs, he would delay some purchases as a result of the spending freeze.

Under "Forestry Equipment" the Chief explained that these funds act as a 1:1 match for a grant application that he'd be writing in the upcoming months. If he doesn't get the grant, then he's try to stretch these funds as much as possible for upgrading forestry equipment.

Other Discussions

Regarding minutes, Chair Ruell reminded Committee members about his memo on minute taking and the policy to make sure all minutes were up to State legal standards. From now on, David Toth would provide the physical copies to those requested.

Mr. Toth reflected on his "Goals and Evaluation" draft document he distributed at the last meeting. Discussion ensued as to whether having goals in the beginning of the budgetary process was valid. Mr. Ruell stressed the need to know expenses for the following year. Mr. Scarano stated that he would like to see predicted property revenues as a guide for future expenses. Ms. Badger said that each of the criteria within Mr. Toth's document were worth noting throughout the budgetary process.

Economic development and its future help for revenues was discussed. The state of the downtown, businesses coming and going particularly on Main Street, and the Leavitt Hill project were noted.

Mr. DeWolfe stated that the Selectboard was seeking to start their budget deliberations earlier this year than in the past and Committee members expressed appreciation.

Mr. Toth mentioned that on January 8, 2015, the Selectboard, Budget Committee, and CIP Committee would present a financial report to the Town.

The next meeting of the Budget Committee would be in mid-September and that Mr. Toth would inquire with Ms. Temperino on an available time.

Mr. DeWolfe moved, Mr. Toth seconded to adjourn at 7:25. Motion passed 9-0

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Scarano