

**Ashland Budget Committee
Minutes
October 16, 2014
Ashland Elementary School Library**

Members Present: David Ruell, Harold Lamos, Mardean Badger, Christine Cilley, Sandra Coleman, Norm DeWolfe, Jamie Lyford
Members Absent: Mark Scarano; Renee Liebert (excused); David Toth (excused); Fran Newton (excused)
Others Present: Steve Heath, Fire Chief; Tony Randall, Police Chief

The meeting was called to order at 5:35 pm by Chair David Ruell.

A motion was made (Badger) and seconded (Cilley) to approve the minutes of October 2, 2014. The vote was in the affirmative, 6 Yes, 0 No, and 1 Abstention (Coleman).

FIRE DEPARTMENT 2015 BUDGET REQUEST

Fire Chief Steve Heath presented his proposed budget for 2015. Mr. Heath's narrative budget handout indicated, for each account line, the amount budgeted for this year and the amount he requested for 2015. In addition, he noted the 2015 amount recommended by the Town Administrator, the amount recommended by the Selectmen, the default amount for each line, and explanations for lines with notable increases, decreases or special circumstances.

The notes below are in addition to the narrative (attached) for the proposed Fire Department 2015 and the Budget Worksheet dated 10/16/14.

- FD Salaries: **The explanatory note on the budget worksheet from the Finance Officer should show 49 weeks (not 39 weeks)** for the term of the Fire Chief's salary; the \$39,200 salary is correct. The BOS reduced the amount for call pay based on experience from the previous year.
- FD Detail Salary: This is a new line, separated from the regular salary line; this is for billed detail work (primarily Circle Triathlon), which will be balanced by a revenue line.
- **Ensure that the new Detail Salary line is balanced by a new revenue line.**
- **The current detail rates should be evaluated** for comparison with other towns, and the rates should cover both personnel and equipment. The rates must cover costs, but be reasonable so that event organizers do not go without safety coverage.
- FD Fire Training: The amount used this year has been less due to (1) grant monies available for training; (2) \$2000 turned back to BOS to assist with 2014 default budget; and (3) have utilized more free training available from State grant. But maintenance of appropriate training is highly important.
- FD Contract Services: This newly used line will provide more accurate tracking of all services obtained through regular contract agreements; these items were all previously in equipment accounts. **The correct total for this line is \$7170 (not \$7055)** because "Firehouse Computer Program Contract" should be \$795, not \$680. These are contract agreements and should remain in the default budget (whether in this line or in the equipment line).
- FD Electricity: Selectman DeWolfe indicated that participation in the NHEC rebate program and impact on the budget is not yet determined.
- FD Equipment Maintenance: Increase is due to age and condition of equipment.
- FD Vehicle Maintenance: Amount requested is due to age and condition of vehicles.
- FD Telephone: The proposal is based on actual usage with the current equipment. In the current budget, \$1093 was returned to the town for the default budget. **The note on the budget worksheet referencing "new Baying equipment" should be deleted.**
- FD Printing: **This line is obsolete and should be deleted**; no outside printing has been used for several years.

- FD EMT/EMS Supplies: Costs of supplies are increasing. Re-licensing in December will inspect to ensure that all supplies are up-to-date. While Spere Hospital is still “even-swapping” some supplies/equipment at no charge, they could at any time discontinue this benefit.
- FD Uniforms, Protective Gear: Need to replace older gear; this will cover only about 2 sets.
- FD Chief’s Expenses: Delete this line as it is not descriptive of what is needed; has been used primarily for office supplies. \$500 which would have been put on this line is instead added to the FD Supplies account.
- FD Supplies: The correct amount for this line is \$1,150, which includes an additional \$500 for ink cartridges and paper for the printer/copier. **(The \$1,150 total needs to be corrected in the budget narrative and on the budget worksheet under ‘Selectmen Revised’.)**
- FD Vehicle Fuel: the BOS reduced the recommendation based on previous usage.
- FD Physicals: The Fire Chief feels investing in the cost of physicals is a serious discussion that needs to be held in the future, for the safety of all department members and for the protection of the town. Entry physicals are paid for by the individuals. The requested \$1000 would only cover about 2 or 3 physicals and will have to cover necessary tests and inoculations for EMT students.
- FD Equipment: The reduction on this line is due to moving all contracted services to the new line.
- FD Defibrillator Lease/Purchase: **This line should be deleted (or the amount should be \$0) as the lease/purchase is finished. This line should be \$0 in the default budget for the same reason.**
- FD Mutual Aid Dues: **The correct amount is \$20,070. The amount on the budget worksheet under ‘Selectmen Revised’ needs to be corrected.**
- FD Building & Grounds: The BOS reduced the amount, because Chief Heath will try to get some of the items accomplished this year (e.g., plumbing).

POLICE DEPARTMENT 2015 BUDGET REQUEST

Police Chief Tony Randall presented his proposed budget for 2015, offered explanations and answered questions based on the information on the budget worksheet dated 10/16/14.

Notes refer to the Budget Worksheet dated 10/16/14.

- PD Police Salaries / PD Police Salaries Overtime / PD Part-Time Officers Wages:
 - Chief Randall explained the current department officer structure (chief, lieutenant, sergeant, patrolmen) and stated that he wants that structure to remain in place with his requested amount of money. Much discussion ensued about options in varying the structure.
 - The current lieutenant is retiring as of May 31, 2015. Chief Randall said it may not be feasible to promote someone to this position from within.
 - Chief Randall explained his request for a 16-week overlap with the retiree and the new hire, to enable on-site training, familiarization with procedures and territory, etc. The BOS reduced to about \$2000 the amount available for the overlap. **It was noted by the Budget Committee that only about 10 weeks overlap would be possible, between the election date and 5/31 retirement date.**
 - Part-time vs. Over-time: Chief Randall took \$2000 out of over-time to put into part-time, because he wants to use part-time more. Part-time pay rates are lower than over-time rates. The BOS reduced his part-time request by \$5000.
 - Chief Randall explained how he computes the amount necessary for part-time wages, by adding vacation days, sick days, personal days, training days, etc. for the existing employees (145 10-hour days = 1450 hours x \$16 = \$23,200). This line also includes the part-time administrator (\$13,312) and 1 part-timer (\$8,840). There is no increase included for the part-time hourly rate.
 - Selectman DeWolfe explained the BOS rationale for reducing the PD salary lines – (a) they looked at the increasing total of the 3 salary lines, from 2013 (\$260,000), to 2014 (about \$288,000), to 2015 department request (\$337,000), default (\$311,000) and BOS

2015 revised (\$317,000); (b) they questioned whether it was necessary to retain all 3 positions of chief, lieutenant, and sergeant.

- PD Retirement: **A clarification is needed for the explanatory note on the budget worksheet -- "salary times 25.30%= 's average 25.84% vs. 26.38%".** What does it mean?
- PD Computer System Maint: *iPatrol* \$360 is the cost to equip 1 iPad with software to run registrations, instead of calling dispatch for a fee. They would like to test 1 unit for a year. It was asked if the fee is an annual per-unit fee; the Chief believes it is.
- PD Uniforms: It will cost about \$2000-\$2500 to outfit the new hiree. Generally the department has replaced individual items as needed, rather than a complete outfit. The BOS reduction from \$5000 to \$3500 is based on past expenditures.
- PD Equipment Purchase: The 3 active shooter vests (1 per car) are new items, at about \$800 each. **It was recommended by some members of the Budget Committee to decrease this line by \$2400 and to add \$2400 for the active shooter vests to PD Uniforms.** The remainder of that line is for outfitting a new cruiser (warrant article) with all necessary equipment.
- PD Cellular Phones: This line's increase includes 1 booster unit to go in the car that is equipped with *iPatrol* on the iPad. It is a monthly fee added to the cell phone bill.
- PD Police Equipment: This is for office equipment and supplies, based on past expenditures.
- PD Police Training: Most of the staff have done most of the free classes available through the Police Academy. They are now taking more classes for a fee. **Delete 'police academy' on the note line because those classes are free.**
- PD Police Training: **It was questioned whether ammunition and targets should be on another line (supplies?).** Most is used for regular practice and qualifying. **Chief Randall will get a figure for how much is budgeted for ammunition and targets.**
- PD Dispatch: This (\$23,507) is the up-to-date figure.
- PD Plymouth Prosecutor: This figure will be based on usage; this is only an estimate at this time.
- PD Detail: This will be off-set with an equal revenue line.
- Animal Control: Chief Randall will investigate further on the fee level for the humane society.

GENERAL BUDGET NOTES AND QUESTIONS

- **If a default budget is approved by the voters, can the recommended new lines still be created even though there may not be an appropriation shown for those lines?**
- **In the 2015 recommended default budget, will the default amount be the 2014 voted amount or the amount after the BOS re-aligned the budget?**
- **Norm DeWolfe reminded the Budget Committee that they will need to officially forward any requests for changes (after the Budget Committee votes on them) to the Town Office.**
- The revenues for the 2015 budget have not been done yet.
- The Budget Committee has requested a recording secretary in the 2015 budget.

OTHER BUSINESS

- **The next meeting is October 23, at 5:30 pm, in the Elementary School Library.** David Ruell will not be able to attend the October 23 meeting.
- Sandra Coleman will take minutes at the October 23 meeting.
- **October 23 meeting is for Town Government and Parks & Recreation. October 30 is for Public Works and Library.**
- Jamie Lyford wants all of his materials in printed format.
- Norm DeWolfe indicated that he has again requested revenue reports for the Budget Committee. Those have not been received since July.
- Norm DeWolfe indicated that a report of actual tax revenues received (including yearly breakdown) has to be requested from Patsy Tucker; she prepares a tax collector's monthly report for the BOS.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:43 pm.

Minutes submitted by Mardean Badger