

**ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING  
THURSDAY, December 11, 2014  
ASHLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
5:30 PM**

**MINUTES**

Chairman David Ruell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Present: David Ruell, Dave Toth, Mardean Badger, Norm DeWolfe, Christine Cilley, Harold Lamos, Sandra Coleman (entered at 5:49)

Alternates Present: Fran Newton, Rene Liebert

Absent with Notice: Marc Scarano, Jamie Lyford

Others present: Eli Badger, Tony Randall, Alan Cilley, Ernie Paquette

N. DeWolfe moved to accept the minutes from November 13, 2014. D. Toth seconded the motion. The motion passed 7 to 0.

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

01-4210-10-110 PD Police Salaries - T. Randall said the normal training time for a new hire is 12-14 weeks. The 12-week field training would cost \$12,004, and the new total for Police Salaries would be \$277,059.

C. Cilley moved to accept \$277,059 for Police Salaries. M. Badger seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 4 to 2.

01-4210-10-115 PD Part Time Officers Wages - T. Randall said that he based his estimate for Part Time salaries on the hours of the two part-time employees and the coverage required for vacation, sick time, personal time, and training. One part-time employee works 2 days per week, and one works 1 day for a total cost of \$22,150. He estimated 85 days for vacation coverage, 5 days per person for sick time, 2 personal days per employee, and 5 days of training per year for a total of 1450 hours at \$16 per hour or a total of \$23,200. T. Randall budgeted \$45,000 to cover these costs.

D. Ruell made a motion to increase Part Time Officers Wages hours to \$45,000. C. Cilley seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of 3 to 2 with 2 abstentions.

M. Badger moved to approve \$40,000 for Part Time Officers Wages. D. Toth seconded the motion. S. Coleman offered an amendment to the motion to increase Part Time Officers wages to \$44,200. H. Lamos seconded the amendment. The amendment passed 4 to 3. The vote on the main motion to raise Part-Time Wages to \$44,200 passed 4 to 3. N. DeWolfe said he opposed the amended motion because he was representing the position of the Select Board.

C. Cilley moved to adjust Police FICA, Medicare, and Retirement to reflect the new figure for Police Salaries. H. Lamos seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 to 0 with 1 abstention.

## WATER AND SEWER BUDGETS

E. Badger said the Water and Sewer budget is a work in progress. The budget is adjusted as the commissioners find out more information about what is needed.

Sales as of November 30, 2014, are \$633,649: Water \$172,904, Sewer \$214,596, and Hauling \$216,148. E. Badger noted that these figures are taken from the receipts and not the reports.

## WATER

Proposed budget for Water is \$289,148, which is \$83,544 less than the first Water budget submitted to the Budget Committee because commissioners have removed the Thompson Street project from the budget. They have left in \$20,000 in capital reserve to cover the first third of the project should it go forward.

The commissioners are not funding everything in the CIP and, therefore, will not have to raise rates.

E. Badger explained that the highlighted items on the budget sheets represent changes to make the budget clearer. The commissioners took \$40,000 out of the new contract with Utilities Partners Contract and are paying certain expenses directly. These expenses are shown on the Water Budget in line 6640 Maintenance-Up Expenses - \$16,000 and on the Sewer Budget - in line 6640 Maintenance-Up Expenses - \$24,000. Permitting fees have been added to the Water and the Sewer budgets in line 6340 Engineering/Permitting. The commissioners also changed the name of 6030 to Administrative Support, which includes the treasurer and the recording secretary.

D. Ruell noted that line 6730 New Construction went from \$120,000 to \$15,000. E. Badger said that they budgeted \$120,000 to cover all known new construction expenses. These expenses, however, could not be covered without raising rates. The \$15,000 is for small CIP-related projects like the construction of ADA Compliant office.

The current rates are below what they were in 2000, and the rates have not kept pace with operating expenses. The income from septage receiving makes the Water and Sewer Department solvent. The commissioners are working on a rate increase, but they believe that residents absorb an increase that would pay for all that is needed in one year.

6870 Meters – \$20,000 is budgeted to finish paying for new meters and accessories.

6510 Hydrant Replacement and Repair – The commissioners are not anticipating installing any new hydrants. The \$10,000 is for unanticipated hydrant repairs and replacements.

6230 Contract Operations went up from \$72,000 to \$82,400 as a result of the new contract with Utility Partners.

6840 Payroll Expenses went down as a result of refining operations.

A. Cilley commented on rate increases. The 2010 3-year planned increases were not completely implemented. Even if they were implemented, the rate would be \$1 less than in 2000. The current rate is \$3.85 per 100 cubic feet.

## SEWER

The commissioners are projecting revenues of \$500,000.

E. Badger explained that the highlighted items (6325 Electric-Operations, 6630 Mains & Manhole Repair/Replacement, 6640 Maintenance – Utility Partners, 8000 Capital Reserve, and 8005 Capital Reserve – Lagoon Cleaning) indicate changes in definitions and additions to capital reserves. The capital reserves are 8005 Capital Reserve –Lagoon Cleaning - \$20,000, 8050 Capital Reserve for the septage receiving station - \$50,000, and 8000 Capital Reserve - \$50,000 for unexpected expenses.

6520 Instrumentation and Alarms – The alarm system that was in 7190 Telephone has been moved to this line.

A. Cilley said the commissioners are planning to reorganize the budget to better identify items.

6750 New Equipment Expense - The \$25,000 is for new truck to replace the green GMC. S. Coleman asked who would be driving the vehicle. E. Badger explained that contractors drive the vehicles. The department contracts for services not equipment.

6730 New Construction - The \$15,000 is for the ADA compliant office and other small projects.

7210 Lagoon Testing – N. DeWolfe asked whether the lagoons had been tested this year since there was no expenditure on this line. A. Cilley said that the lagoons had been tested recently.

6630 Mains and Manholes Repair/Replacement was increased from \$5,000 to \$35,000 to cover the North Main Street repairs, which are in the CIP.

The commissioners noted that income is less than expenses. There is enough cash to cover the difference while the commissioners determine what the new rates should be. N. DeWolfe expressed concern that the increase in the Water and Sewer Budget over last year will cause the voters to approve the default budget even though the Water and Sewer Budget does not affect taxes. E. Badger said the department needs to explain the \$350,000 increase to the voters.

D. Toth made a motion to approve the Water budget of \$289,148. C. Cilley seconded the motion. The motion passed 5 to 2.

C. Cilley made a motion approve the Sewer budget of \$540,572. D. Ruell seconded. The motion passed 5 to 2 opposed.

#### ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

S. Coleman asked what caused the \$17,000 increase. Most of the increase was for the new billing system.

N. DeWolfe made a motion to accept the proposed budget of \$3,119,358. D. Ruell seconded the motion. The motion passed 4 to 3.

#### REVENUES

D. Ruell said that Payment in Lieu of Taxes should match the budgeted figures. The Revenue sheet shows \$16,809 from West St. Housing and \$41,530 from the Electric Department. The budgeted figure from the Electric Department is \$42,000.

D. Ruell moved to change Payment in Lieu of taxes \$58,810. N. DeWolfe seconded. The motion passed 6 to 1.

S. Coleman pointed out that the property tax revenues are not listed in the revenues worksheet. N. DeWolfe handed out a worksheet that he put together showing property tax revenues collected so far this year. He said that the Finance Officer and the Tax Collector do not use the same system for tracking revenues.

N. DeWolfe moved to accept revenues including the change in Payment in Lieu Taxes and excluding property tax revenues. M. Badger seconded. The motion passed 7 to 0.

#### OTHER ITEMS

01-4130-10-445 Internet Cable - N. DeWolfe moved to accept \$1,110. M. Badger seconded. The motion passed 7 to 0.

#### NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on December 16, 2014, at 5:30 p.m. in the Elementary School Library.

#### ADJOURNMENT

N. DeWolfe – Motion to adjourn. Seconded D. Toth

Respectfully Submitted,

David Toth