

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

JULY 20, 2016

Members Present: Ruell, Badger, Coleman, Hoerter, Lamos (in place of DeWolfe), Downing ; also Lyford (alternate)

Members Excused: DeWolfe, Ryan

Others Present: Heather Thibodeau, Tim Paquette, Ann Barney

The meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m. in the Ashland School Library.

The issue of why the meeting scheduled for July 17 was canceled was discussed.

A lengthy discussion followed on when monthly reports should be available for the Budget Committee, given the past votes of the Committee and the dates on which some financial data is available. The recent detailed expenditure report was also discussed. The consensus was that the Committee did not need the detailed expenditure report in the future.

Mid Year Reviews

Parks & Recreation Department. The committee reviewed the mid-year Parks & Recreation expenditures with Director Ann Barney. Areas of discussion included the following. Over-expenditures in Clubhouse water and sewer bills were caused by a broken toilet. The After School program is exceeding its budget because more children than expected are being served by the program. But, additional revenues will offset the added costs. Memorial Park electricity is higher than expected due to Christmas lights, concerts and work in the Park. One area of future concern is the expense of meeting fire codes in the Booster Clubhouse.

Public Works Department. The committee reviewed the mid-year Public Works expenditures with Director Tim Paquette. Items discussed included the following. Vehicle expenses have been high because of repairs to the 2005 truck. Traffic Improvements, although largely spent, should be enough for the year. The 1985 grader is defunct and cannot be repaired. Landfill testing has been completed for the year. Transfer Station supplies may exceed the budget. Because of changes in

staff and gaps in employment, Public Works and Transfer Station salary expenditures should be under budget at the end of the year.

General Government Budgets

The Committee reviewed all the mid-year expenditures not covered by department heads with Town Administrator Heather Thibodeau. Among the areas covered were the following. The Administrative Assistant is no longer paid from the General Assistance Assistant's Stipend, but her work on those welfare cases has driven up Executive Overtime costs. Executive Training and Professional Dues are completed for the year. Because of the exchange of the Town Office copier, Copier expenses were high in the first half, but the budget should be sufficient for the second half. The unbudgeted Election FICA and Medicare are being paid to the Deputy Town Clerk. The Town Treasurer's salary line will be reduced by reimbursements from the utilities. The Audit is over budget due to lawyers' letters. Thibodeau corrected expenditures under Property Taxation – Appraisals should be \$8388 and Revaluation should be \$15,400. Barring the unexpected, the Legal budget should be sufficient. Under General Government Buildings, Cleaning salary from the prior year was paid in 2016. There are coding problems with GGB General Expenses. The new Building Inspector is being paid at a higher rate than the former Inspector, which may mean the Salary line will be overspent. Fees for his services may be increased to offset those costs. The remaining Emergency Management budget should be sufficient. The amount spent on General Assistance was discussed.

The deadline for monthly financial reports was discussed further. The consensus was that the reports should be ready by the first Tuesday after the 12th of the next month.

Benoit Lamontagne, who had volunteered for one of the vacant positions on the Committee, was unable to attend but will come to a future meeting. Downing suggested that the Committee should not fill the vacancy as that would create an even number of members, with the potential for tie votes. Badger said that we should attempt to reach the voted number of nine members on the Committee.

On a motion by Downing, seconded by Hoerter, it was voted to adjourn at 8:25 p.m.