

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

September 8, 2011

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Coleman, M. Brown, D. Golden, C. Austin, D. Ruell, S. Felton, I. Heidenreich, K. Stack

MEMBERS EXCUSED: B. LaRiviere

MEMBERS NOT EXCUSED: S. Lake

OTHERS PRESENT: P. Tucker, P. Branscombe, A. Cilley, L. Nichols, R. Cross, L. Pack, J. Hughes, M. Ober

The meeting came to order at 6:00pm in the Ashland Elementary School library.

Three representatives from Genesis Behavioral Health spoke to us about the services that they provide, how many Ashland residents received their services, and to ask for a donation for the upcoming year. The amount that they are requesting for the 2012 year is \$2,239.00

At 6:10pm S. Felton spoke with the committee about the recap-review-follow up of the Ashland Electric Dept. from the Aug 11 meeting. S. Felton gave the members a handout of the recap.

D. Ruell suggested we ask the town attorney about the legal right for the Ashland Budget Committee to view the 5 year power purchase supply agreement that the Ashland Electric Dept. voted to not allow the budget committee to review.

L. Nichols, Superintendent of Ashland Electric, stated that if the Ashland Electric Dept. should ever default, the town is not responsible for the incurred debts.

L. Nichols tried to explain the reason why the financial statement for Jan thru July that was reviewed on August 11 appeared to show a significant income line with billed income, yet the equivalent expense related to that income not included in the statement. Ashland Electric financial statement is stated to run under an accrual accounting system.

S. Felton made the motion, 2nd by I. Heidenreich to verify with VPPSA (Vermont Public Power Supply Authority) where we purchase our power, about the confidentiality of the 5 year power purchase contract and find out why the budget committee cannot be shown the contract. All members voted without opposition.

The budget committee needs a better explanation of the Electric Dept's financial statements to obtain a clear understanding of their financial health, have questions answered on what appears to be an inconsistency in power sales income compared to expenses related to that income, and why bond income and expense payments do not appear on the monthly financials.

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L. Nichols is willing to bring the auditor (electric, water and sewer) to a meeting. Tentatively scheduled for Oct. 6, 2011 @ 7:00pm in the Elementary school library.

At 6:45pm M. Ober & P. Branscombe reviewed the public works dept. with the budget committee. The two concerns that M. Ober has finishing 2011 budget are the overspending of fuel line and heat line.

M. Ober showed the committee a copy of the projected capital needs sheet he made out for the public works and will be part of the 2012 budget process.

At 7:05 pm. A. Cilley, J. Hughes, R. Cross reviewed the water and sewer dept. with the budget committee.

They explained that the Utility Partners Inc. contract is their biggest bill as they are responsible for daily operations.

They explained that they will announce a rate increase of 0.75 cents per cubic foot to help close the gap that exists in the Ashland Water Dept. This is one step in trying to close the gap in both water and sewer when taking into consideration the need to set aside funds for upcoming capital expense needs.

At the moment, the sewer dept. cannot afford to build a receiving station, but to move forward they are going to look into buying some screening to help filter waste going into the lagoon from outside haulers.

They are going to set aside an amount into a sewer dumping fund, to work on building a reserve to help future financing of a receiving station. Dumping fees collected will be added to such fund.

They also discussed having a gate and key card system made up to enable trucks to come in and dump after hours.

They will address the pipeline going to the Holderness line with Holderness in the near future.

D. Ruell brought up a complaint given to the budget committee re: wanting more details of the minutes and having them updated on the town page.

S. Felton to respond to the complaint letter.

The next meeting for the budget committee will be with the Ashland School Dept. on September 29, 2011 at 6:00pm.

M. Brown made the motion 2nd by I. Heidenrich to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm.

Christine Austin, Secretary

