

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE
October 10, 2013
DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: M. Badger, C. Cilley, I. Heidenreich, Renee Liebert, F. Newton, D. Ruell, M. Scarano, J. Stewart, (BOS), D. Toth

OTHER BOS MEMBERS PRESENT: N. DeWolfe (also Budget Committee Alternate)

MEMBERS ABSENT: S. Coleman with notice

Others Present: P. Branscombe, A. Abear, E. Badger, A. Cilley

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. in the Ashland Elementary School Library and a quorum was present. The Select Board also convened a separate concurrent meeting.

Review of the Town Administration Budget

Executive

P. Branscombe said that the increase in BOS Salaries is due to the change to a 5-member board next year.

Website Expense includes the fee for hosting plus the stipend for the website manager. Executive Expenses include workshops and materials for new board members.

The pbCam Expense is the same as last year in case the new board requires a second evening meeting.

Financial

Treasurer Salary was not changed even though the treasurer asked for a 5% increase. The Department Head request line should read \$5,380, which includes \$500 for the Deputy.

The Town Administrator increase is part of a 3-year contract.

Administrative Assistant includes a 3% increase to pay for additional responsibilities, including welfare.

Financial Officer expense is based on an estimate for the salary of a new financial officer.

Life insurance expense is an estimate at this point. The gross maximum rate is not yet known, but a 10% increase is expected. Employee contributions will increase from 5% to 7.5% but these contributions will show up as revenues.

Office retirement has been increased due to estimates of anticipated retirement costs. In addition, the state cost is expected to increase.

Audit has been increased by \$300 based on an estimate provided by the auditor. The actual cost of the audit in 2013 was lower than anticipated because there was not as much work as the auditor anticipated.

Telephone will need to be adjusted once the new system has been completely changed over to include all departments and the savings can be more accurately estimated. There are currently 14 telephones in the town hall, including the police department, and 5 lines.

Mileage Expense has been increased due to anticipated additional travel requirements. HEAL travel expenses were paid for out of the HEAL grant.

Postage is \$3,000 but may increase because the cost of postage will be increasing in the coming year.

Computer Expenses for the town office are increasing due to two anticipated computer upgrades, increases in software costs, and increases in the service contract. The town will be saving some money, however, by going to the Cloud rather than replacing the server. M. Badger recommended that all town computers be covered by the same CCS contract. The contract currently covers the computers in the town hall only. The expense includes \$5400 for the annual contract which includes labor and \$72 for remote backup.

Revaluation of Property

Assessing is down because the revaluation cycle has been completed.

Legal

Legal costs include negotiating the Time Warner contract and three open cases.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment is an estimate since costs are only incurred in the case of termination and therefore cannot be determined in advance.

General Government Buildings

Cleaning has been decreased due to a new cleaning contract with Jennifer Lyford. The contract with Joyce Janitorial has been terminated.

General Repair includes the replacement of windows as recommended by the energy audit. It also includes new carpeting and air conditioning. Lights will be replaced as needed. An additional \$2,000 has been added to cover estimated costs of normal repairs.

D. Ruell questioned the -\$212 in the Safety Equipment line. P. Branscombe will research the question.

M. Scarano mentioned the importance of identifying and getting matching grants. He recommended looking for a subscription service to help identify available grants. He also recommended meeting with state and federal elected officials for help identifying grants for planned projects.

Insurance

The 7% increase in property and liability insurance is based on a worst-case scenario.

Building Inspector

The Building Inspector stipend has been increased to \$8,000 to cover an estimated 11 hours per week. The other building inspector stipends (\$3000) is for electrical and plumbing inspectors.

Emergency Management

P. Branscombe will meet with the Fire Chief Steve Heath and the EOC, Lee Nichols to discuss this budget.

Animal Control

The cost of animal control has been reduced because P. Branscombe renegotiated the contract to reflect the actual number of animals taken to the shelter from Ashland.

Health and Welfare

The health officer has not requested an increase in stipend. P. Branscombe mentioned that the BOS voted to increase the rent allowance. This increase may increase the welfare line. In addition, the town is searching for a new welfare officer. M. Scarano mentioned sharing services with other towns to help reduce costs and improve services. P. Branscombe said that he has checked, and that currently there are no opportunities to collaborate with other towns on welfare.

Welfare General Expenses include money for taxis and other purposes for which we cannot pay for with vouchers.

Patriotic Purposes

C. Cilley will check with the legion to see if they need money for patriotic purposes.

Conservation Commission

The increase in Expenses is to cover dues to the Pemi River Local Advisory Committee (PRLAC).

Trustees

No input has been received from the trustees; therefore the 2013 budget of \$636 will stand.

Interest Tan Notes

The Tax Anticipation Notice amount is an estimate.

Warrant Articles

P. Branscombe is working on the warrant articles based on the CIP recommended and department heads.

Meeting Schedule

M. Badger will check to see if the School Board can meet with the Budget Committee on October 13, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. The Budget Committee will meet on November 19, 21, and 26, 2013 for general budget discussions.

Other

The BOS voted to change the ER Clerk Expense line from \$2,300 to \$3,300.

Next Meeting

M. Badger will take minutes at the next meeting, October 17. J. Stewart recommended that the committee approve the minutes of past meetings at the next meeting.

F. Newton moved to adjourn, and J. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Toth