

**ASHLAND BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MINUTES, MONDAY, JANUARY 5, 2015
ASHLAND ELECENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY
7:00 PM**

Normand DeWolfe called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with a roll call: P. Preston, F. Newton. Normand DeWolfe, Jeanette I. Stewart, and Steve Felton.

Pledge of Allegiance

Others Present: Paul Branscombe, Pat Crowell, Jeannie Forrester, and members of the public.

Jeannie Forrester talked about the Legislative Updates coming up this year.

APPROVALS

Minutes of November 17, 2014 – Motion to approve with corrections – Newton, second Stewart; Vote 5-0 in favor.

Minutes of December 1, 2014 – Motion to approve as written – Newton, second DeWolfe; Vote 5-0 in favor.

Minutes of December 15, 2014 – Motion to approve with corrections – Felton, second Newton; Vote 5-0 in favor.

Minutes of December 22, 2014 – Motion to approve as written – Felton, second DeWolfe; Vote 5-0 in favor.

SIGNATURE FILE - The Board signed several items in the file.

OLD BUSINESS

Ashland Economic Development Committee update – Felton mentioned that at the next meeting on January 29, the North Country Council chairperson will be there. He said that the committee is researching grant money that might be available. The committee met with Mike Capone, Town Administrator in Bristol, to get some direction. Bristol has just done some projects. Felton also mentioned Michelle Roberts who will be doing some work on GIS mapping for the town.

Additional petitioned warrant articles/Fire Dept CRF article – Branscombe spoke about the Fire Department CRF article. He said that DRA says to add non-lapsing to it. Legal said that we do not need to list the total price. Some discussion followed regarding the wording raising and appropriating \$75,000. DRA and legal said to keep it there. Will need to be explained in Voter’s Guide and at the Deliberative Session. The consensus of the Board was to accept the article. **Article 3** – DRA doesn’t advise this year, maybe next year. Stress this in Voter’s Guide. Can’t exclude Utilities. **Article 9** – Newton moved to approve \$50,000 for Capital Reserve for Fire Dept. Stewart seconded. All in favor. **Article 18** – Preston moved to accept this article. Newton seconded. All in Favor. **Article 19** - Preston moved to accept this article. Stewart seconded. All in favor.

2015 Budget - DeWolfe mentioned that he talked with Jim **Gleich** about the number of hours he works. The Board said that he should work an average of 29 hours a week and the salary will be \$26,963. Stewart moved to approve the new budget figure as \$26,963 for Gleich’s salary. DeWolfe seconded. All in favor

Webster Selectman warrant article – Branscombe said that other communities have done nothing. The Board decided to drop it also.

Next steps for Union negotiations – Stewart said that the Board should wait until after the March elections. Felton and DeWolfe both want to meet sooner. Newton agreed. Newton moved to nominate DeWolfe to the Negotiating Team. Felton seconded. Newton moved to nominate Felton to also be on the Negotiating Team. Felton seconded. Preston abstained. Stewart, nay. In favor 3-1-1.

NEW BUSINESS

Financial Forum update – Felton said that the meeting will be on Thursday, 1-8-15 at the cafeteria. Several topics will be discussed including what Ashland’s goals are. Newton encouraged everyone to attend and liked what Felton said about “One town – One team”. Felton encouraged Branscombe to send out an “Infoblast” before Thursday.

Voter's Guide 2015 – Branscombe provided last year's guide. DeWolfe said it needs to be looked at. Branscombe will submit when finished and the board can expand on it. The Board will discuss at the work session. Stewart said that it should be completed by the end of the month.

Library payment schedule – Letter from the trustees requesting \$4000 in January. Stewart moved to pay the Library \$4000 in January. Newton seconded. All in favor.

Planning Board letter from chairperson re: absentee member – DeWolfe spoke. He mentioned that member Gordon McCormack Jr has missed seven meetings without notice. Stewart mentioned that he doesn't live in Ashland any longer. The Board is sending this back to the Planning Board because they need to hold a public hearing to remove a member. Several attempts to contact Mr. McCormack have failed so Stewart said that she will try calling him.

Lamontagne appointment to AEDC – Mr. Lamontagne sent a letter to the Economic Development Committee to be appointed. Newton moved to appoint Mr. Lamontagne to the AEDC. Stewart seconded. All in favor.

CNP 2015 contract – Commerford Neider & Perkins LLC is the town's assessors. The reval will be over a 5 year period. The contract is for 5 years and will be paid over 4 years. The amount to be paid out over 5 years is \$93,000. Stewart moved to accept the contract. DeWolfe seconded. All in favor. The Board signed the contract.

Health Insurance comparisons – DeWolfe would like to save this for the work session. He said that the town currently pays about \$17,000. Stewart said the Town should look into other avenues. Branscombe will explore before the work session. DeWolfe said that he received a letter from a resident that he will discuss at the work session.

Tax Map Digitization Project – Branscombe recommended a budget of \$10 - \$12 thousand dollars. The pilot program will be about 200 parcels and \$5.00 a parcel. Legal didn't have a problem. DeWolfe asked about the existing budget line of \$250.00. The new budget would have to be \$10,250.00. Felton mentioned that the town is in "dire" need of this. Newton agreed. Felton moved to enter into agreement for tax map digitizing not to exceed \$10,000.00. Newton seconded. All in favor. Newton moved to change the budget line from \$250.00 to \$10, 250.00. Stewart seconded. All in favor.

TOWN ADMINISTRATORS REPORT

Branscombe reported on what has happened over the last month.

SELECTBOARD ITEMS

DeWolfe reported that the Board had asked Patsy Tucker to split her wages between being Town Clerk/Tax Collector and her years of experience. The Board will take no further action at this time.

DeWolfe said that the Personnel Policy needs clarifying regarding people retiring. DeWolfe moved to cross out "anyone" and replace it with those employees on roll after April 1, 2001 and retiring on or after April 1, 2015. Newton seconded. In favor 3-0-2. Preston and Stewart both abstained.

Branscombe suggested that the Board consider a wage scale for non-union employees. The Board decided to discuss at the work session.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Sandra Coleman stated that the legislative body determines elected officials. She asked about Article #2 having no tax impact. She was told that the impact will happen in 2016. She said that is very misleading. She said that the Board is not being transparent. She asked if the article could say what the impact would be in subsequent years? Branscombe will get clarification from legal. Stewart would like to put an explanation about the tax impact in 2016, 2017, etc. in the article. Sandra also asked about the interest and said that the article didn't add up.

There being no further business, Stewart moved to adjourn at 8:45 PM. Newton seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Crowell
1-7-14