

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

JANUARY 13, 2012

DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: S. Felton, D. Ruell, C. Austin, F. Newton, S. Coleman, I. Heidenreich, M. Brown, J. Stewart, M. Scarano, K. Stack.

OTHERS PRESENT: A. Cilley, J. Felton, D. Toth, L. Nichols, M. Badger, E. Badger, J. Lyford, J. Lyford, L. Pack, J. Lyford, D. Lyford, G. McCormack, S. Heath, L. Davis, P. Branscombe, M. Ober, J. Mazzone, P. Mazzone, KL Hughes, B. Boyle, A. Staples, D. Vaughn, S. Weinberg, T. Randall, M. Morris

The meeting came to order at 7:00pm in the elementary school café.

Felton started with doing a power point presentation, which included:

Who is on committee

Objectives

Budget committee responsibilities

Components of budget

Pie chart of tax rate

Budget development

Basic financial principles

Financial ebbs & flows

Current financial situation

Capital reserves

What does it mean?

What do we do?

Budget overview

Town dept budget requests

Revenue sources

L. Nichols explained about in lieu of taxes between the town and electric dept.

M. Brown mentioned some other lieu of taxes in the town of Ashland.

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Ruell spoke on the 1.5% increase to non-union members.

J. Stewart spoke on article 23 (Collective Bargaining Agreement) and why 2012 town estimated cost is \$889.

J. Stewart confirmed that the contract has been signed.

Ruell started on the town budget.

Executive

Election & Register

Ballot Coding

Revaluation of Property

Financial: Ruell explained the merit increases for P. Branscombe, and P. Crowell and the stipend for P. Tucker

Legal: J. Mazzone asked what the golf course is paying for taxes. We could not answer that question. We don't even know what the golf course asked for in abatement.

Personnel administration: L. Nichols asked about unemployment compensation. J. Stewart told P&R and transfer station part time employees went on unemployment compensation.

Planning & Zoning: Article #1 (Master Plan) was mentioned. J. Lyford asked who was Planning Board Secretary. P. Tucker is secretary.

General Government

Cemeteries

Insurance

Advertising & Regional

Other General Government

Police: T. Randall spoke about other dept. getting stipends or merit increases. His men at the PD haven't had a raise for 5 years. He spoke about insurance -vs.- 1.5% salary increase. T. Randall is taking it personally. He feels the PD was "singled out" for raises. He wants to know where he is getting cut in the budget (for the

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committee to tell him where he is being cut—before we cut, so he can defend his budget) re: rifles (the PD needs certain equipment to do their jobs).

Felton spoke about the merit raises in other dept. He also spoke about health insurance premiums.

J. Stewart spoke about the library & electric raises. Merit raises were not mentioned.

L. Nichols is paying \$20. a week towards their insurance premiums. L. Pack is to start paying \$20. a week starting in January. L. Pack is getting a raise because the electric Dept did not get the 50 cent raise when the town employees got theirs.

Union members are going to get 3.2% raise in the first year.

M. Ober wants the town to be consistent and work together.

P. Branscombe said that the 1.5% raise increase total figure is \$5,099.

J. Stewart wants the 1.5% raise for non-union employees. Our employees do deserve a raise.

J. Felton spoke on the work the budget committee has done.

T. Randall said give the increase to everyone or to no one. He also spoke on the difference between shotguns and patrol rifles. He wants patrol rifles because they are a more accurate shot.

K. Stack spoke on his original take on the rifles.

J. Lyford stated that each cruiser needs a rifle for each cruiser.

Heidenreich mentioned that we did ask for more info on the rifles.

Detail: T. Randall said that off duty officers could put in for details in other towns.

Ambulance

Mutual Aid Dues

Fire Department: Article #6 (fire dept. roof). L. Nichols said that the highway roof was replaced 12 years ago and cost \$25,000. then. P. Branscombe said that there was a structural engineer coming Monday the 16th to look at the Fire Dept. roof. Article #8 (establish fire dept. equip. CRF).

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Building Inspector

Emergency Management

Public works: J. Stewart asked about the highway fuel default figure being \$30,000. instead of \$15,000. Ruell explained that it's an obligation of the town to keep the roads cleared. So for public safety, we chose to keep it at \$30,000. Article #4 (Public works department loader lease). Article #7 (establish road improvement CRF). Article to be put in as a petition warrant article for a transportation fund.

Highway & Streets

Bridges

Town Mechanic

Street Lighting

Transfer/Recycling: Article #5 (Transfer/recycling center tractor lease)

Health

Animal Control

Welfare

Parks & Recreation

P & R Campground

P & R summer/vacation programs

P & R after school program

P & R Community

Library

Patriotic purposes

Town trustees

Conservation commission

Debt service principle

Int. long-term bond

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Int. tan notes

Capital outlay

Ruell spoke on donations. Donations are now under petition warrant articles

Article #9 (CADY)

Article #10 (Pemi-Baker Community Health

Article #12 (Grafton County Senior Citizens Council Inc.

Article #13 (Genesis)

Article #14 (Plymouth regional Clinic)

Article #15 (Tri County Cap)

Article #16 (Bridgehouse)

Stack explained to the audience what the board asked for in descriptions from the organizations asking for donations.

Coleman asked what the impact of the donation articles is on the tax rates. No one knew at this point.

Article #17 is a petitioned warrant article re: park & recreation director going back to a salaried full time position.

J. Stewart asked about the cut in figure for the tennis courts. P. Branscombe said that the tennis courts are used in the summer. Ruell explained that we thought that it could wait for another year.

Article #11 is a petitioned warrant article re: the relocation of the bandstand. On January 21, 2012 Northway president may pay the \$5,000. for moving bandstand.

Felton spoke about cuts in the budget and understands that not everyone will be happy.

Ruell went over the revenues:

Summary

Revenue from taxes

Other fees

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Revenue from federal or state or trust

Charges for services

Ruell went over electric budget: lines discussed:

Superintendence (for L. Nichols and field workers)

Postage

Computer expense

Depreciation

Ruell went over water dept.: lines discussed:

Administration fee

Contract operation

Depreciation (Felton and Stack spoke on why we decrease line to \$0.00)

Payroll expense

Testing of wells

Ruell went over sewer dept.: lines discussed:

Administration fee

Contract operations

Depreciation

Payroll expense

Testing lagoons & wells

Branscombe stated that Marsha Morris said this is the first time she's seen a power point presentation at a public budget hearing.

Felton spoke on the utilities and what the difference is between the utilities and the town.

Branscombe spoke on a 2% cut on the bottom lines would have been an option. At the moment it looks like there will be a \$1.55 increase in taxes dues also to the warrant articles.

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Felton spoke on educating the taxpayers on the budget formats. He spoke on capital reserves and that all involved need to work together.

Scarano mentioned about what we could have done (passing the buck), but we had to make some tough decisions and we worked together as a committee to do the best for the taxpayers.

Stewart spoke on the warrant articles. People need to prioritize the articles. They need to be put into which are important because each one is an impact on our taxes.

Felton took a poll of the audience to see how many would like to take an x % amount off the budget across the board.

Stewart spoke on the difference of the loader and the tractor in the warrant articles. One is for the highway dept. the other is for the transfer/recycling dept. One is a loader and the other is a tractor.

Mazzone said that we need to look at each dept separately, but could do the 2% if needed.

Coleman doesn't believe across the board. But to cut bottom line of each dept. appropriately.

We will need to get a TAN in February for some big expenses coming up.

D. Toth spoke on putting monies away from the bonds that will be paid off to put into a capital reserve account.

Newton spoke on economic development in the town of Ashland.

L. Nichols spoke on changing homes into apartments. He doesn't believe that this is a good idea.

J. Felton mentioned that she agreed that we all need to work together and that no dept should feel singled out.

Ruell mentioned article #2 (PD police radios)

Ruell mentioned article #3 (town clerk)

Our next meeting is Thursday January 19, 2012 at 6:00pm

Newton made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heidenreich to adjourn the meeting at 10.22pm. All members ayed.

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Christine Austin, Secretary