

# ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 6, 2012

## DRAFT MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: C. Austin, I. Heidenreich, S. Felton, M. Brown, S. Coleman, D. Ruell, M. Scarano, D. Toth, M. Badger (non voting member)

MEMBERS EXCUSED: P. Preston (no selectman alternate)

OTHERS PRESENT: P. Branscombe, E. Badger, P. Tucker, S. Heath, T. Paquette, T. Randall, P. Fuller, P. Collins, P. Saybell, J. Law, F. Newton (other parents also present)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm in the Ashland Elementary library.

Felton passed out a sheet on property tax increase since 2009 and a comparison/trend sheet. He discussed these sheets.

Felton discussed capital improvements and capital reserves.

Scarano stated that Ashland is in the lowest of 25% in Grafton Co. as far as reserves. Ashland is also one of the lowest median pay.

Felton spoke on town infrastructure and capital needs.

Ashland has no capital reserves and no general fund balance.

Ashland's debt ratio is between 60% and 70%.

Federal and state help to towns are decreasing.

Coleman suggested that the fire dept. roof be a warrant article instead of putting it in the budget.

Felton stated that he checked on putting it as a warrant article and legal told him that "no means no". Which means if the warrant article does not get passed...we cannot get monies for the roof from other means.

Without counting the roof in the budget, the fire dept. budget went down 7%.

Brown stated that the school budget increased 1.6% mostly due to retirements.

Branscombe stated that the contract for the fire dept. roof is already in place.

The board discussed why the town's portion of the funds that paid for the Collins St. bridge was taken out of various lines in the town's budget instead of taken out of the \$125,000. appropriated for town roads through last year's warrant article.

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Scarano gave the board 5 scenarios to think about re: how the board wants to approach the budget.

- Reduce budget including warrant articles to keep budget the same as last year
- Level fund from last year to include reserves
- Reduce funds from last year and add in new reserves
- Level fund to last year's budget and add new reserves
- Accept the selectman suggestions of this year's budget plus add new reserves (an increase of 5%)

The board discussed that the minimum amount that should be put away for future capital reserves is \$250,000.

The board discussed that for this years warrant articles, (for capital reserves) fire, public works and roads should be asked for.

The board discussed that level funding this years budget would mean to reduce the budget presented to us by \$100,000.

Branscombe will bring the present budget back to the dept. heads and the selectmen to see if they can reduce the budget by \$200,000. which will be a 5.7% decrease.

Toth made a motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Scarano to have Branscombe ask the selectmen to reduce the budget by \$ 200,000. The figure to be reached is \$2,620,867. 3 members nayed, 5 members ayed.

The board discussed the reasons the 3 members nayed.

Dates for future meetings are as follows:

Monday December 10 at 6:00pm in the Ashland school library to go over Electric budget and start looking at where we can possibly reduce the budget \$200,000.

- Tuesday December 18 at 6:00pm in the Ashland school library
- Saturday December 29 at 1:00pm at the CAP building

Felton gave us a proposed outline for financial forum 2

The board is waiting to get from the town:

- Cash flow analysis

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- Money transfers
- Interim trial balances

Coleman brought up the concern that the \$5.00 per vehicle, that Tucker brought up at a different meeting, should be a warrant article because it is anticipated revenue for roads.

The board discussed this concern; Tucker is going to be asked to give us a breakdown of the registration fees and where the money goes.

P. Fuller spoke in behalf of parents that utilize the parks & rec after school program. He asked to keep these programs and not cut it out.

Scarano made the motion, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brown to adjourn the meeting at 8:20pm. All members ayed.

Christine Austin--Secretary