

1
2
3
4
5
TOWN OF ASHLAND
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 2021
5:30PM

- 6 I. **CALL TO ORDER** – Town of Ashland Chairman Eli Badger called the
7 meeting to order at 5:30pm and requested roll call of the Selectmen. Chairman
8 Eli Badger and Selectmen Ann Barney, Bob Letourneau, Andy Fitch, and
9 Allen Cilley.

10
11 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

12 *To approve the minutes from the October 25th meeting as amended.*

13 **SECOND:** Allen Cilley

14 **ROLL CALL VOTE:** 4-0, 1 Abstention – Bob Letourneau

15 **MOTION PASSED**

16
17 II. **NEW BUSINESS**

- 18 a. **REQUESTED MEETING WITH WARD D’ELIA & BILL**
19 **CARTLIN REPRESENTING MILL POND ASSOCIATES TO**
20 **DISCUSS ISSUES REGARDING THEIR PROPERTY** – Mill Pond
21 Associates have owned the property of 26 acres off of Winter Street in
22 Ashland for about 40 years. Currently, the property has been on the
23 market for about 7 months. During their due diligence to the selling of
24 the property, they believe that false information has been shared about
25 the property and that it has been shared from the Town Offices. They
26 have submitted a letter that is attached. The information that they believe
27 that was shared falsely was in regard to the contamination of the wells
28 that are on the property.

- 29
30 b. **YIELD TAX LEVY, MICHELLA JOHNSON & JENNIFER**
31 **CULLEN \$325.68, 021-001-006, LAKES REGION**
32 **CONSERVATION TRUST, \$5.92, 024-001-001, & LAKES**
33 **REGION CONSERVATION TRUST, \$8.401 025-001-003** – Town
34 Manager Fred Welch presented the board with the forms to levy the
35 taxes on the above properties that resulted in a timber tax. The Board
36 discussed that the totals were the adjusted totals after the final cutting,
37 and it was confirmed that these are the adjusted totals by Mr. Welch.

42 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

43 *To send the bills to Johnson & Cullen tax lot 021-001-006,*

44 *Lakes Region Conservation Trust tax lot 024-001-001, and*

45 *Lakes Region Conservation Trust tax lot 025-001-003.*

46 **SECOND:** Ann Barney

47 **ROLL CALL VOTE:** 5-0

48 **MOTION PASSED**

- 49
- 50 c. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 FIRE DEPARTMENT & AMBULANCE**
- 51 **BUDGETS** – Chief Steve Heath presented the budgets. The ambulance
- 52 contract has increased effective July 1st, 2022. Previously, the contract
- 53 had been for three years, it is now done annually and on a fiscal year.
- 54 With the Town being on a calendar year, the first two payments of 2022
- 55 will be the same as the 2021 contract. The amount calculated for next
- 56 year was calculated using the 2021 contract and the 2022 contract. The
- 57 Board asked if the contract for the ambulance had been signed, Mr.
- 58 Welch replied that it had not. For the Fire Department budget, Mr.
- 59 Letourneau inquired about the fuel line, Chief Heath informed the Board
- 60 that the Fire Department gets a discount by using the Irving cards. The
- 61 discount occurs once the monthly billing has taken place, therefore the
- 62 line has stayed flat. Heating oil has stayed the same as the Town gets a
- 63 bulk rate by partnering with the SAU. Additional lines that saw increases
- 64 are supplies, telephone, contracted services, and dues. The salary line
- 65 saw an increase of 3%, the Board inquired if the line included the per
- 66 diem employees- it does- and how employee retention is going. Chief
- 67 Heath explained that all the nearby towns are experiencing difficulty
- 68 with staff retention.
- 69
- 70 d. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 PUBLIC WORKS BUDGET** – Craig Moore
- 71 presented the budget. A line was added for drug testing, in previous
- 72 years it was combined in the director expense line, this will isolate the
- 73 actual costs associated with drug testing. Drug testing is done for the
- 74 employees that hold a CDL, an employee gets picked every quarter. The
- 75 salary lines increased with the Union contract requirements. The
- 76 remaining lines under the Public Works budget have remained the same.
- 77 Under the Highway and Streets Budget the line for uniforms has
- 78 increased due to the uniform requirements that are in the Union contract.
- 79 Winter Maintenance is up 18% due to the increase in salt which was a
- 80 quoted increased of 30%. The remaining lines in Highway and Streets
- 81 have remained the same. Under the Mechanic Budget the salary line has
- 82 increased due to the hiring of a new mechanic. Mechanic uniforms have

83 increased due to the special suits that are required. The remaining lines
84 in the mechanic budget have stayed the same.

85
86 e. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 TRANSFER & RECYCLING BUDGET** –
87 Craig Moore presented the budget. Salaries are up in accordance with the
88 Union contract. Electric has increased due to AC usage. The general line
89 is used to ship electronics, glass, ect. This is offset by the collected
90 funds. District Dues has seen an increase, the exact amount is not known
91 at this time, however it increases every year. The estimated increase is at
92 10%. A line was added for the Annual Scale Certification, the fee for
93 which is \$1,000 and it is offset by the fees at the transfer station.

94
95 f. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 WATER BUDGET** – Russell Cross
96 presented the budget. Mr. Cross started the budget presentation by
97 informing the Board that this is a realistic budget which it was not in
98 previous years. Salaries have been broken out to account for the
99 executive employees’ portion as well as the Water and Sewer
100 employees. For the New Equipment line, a new tractor has been
101 budgeted in. Chemicals and electricity are big costs for the Water
102 department; the cost of chemicals increases each year and the shipping
103 for them are 4-6 weeks out. The Board raised the question on if the
104 Water department salaries are competitive, Mr. Cross confirmed that
105 they are in comparison to other towns, however no wage study has been
106 done. Mr. Cross added that there is one employee at the top rate
107 currently, but they are good with staffing. New meters were not done in
108 the last year and there are some that need updating. Currently the water
109 meters are read by radio, the question was raised by the Board if, with
110 the new electric meters, could the water meters be done as well. Mr.
111 Welch confirmed that they are compatible however, the suggestion is to
112 complete one process before adding another.

113
114 g. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 SEWER BUDGET** – Russell Cross presented
115 the budget. Salaries follow suit with the Water budget. Septage receiving
116 now has lines to see the true cost. The bond payment is in the second
117 year of payments. Sewer is also looking to purchase a new mower; they
118 are working with Craig on a boom mower. The road that goes to the cell
119 towers is in need of fixing. The Board asked about the alarms line, the
120 alarms are for monitoring, Mr. Cross suggested at some point they may
121 be able to do it all by radio which would be a savings.

122

123 h. **REVIEW OF THE 2022 ELECTRIC BUDGET** – Craig Moore
124 presented the budget. The salaries have been broken out to account for
125 the employees of the department as well as the executive employees that
126 help with aspects of the department. Mr. Moore is hoping to hire an
127 additional linesman which has been accounted for in the budget. Health
128 and retirement have been broken out across the budgets proportionally,
129 health and retirement have both seen an increase. The line for audit went
130 down, and legal has stayed the same. Mr. Moore explained that under the
131 office equipment line there is a possibility of having to replace the copier
132 in the utilities department that is used for billing. There is a service
133 contract that was signed to keep it up and running. Training and
134 uniforms saw an increase due to additional employees. Dispatch saw a
135 decrease; Mr. Moore believes that an additional \$0 was included by the
136 previous Town Manager. It has decreased to \$2,500. Fuel lines have
137 been split to account for building and vehicles separately. A hydro line
138 has been created to explore starting it up again. A new line for New
139 utility poles has been created; it will be used for replacing poles. The line
140 for new equipment covers a new transformer as well as the boom mower
141 that Mr. Moore and Mr. Cross have been discussing. Purchasing a boom
142 mower would save money; currently when it is rented it is \$8,000 for the
143 week. Vehicle purchase line has been increased to purchase a new truck
144 which is part of the superintendent contract. Lines have also been added
145 for the Eaton purchase of the new meters and software.

146
147 i. **CHANGES TO PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED BUDGETS** – Town
148 Manager Fred Welch presented the Board with updated budget lines
149 from previously presented budgets. Mr. Welch explained that costs have
150 continued to come in from vendors and he wanted to make the Board
151 aware of the changes.

152
153 j. **SIGNING OF THE MS-535** – Town Manager Fred Welch presented
154 the Board with a copy of the MS-535 to sign. Mr. Welch explained that
155 the State required the form be signed again, once submitted it would
156 result in the tax rate setting.

157
158 Town Manage Fred Welch made a comment on the utility budgets,
159 stating that he was aware of complaints due to the descriptions of the sub
160 line items, they have been working on them by looking at the bills and
161 reallocating the costs. Mr. Welch stated that he is still working on a
162 municipal rate for electric.

163

- 164 III. **OLD BUSINESS – None**
- 165 IV. **SELECTBOARD BUISNESS – None**
- 166 V. **NON-PUBLIC SESSION – None**

167

168 **MOTION:** Alan Cilley

169 *To adjourn the meeting at 7:27pm.*

170 **SECOND:** Andy Fitch

171