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**TOWN OF ASHLAND
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7TH, 2022, 5:30PM
UTILITY CONFERENCE ROOM
6 COLLINS STREET, ASHLAND, NH**

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- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - Chairman Eli Badger called the meeting to order at 5:30pm and requested roll call of the Selectmen. Chairman Eli Badger and Selectmen Andy Fitch, Bob Letourneau, Ann Barney and Alan Cilley were present.

MOTION: Andy Fitch

To approve the minutes of the January 20th meeting as written

SECOND: Alan Cilley

VOTE: 5-0

MOTION PASSED

Chairman Eli Badger let everyone know that Town Manager Fred Welch would not be in attendance for this meeting.

The Town Trustees were on the agenda for this meeting as they had questions for the Board. The Trustees were already provided the information for their questions and have cancelled their attendance for this meeting.

II. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **REQUEST OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES FOR EARLY PAYMENT OF 1ST QUARTER APPROPRIATION** – The Board was presented an email that was sent by David Ruell asking the Board to approve an early payment of the library’s 1st quarter appropriation in the amount of \$5,000. Marden Badger discussed with the Board that it was a standard request made by the library and the only year they have not requested the funds was in 2020. The library expressed that they have had some unanticipated expenses to which the Board asked for them to explain. Mrs. Badger explained that legal was a big expense that included an HR issue and discussion about the \$400,000.

MOTION: Andy Fitch

To approve the early 1st quarter payment to the library in the amount of \$5,000.

SECOND: Ann Barney

VOTE: 4-0-1, 1 Abstention by Bob Letourneau

MOTION PASSED

- b. **LIBRARY TRUSTEES RESPONSE TO SELECTMEN’S REQUEST FOR ENGINEERING DOCUMENTS REGARDING CURRENT LIBRARY** – The Board was presented with the engineering documents for the current library and discussed the quote with the library. The Board inquired about how much was spent on the plans themselves. Mrs. Badger stated that the library had budgeted

46 \$10,000 but at this point have only spent around \$4,000. The plans that were
47 presented were of the building as it is currently, not for what would be done with
48 renovations. At this point there is not a decisive plan on what is to be added,
49 moved, or deleted in terms of renovations. The board asked if there were other
50 bids for this renovation, Mrs. Badger explained that at this time it is not in a bid
51 process, the documents the Board have are a rough estimate of what would be
52 done without the detail. Once there is detail added, then the renovations would go
53 out to bid. Mrs. Badger explained that the plans for the renovations would bring
54 the building up to code. Should the library move to the new building, the current
55 library would fall under the Board, at this time the Board will not be speculating
56 on what to do with the building. Mrs. Badger added that a survey of the plot with
57 the current library has been done by Tony Randall and is now part of the Town
58 information as a survey did not exist previously.
59

- 60 c. **LIBRARY REQUEST TO BE EXCUSED FROM PAYING BACK TO THE**
61 **TOWN FOR PAYROLL EXPENSES FOR 2021 IN THE AMOUNT OF**
62 **\$618.12.** – The library has asked to be excused from the costs associated with
63 processing payroll. David Ruell expressed that many years ago the Town asked to
64 do the library’s payroll to improve cashflow. The Board asked if there was any
65 paperwork to support that information and both the Board and library recognized
66 that finding paperwork would be difficult. Selectman Letourneau asked if the
67 library employees were Town employees and the library said they are separate.
68 Selectman Letourneau stated that he felt the associated payroll costs should be
69 assessed to them. Mr. Ruell stated that the library did not budget for the costs.
70 Chairman Badger discussed that he would be in favor of forgiving the 2021
71 payroll costs but would not be in favor of forgiving 2022 payroll costs now that
72 the library has a year to budget for it. Alice Staples suggested they get their own
73 payroll company. The Board discussed forgiving the 2021 payroll costs but
74 assessing the 2022 payroll costs to the library.
75

76 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

77 *To forgive the \$618.12 for the associated payroll costs of 2021*

78 **SECOND:** Alan Cilly

79 **VOTE:** 5-0

80 **MOTION PASSED**

81
82 Selectman Letourneau inquired about if other libraries run any activities that
83 generate money. Mrs. Badger stated that library activities and programs are free
84 of charge. Selectman Letourneau suggested getting donations by way of
85 sponsorship in the way that the 4th of July gets sponsorship. Charles Bozzello in
86 the audience stated that he is aware of some libraries getting sponsors for event
87 just as the 4th of July does.
88
89
90

- 91 **d. APPROVAL OF YIELD TAX WARRANT TIMOTHY & DIANE**
 92 **HIBBARD, TAX MAP 008-001-002, \$3,501.85** – The Board was presented with
 93 the yield tax warrant to approve the signing of it.
 94

95 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

96 *To approve the signing of the yield tax for tax map 008-001-002 in the amount of*
 97 *\$3,501.85.*

98 **SECOND:** Alan Cilley

99 **VOTE:** 5-0

100 **MOTION PASSED**
 101

- 102 **e. NOTICE OF A STATE LICENSE FOR 283 RIVER STREET, SEASONAL**
 103 **COMBINATION BEVERAGE/WINE/TOBACCO LIQUOR LICENSE** –
 104 The Board was presented with the notice to municipalities of the requested license
 105 for comment. The Board has limited discussion on the license and overall feeling
 106 of the Board was that none of them had a problem with the license.
 107

- 108 **f. QUESTION OF STATUS OF CHARTER COMMUNICATIONS STOCK**
 109 **HOLDING BY THE ELECTRIC DIVISION, 2 SHARES, \$1,303.94 IN**
 110 **VALUE** - The Board was presented with a notice that was sent to the Electric
 111 department giving notice of the shares and their value. The question is should the
 112 Town explore if there were other shares, who bought the shares, and what to do
 113 with the existing ones. The Board discussed that this is the first time hearing of
 114 this since the commissioners were dissolved. The Board would like to investigate
 115 the current and possible previous shares in Charter Communications.
 116

- 117 **g. QUESTION OF APPROVAL OF MUNIBILLING PROPOSAL, 3 YEAR**
 118 **CONTRACT FOR UTILITY BILLING** – The Board discussed with Finance
 119 Director Marissah Gallien about the new proposed billing system that would
 120 encompass Water, Sewer and Electric. Currently the utility office is using two
 121 different programs, one for water and sewer, the other for electric. Both programs
 122 have flaws that make it difficult to be efficient in the office in terms of payment
 123 processing and timely billing. The new proposed program would be compatible
 124 with Sensus which are the radio reads for water and the new AMI readers that will
 125 be installed for the electric reads. The new program offers customers the ability to
 126 pay online by credit card or e-check, auto pay will be an option as well. The
 127 online portal for customers will show the customer their current bill as well as
 128 their previous bills. The cost of the software will be billed to the Town on a
 129 quarterly basis, and is based on the number of active accounts. The initial cost of
 130 set up and the quarterly billing for the first year is in the amount of \$22,076.
 131

132 **MOTION:** Bob Letourneau

133 *To approve the initial cost of \$22,076 for Munibilling*

134 **SECOND:** Alan Cilley

135 **VOTE:** 5-0

136 **MOTION PASSED**

137
138 The Board signed the weekly payroll and accounts payable check run in Town
139 Manager Fred Welch's absence.
140

141 Ms. Gallien presented on behalf of the Town Clerk/Tax Collector the ratio study
142 to be signed by the Board. The Board would like to see the associated documents
143 for the ratio study and suggested it would be helpful if the Town Clerk/ Tax
144 Collector were in attendance to answer questions. The Board decided not to sign
145 the ratio study at this time.
146

147 III. OLD BUSINESS

- 148 a. The new roof for the Booster Club has been completed.
149

150 IV. SELECTBOARD ITEMS

- 151 a. **DEFAULT BUDGET** – The Board acknowledged that several people brought up
152 issues with the default budget at the deliberative session, to help clarify, Town
153 Manager Fred Welch was able to speak via speaker phone. Mr. Welch does not
154 think that we erred. Previously there was confusion on the utility sub line items
155 because they were not defined in a way that you could tell what money was being
156 spent on. The utility sub line items were corrected by defining them which was a
157 collaboration between finance and the department heads. Mr. Welch brought up
158 former superintendent Rusty Cross and that one of his complaints was that the
159 lines in the water and sewer budgets were not clear about what to charge to each
160 line. While defining the sub line items in the utility budgets the department heads
161 recognized that it will be much easier to make the rates for the utilities now that
162 they will know how much is being spent on specific items. Selectman Letourneau
163 brought up the person from the deliberative session that said they called the DRA.
164 Mr. Welch stated that the DRA never called the Town to express that they felt
165 anything was illegal. One of the lines that has been removed from each of the
166 budgets is the line “miscellaneous” Mr. Welch feels as though you don't need a
167 miscellaneous line should you have well defined lines so that you know where to
168 charge things.
169

170 The Board did not make any changes to the default budget.
171

- 172 b. **ARTICLE 19** – The Board discussed the change of Article 19 that took place at
173 the deliberative session. Grafton County Senior Citizen Council Inc had requested
174 \$6,000. Rick Pare motioned to double the request in the amount of \$12,000 which
175 was seconded by Linda Pare and was ultimately passed. The budget committee
176 recommended the change at their last meeting. The Board discussed that now that
177 the money has been increased, then the request may change moving forward for
178 the same appropriation. The Board also discussed that due to the increase the
179 warrant article may be in danger of not getting approved. Since the article was not
180 amended to include a clause that, should the \$12,000 not pass it would default to
181 \$6,000, the organization may not get anything. Selectman Letourneau is
182 concerned that if the article does not pass then the senior citizens will not get what

183 they need. Selectman Cilley expressed his concern as well as previously this
184 warrant article had not passed unanimously. The Board made the decision to
185 abstain from amending their recommendation and asked for the Board
186 recommendation line to be removed from the warrant article.

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188 c. **MEETINGS** – Selectman Cilley discussed with the Board that there are many
189 things that are in need of being done in the Town that cannot be done in the
190 amount of meetings the Board holds now. Selectman Cilley suggested holding
191 additional meetings so that the Board can work on items that need attention in the
192 Town. Selectman Letourneau brought up that there should be a priority list of
193 items that need attention such as the ADA compliance. Chairman Badger
194 suggested putting together a capital improvement plan.

195
196 **MOTION:** Alan Cilley
197 *To adjourn the meeting at 7:32pm*

198 **SECOND:** Andy Fitch
199 **MOTION PASSED**

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