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**TOWN OF ASHLAND
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 16TH 5:30PM
UTILITY CONFERENCE ROOM
6 COLLINS STREET**

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- I. CALL TO ORDER** – Chairman Letourneau called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance. Selectmen Andy Fitch, Ann Barney, Charles Bozzello and Rebecca Hartley were all in attendance.

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MOTION: Rebecca Hartley

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To approve the Minutes of October 2nd as written

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SECOND: Andy Fitch

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VOTE: 4-0-1 (Selectmen Bozzello Abstained)

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MOTION PASSED

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II. NEW BUSINESS

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- a. WATER METER PROGRAM** - Water & Sewer Superintendent Andrew Benton presented the Board with a proposed project to start replacing the older water meters in Town. The department will need to start entering homes next year with a lead line survey project, during which time Mr. Benton would like to replace water meters to lessen the disruption of having to enter homes multiple times. The project is also being suggested as the current meters that are installed are rapidly approaching their half-life. The current water meters have a life expectancy of 20 years, and they are nearing the 10-to-11-year marks which is the accuracy expectancy. The proposed project would be done over the course of 7 to 10 years as to keep the budget level. Mr. Benton brought the current water meter types that are used as well as a transmitter and explained the common problems that occur with the current set up including the replacement costs for each current meter and transmitter being \$350 each. The proposed new meters would be \$250 each and would not have multiple parts, therefore getting rid of the need to drill holes to get the transmitter line outside the home. The new meters are ultrasonic and can collect data down to a very small amount, lessening the lost revenue. Finance Director Marissah Gallien spoke about the current technology issues that come with the current meters and the improvements that would be made from the new meter program. The current software does not hold information for easy recall whereas the new program would house the data that is read off the meters permanently and would be easily accessible, the meters themselves hold over 400 days of meter reads. Additional features of the new meters are the tamper codes which would tell the department if a meter was pulled out, or turned around, as well as the temperature which could help to avoid freezing pipes. The reading of the meters would still be done the same way by driving around, the department has been testing the new meters around Town in places they usually have a hard time pulling reads from and the reads are coming in from a large distance. The Board had been provided information regarding the meter vendors that the

47 Superintendent and Finance Director met with and the charges that have been
48 quoted. Chairman Letourneau asked about Eaton which is the company the
49 Electric Department did their meter project with and asked about the capabilities
50 of the nodes that Eaton had previously brought up. Ms. Gallien shared that
51 although there are nodes available to be added onto the meters, the meters
52 themselves would need to be replaced. Mr. Benton shared that the annual hosting
53 fees were very expensive as this avenue had been looked into. Selectmen
54 Bozzello pushed that the project should go the route of AMI (AMI would be
55 remotely read and eliminate the need for driving around Town). Ms. Gallien
56 shared that the vendor that were met with felt that AMI is too expensive for such a
57 small Town which is why the project is being presented with ultrasonic meters
58 and would be read by radio. Chairman Letourneau felt he did not have enough
59 information to make a decision and asked to revisit it at a later time.
60

61 **b. PERSONNEL ADMIN BUDGET** – Ms. Gallien presented the Personnel
62 Administration Budget. This budget includes the costs associated with health
63 insurance. Ms. Gallien stated that their health insurance carrier provides a GMR
64 (Guaranteed maximum rate) for the following year and the make their decision on
65 the actual increase in the spring. The GMR for health insurance is a 15.7%
66 increase. Decreases were seen in the sick buy out line as it was recalculated to an
67 average if all eligible employees bought out a week of sick leave per the Town’s
68 Personnel Policy. The retired employee health insurance line also saw a decrease
69 as there are less members on the plan. Decreases were also seen in the disability
70 insurance and life insurance lines, corresponding to the decrease provided by the
71 health insurance carrier. Retirement, which is the NHRS employer match, saw an
72 increase proportionally to the salaries in the general fund budget. Police employer
73 match is at 31.28% and the employee match rate is 13.53%.
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75 **c. POLICE DEPARTMENT BUDGET** – Chief Will Ulwick presented the
76 proposed 2024 Police budget. Increases were seen in salaries for the Chief &
77 Lieutenant as well as the union salaries due to the new CBA. Overtime was
78 figured on a 3-year average, the officers that the PD has are active and they are
79 seeing more things go to court. The prosecutor line also saw an increase and was
80 done on a 3-year average. The Chief spoke at length about the 4th of July detail
81 line and the increase that is proposed. Previously the outside agencies would
82 effectively become Town employees for the detail. New rules from Primex have
83 come out that the officers will not be covered by insurance by the agency they are
84 doing the detail for, nor their regular agency. With this information the Chief took
85 the detail rate of \$50 per hour and built in funds for agencies with administrative
86 fees using Ashland’s administrative fee of \$20 per hour. Lines that also saw an
87 increase were the computer system maintenance line to add in redaction software,
88 and equipment purchase to include a one-time purchase of a double sided ID
89 maker to issue Town employee ID badges. Dispatch increased using a 5-year
90 weighted average, and training increased due to staffing increases.
91

92 **d. PARKS & RECREATION BUDGET** – Parks & Rec Director Ann Barney
 93 presented the proposed 2024 budget. Increases were seen in salary, background
 94 checks, water, sewer, and electricity to meet the projected consumption for 2023,
 95 an addition of a cell phone, and internet will be increasing due to the promotion
 96 period ending. Additional increases were seen in the cleaning contract, which was
 97 underfunded in 2023, the monthly computer fee, and chemical toilets. A decrease
 98 was seen in heating fuel as the new contract has lowered fees. The campground
 99 portion of the budget increased in cleaning contract fees, Waste Management fees
 100 and tree maintenance. The vacation and summer camp portion of the budget saw
 101 increases in salaries for returning employees, internet due to the promotion ending
 102 and camp trips. The after school budget did not have any changes.

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 104 **e. INTENT TO CUT, MAP 211, LOT 2 –**

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 106 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

107 *To approve the intent to cut for map 211 lot 2*

108 **SECOND:** Ann Barney

109 **VOTE:** 5-0

110 **MOTION PASSED**

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 112 **f. ACCEPTANCE OF ST. AGNES CHURCH WWI HONOR ROLL -**

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 114 **MOTION:** Robert Letourneau

115 *To accept the gift of the St. Agnes WWI Honor Roll plaque from General Properties*
 116 *LLC*

117 **SECOND:** Rebecca Hartley

118 **VOTE:** 5-0

119 **MOTION PASSED**

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 121 **g. QUESTION OF REMOVING ICE RINK FROM PRIVATE PROPERTY –**

122 The Board discussed a notice they received from the property owners of the land
 123 the ice rink is on, asking for the ice rink to be removed and to respond with a date
 124 of which they can expect it to be removed by October 31st of this year. Chairman
 125 Letourneau suggested May 1st 2024 weather permitting. The remaining Board
 126 members gave their consensus.

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 128 **h. QUESTION OF REMOVING BANDSTAND FROM PRIVATE**

129 **PROPERTY** – From the same notice as the above topic, the owners have also
 130 asked that the bandstand be removed and would like a response with the
 131 anticipated date of removal by October 31st 2023. Vice Chairman Fitch discussed
 132 that the fees to move the bandstand to another spot on the park came in at about
 133 \$12,000, to move it off property to another site will be \$30,000, and should it be
 134 moved off property the road would need to be shut down and potentially the
 135 utilities to be held up due to the height of the bandstand. Chairman Letourneau
 136 suggested that the same date of May 1st 2024 be given for this request as well and

137 the Board gave their consensus.
138

- 139 **i. QUESTION OF ADOPTING CHANGES TO 6 COLLINS ST MEETING**
140 **ROOM RECOMMENDED BY THE PLANNING BOARD** – Planning Board
141 Chairman Mardean Badger spoke with the Board about suggested
142 changes/additions to the meeting space. Mrs. Badger requested a folding 6ft table,
143 and cords for connecting to the tv. The Board did not make any decisions on the
144 proposed changes.
145

146 **III. OLD BUSINESS – None**

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148 **IV. SELECTMEN'S ITMES**

- 149 a. Vice Chairman Fitch brought a purchase order to be signed by the Board for the
150 upfitting of the 2 new police cruisers.
151

152 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

153 *To approve the police cruiser upfitting for 2 cruisers for \$15,650 from the police car*
154 *CRF*

155 **SECOND:** Robert Letourneau

156 **VOTE:** 5-0

157 **MOTION PASSED**
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- 159 b. Chairman Letourneau had a request to appoint George Chase as an alternate to the
160 Pemi-Baker Solid Waste district.
161

162 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

163 *To appoint George Chase to the Pemi-Baker Solid Waste District*

164 **SECOND:** Rebecca Hartley

165 **VOTE:** 5-0

166 **MOTION PASSED**
167

168 As the Board began to vote to enter into a non-public session, Bethany Franz of Ashland
169 spoke to the Board about their concerns regarding the changes to the ballfield and with the
170 proposed Mill Pond project. Concerns were shared regarding how this will affect the children
171 that use the ice rink including their own son, and the additional burden that could be seen to the
172 Police Department. Chairman Letourneau assured that the Board will do their due diligence on
173 the proposed project and the requests to remove the ice rink and bandstand.
174

175 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch

176 *To enter into a non-public session at 6:52pm pursuant to 91-A:3 (a, b, & c)*

177 **SECOND:** Ann Barney

178 **VOTE:** 5-0

179 **MOTION PASSED**
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183 **MOTION:** Rebecca Hartley
184 *To seal the minutes of the non-public session*
185 **SECOND:** Ann Barney
186 **VOTE:** 5-0
187 **MOTION PASSED**
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189 **MOTION:** Andy Fitch
190 *To adjourn the meeting at 8:19pm*
191 **SECOND:** Rebecca Hartley
192 **VOTE:** 5-0
193 **MOTION PASSED**