

ASHLAND BUDGET COMMITTEE MINUTES - Jan 15, 2025

Present: Kendall Hughes, David Ruell, Michelle Roloff, Andy Fitch, David Unangst, Andy Fitch

Absent/Excused: Jamie Lyford, Sandra Coleman

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the conference room at the Fire Station

Article 1: Non monetary, not concern us.

Article 2: Non monetary, not concern us.

Article 3: Town Budget of \$3,968,561, Recommend approve 5 to 1.

Article: 4: Electric Department budget of \$3508,859, discussed 32% increase in electric rates for customers. No Tax Impact, Recommend, approve 5 to 1.

Article: 5: Water Dept budget of \$403,578, No Tax Impact, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 6: Water Dept budget of \$877,838, No Tax Impact, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 7: Class V Public Highway, Non monetary, not concern us.

Article 8: Contingency Fund, unassigned fund balance, any left over will lapse to general fund. Recomenmd approve, 6 to 0.

Article 9: Fire Dept Capital Reserve \$75,000, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 10: Police Capital Reserve, \$10,000, from anonymous donation to general fund. David motion, second David: Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 11: \$30,000 for police capital reserve for repair and purchase vehicles. David moved, Michelle second, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article: 12: Public Works, \$30,000 for capital reserve, Andy moved, Michelle second, recommend approve, 6 to 1.

Article 13: Road & Bridge Capital Fund, \$150,000 to be deposited into the Road & Bridges Capital Reserve Fund, Andy motion, David second, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 14: Building Maintenance and Repair Capital Fund, \$50,000, Andy motion, David second, Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 15: Library Capital Reserve, \$25,000: David move, Andy second. Plans are on display on the library, full renovation is closer to \$1M. Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 16: Police radios, \$10,000. Discussion that \$19,500 came from a large grant that was requested, where we received only about 20%, but that this will be used to offset 2/3 cost. David move, Andy second. Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 17: Parks & Rec Revolving Fund, not more than 12% of total fees collected. David move, David second. Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article: 18: not involve us

Article: 19: not involve us

Article: 20: Appropriate \$12,000 to Grafton Senior Citizens Council. We pay about 12% and they pay 88%. Andy move, David second. Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 21: PB Hospice & Home Health :\$9692. Kendall and Andy talked about the value of these services to our community. Motion David, Second David R. Recommend approve, 6 to 0.

Article 22: \$3876 For Tri-County Action Program. David Move, Andy Second. Recommend 6:0

Article 23: \$1,250. Committee members have experienced value in using the services, one when he was between cars, another used it also for when he needed a ride to Concord. David Ruel moved, David second. Recommend approve, 5:0:1 Abstain

Article: 24: \$200,000 police station capital reserve fund. We discussed the need to build a new police station, and Andy commented on the Primex report from 2021. Proposed location is down by the utility room Collins St, and conceptual design exists and includes a sally port, as well as another bay for use by the HW dept. We discussed the need to have more public communication about the serious issues in the police station. Motion Michelle, Second David. Recommend approve, 6:0

Article: 25 \$3,000, Town museum preserves the asbestos removal from basement, 4 chimneys rebuilt, two portions of brick work at corners, old style mortar water damaged, we need better drainage. Building 1837, and BOD is maintaining it. David Motion, Michelle Second. List will be provided, a special firm from Concord replaced a chimney for \$5K grant, Listed National Historic Register. Recommend 5: 0 : 1 Abstain

Article 26: To see if town will vote to dissolve the Budget Committee. Non monetary, no vote.

Discussion about how the Budget Committee provides a benefit for the tax payers as every town dept and official has to come to us and explain to us why and what they are changing their budgets. Next year, we hope to have the town and dept budget to the Budget Committee earlier than mid-December. We are making progress on getting it earlier, and joint meeting with BOS helped move things more quickly. Zoom/Teams meetings would make it easier, and we should have town emails for budget committee. Right to know (91A) would be better served by having town email addresses, and Andy took the action to get the budget committee members town email addresses. Discussion of how we need a better place to do video rooms. NH municipal association does training that can be attended anytime. David U has been on the committee for 5 years, and would like training as well as Michelle, who is in first year. Kendall has gone to training in Concord on planning board, and there are local officials workshops in February, March, April. September certificate program. Discussed attending the Budget and Finance Workshop, in Manchester, Sept 11, 2025 or the 16<sup>th</sup>, Littleton Opera House NHMA.gov.

Meeting ended at 7:00

Michelle Roloff, Secretary