

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Great Hall
Finance Committee Minutes

Tuesday February 1, 2011

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman; Scott Houde; Clerk, and Andrew Crowley, member

Absent: Jesse Reich

One committee position open

Called to order at 7:00 pm by Brian Muldoon

- Mail
 - None
- Minutes
 - Outstanding minutes are 12/8/10, 12/16/10, 1/4/11, 1/5/11, 1/6/11, 1/11/11, 1/13/11, 1/19/11, 1/20/11, 1/26/11
 - Minutes will be approved at next meeting with full quorum
- Budget Review
 - Jeff Thomas presented a Parks Department budget of \$106,043 which represents a 3% decrease and \$103,807 which represents a 5% decrease from FY2011.
 - The budget reductions will have significant impact on services provided by the department. Most of the budget is wages and salary. There is little to cut in services and supplies.
 - The town beach hours will have to be reduced. The hours have been expanded over the last few years. The beach currently opens on weekends after Memorial Day. The budget cuts will require the beach to remain closed until after school gets out and hours may be effected further.
 - Maintenance of Pirone Park and town beach will be reduced resulting is less attention to detail. The cut in budget, coupled with increased costs, will result in reduction/elimination of fertilization at Pirone Park. Cost is for litter pick up and trimming.
 - Equipment cannot be replaced in a timely manner resulting in worn out or unsafe equipment. Equipment for sports is self sufficient.
 - Loss of the other charges line limits the departments' ability to respond to unforeseen expenses such as vandalism or equipment failure. This could be covered as a Reserve Fund Transfer if it occurs.
 - The department is in need of a new lawn mower with an expected cost of \$5,500. Jeff had hoped to include this amount in the capital exclusion but was turned down since the cost is not up to the threshold. The lawn is cut at Pirone Park and the town beach. The current mowers are 7 years old.
 - Capital Planning policy has a minimum of \$10,000. Small item should be paid for from the operating budget. There is no room in the Parks dept budget line item. The department has a revolving fund but that is funded by sport registration and should be utilized for that.
 - JR – Could you charge more?
 - There is no desire to raise sports fees
 - There are more vendors using Pirone Park for softball and other events. The problem is renting out the field limits the use of the filed by the public which is who the department serves.
 - BM – Any thoughts about charging beach fees?
 - There are restrictions on fees for the beach. Any great pond in Massachusetts has to have unrestricted access. Improvements for conservation require free access.
 - Brian Muldoon called recess at 8:00pm
 - Brian Muldoon called Finance Committee back to order at 8:07pm
 - Dan Nason presented DPW Administration budget of \$227,555 which represents a 2.4% decrease from FY2011.

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- The budget includes a wage increase of 8.3% for step increases. The increase is for additional licenses obtained by employees for wastewater treatment. The town administrator instructed all departments to level fund wages but these are contractual increases for new licenses.
- One employee is being moved from union employee to a confidential employee. This requires her leaving the ASME union. To compensate for the lost benefits of the ASME union her wages will increase from FY2011. The new title is Operation Manager. This move is necessary for the handling of confidential material such as payroll and employee reviews.
- BM – Is the Grade 6 wastewater step increase in your personal contract?
 - No
- Utilities are lower since the DPW area was reorganized. Fewer utilities are used in the winter to heat break areas for the employees. The decrease is based upon prior year actual expense.
- Storm Water Drain (Catch basin) – Water Sewer Commission is looking for a new approach after the Town Meeting denied the request for a Storm Water Fund in the fall. W&S will present to the Board of Selectmen only administration and wages will be requested through budget. All capital expenses will be removed from the fund request. Capital will fall by the wayside until W&S can present to Town Meeting in the near future. The fund will be a flat fee on all water and sewer bills. This approach should appease the EPA should they review Ayer. It's not a 100% but they will be lenient with 80% and a plan for implementation.
- Dan Nason presented a DPW – Highway budget of \$349,136 which represents a 3% decrease from FY2011.
 - The safety impact is no preventive maintenance can be performed on the town roads. Currently the only funds for road maintenance come from Chapter 90 money from the state. The paving of roadways will be delayed causing reduced visibility at night.
 - There are approximately 4 miles of roads in Ayer that have not been properly accepted by the town. These are roads going back 15 years or so. A warrant was to be presented at the fall town meeting but pulled due to town counsel's concern. The roads now must be surveyed and "as is" mapping. This is a cost to the town. The offset would be an increase in chapter 90 funds from the state of approximately \$10,000 per year.
 - The DPW had no long term plan for resurfacing roads when Dan was hired. He is implementing a plan during 2011.
 - The DPW is required to perform litter and bathroom cleaning at the Rail Trail. The bathrooms were constructed by the state and are now in disrepair. The bottoms of the wood structures are rotting. The state will not pay for their repair. The cleaning becomes a daily chore during warmer weather
- Dan Nason presented a DPW – Snow Removal budget of \$155,070 which is level funded from FY2011.
 - The DPW has moved from using contractors to DPW and other department employees for plowing. This has decreased costs. The primary shortfall is the employees struggle to fit in their every day duties amongst storm clean up.
- Dan Nason presented a DPW – Street Lighting budget of \$71,340 which is level funded from FY2011.
 - No discussion – Fixed Cost
- Dan Nason presented a DPW – Fuel budget of \$71,250 which is level funded from FY2011
 - The fuel is stored at DPW and used by other departments. The other departments include Fire, Housing, police, and Parks.
- Dan Nason presented a DPW – Equipment Maintenance budget of \$73,841 which represents an increase of 2.3% from FY 2011.
 - The increase is due to greater costs for HazMat/MSDS compliance. The mechanic wages are level funded. The department was overall level funded due to a slow inflow in newer capital equipment. The mechanic repairs all vehicles in the DPW fleet and some work for other departments.
- Dan Nason presented a Water Fund budget of \$1,653,612 which represents a 0.5% decrease from FY2011.
 - This is an enterprise fund. All rates and budget items are approved by the commission. There is no impact on the omnibus operating budget.

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- Dan Nason presented a Sewer Fund budget of \$2,465,380 which is level funded from FY2011.
 - This is an enterprise fund. All rates and budget items are approved by the commission. There is no impact on the omnibus operating budget.
- Dan Nason presented a Solid Waste Fund budget of \$449,372 which represents a 3.3% increase from FY2011.
 - This is an enterprise fund. All rates and budget items are approved by the commission. This enterprise fund is not self sufficient and requires subsidies from the omnibus operating budget.
 - Current level of subsidy is unknown due to unknown bag sales in the operating budget year.
- Motion to adjourn at 9:14pm

Motion	AC
Second	SH
B. Muldoon	Aye
J. Reich	Absent
S. Houde	Aye
A. Crowley	Aye
Vote	3 - 0

Brian Muldoon, Chairman _____ Date _____

Jesse Reich, Vice Chairman _____ Date _____

Scott Houde, Clerk _____ Date _____

Andrew Crowley, Member _____ Date _____