

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
Finance Committee Minutes

Wednesday February 9, 2011

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Clerk (early departure), and Andrew Crowley, member
Absent: Jesse Reich; Vice Chair
One committee position open

Called to order at 7: 00pm 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, 2/1/11, 2/1/11, 2/3/11
 - Minutes will be approved at next meeting with full quorum
- Budget Review
 - George Bacon was present to discuss the Historical Commission cuts of 3% and 5%
 - Memo from George states that the commission can absorb up to a 5% cut without any impact to their duties. FY2011 budget is \$700. There are no fixed costs for the department. All costs are variable and fluctuate on the projects at hand.
 - The commission received funds from the seller of the Fletcher Building with restrictions that it cannot be used for operation budget.
 - Karen Swanfeldt presented the Council on Aging budget of \$107,402 which represents a 3% decrease and 105,188 which represents a 5% decrease
 - With a 3% decrease the council will lose its weekly housekeeper. The cleaning will continue and made up by volunteers. The Meals on Wheel driver will be eliminated. The delivery for Meals on Wheels will be shifted to the nutritionist.
 - The 5% cut will mirror the 3% cut but include restrictions on the kitchen staff.
 - Council on Aging has a very dedicated staff. Ms. Swanfeldt stresses that the council could not function without the volunteers and staff that work for her. The department has been level funded for 4 years and still provided top level services. Financial help comes from Ayer Housing, Montachusett (MOC), and MART Transportation. The office space is \$200 per month and those costs has not increased in 20 years.
 - Mary Spinner from the Capital Planning Committee presented the Capital purchases for FY2012.
 - Approved capital purchases include:
 - \$125,000 to upgrade radio communication for the Police Department. This is a requirement for FY2013 for the fire, police and ambulance to be on narrow band frequency. (Capital Exclusion)
 - \$41,000 for a new Jaws of Life for the Fire Department (Enterprise Fund)
 - \$48,039 to upgrade radio communication for the Fire Department (Capital Exclusion)
 - \$69,430 to replace the generator at Town Hall. This is necessary to ensure the ability of the town to function in an emergency and keep all documents safe in the event of an extended loss of power. The concern is keeping the pipes from freezing. (Capital Exclusion)
 - \$59,175 for automated HVAC controls at Town Hall. The system will replace all individual thermostats with centralized computer control. The return on the investment is anticipated to be 9 years at current energy costs. (Capital Exclusion)
 - \$20,000 to upgrade to radio equipment for the DPW. This will allow the DPW to communicate with the fire and police on that department's new equipment. (Capital Exclusion)

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- \$58,000 to replace all street signs within the town of Ayer. This is a federal mandate for the end of 2011. (Capital Exclusion)
- \$145,000 for a 6 wheel dump truck for the DPW. This will replace a 1980 model year truck. The new equipment will be more efficient on fuel and the design reduces time to switch applications thus reducing overtime during snow storms. (Capital Exclusion)
- \$30,000 for a truck lift for the DPW mechanic. Currently the mechanic must work on all vehicles on the ground or jack stands. There are safety concerns with this practice and the size of vehicles he works on. (Capital Exclusion)
- Capital purchases within the Water Enterprise Fund total \$200,000. The borrowing cost are within the enterprise fund and have no impact on the general omnibus fund. Items include
 - \$30,000 to replace the chemical feed pump skids.
 - \$30,000 to upgrade radio read meters and software for billing. This allows quarterly billing.
 - \$100,000 to replace the backwash pump at Spectacle Pond pumping station.
 - \$40,000 to replace the 6" bronze (clay) valve at Spectacle Pond. This was last replaced in 1985.
- Capital purchases within the Sewer Enterprise Funds total \$141,000. The borrowing costs are within the enterprise fund and have no impact on the general omnibus fund. Items include:
 - \$44,000 for a ¾ ton pickup truck with a plow.
 - \$40,000 for engineering work on the West Main Street pumping station. This station is from 1969 and in need of upgrading.
 - \$35,000 for SCADA upgrades. This allows employees to monitor the plant remotely reducing overtime in the event of minor problems that can be fixed remotely,
 - \$22,000 to upgrade radio read meters and software for billing. This allows quarterly billing.
- Capital purchases within the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund totals \$215,000. The borrowing costs are within the enterprise fund and have no impact on the general omnibus fund. Items include:
 - \$30,000 for a brush chipper. The department has stopped opening the brush dump to the public on weekends. The brush is collected at the transfer station and trucked to the brush dump. This greatly reduces additional overtime costs.
 - \$185,000 for a new front end loader. The current unit is a 1996 model year. The DPW should receive \$10,000 trade in for the current unit. The current unit has encountered many mechanical problems in the past year.
- There will be a Capital Exclusion request to the tax payers totaling \$554,644. This includes some items from the defeated Capital Exclusion last year and additional items for FY2012. A Capital Exclusion is a single year tax surcharge to purchase equipment outside of the omnibus budget.
 - The Board of Selectmen will move forward to put the capital exclusion on the ballot for the April elections. Last year's capital exclusion created confusion due to multiple lines instead of a single request.
 - The Finance Committee will be in charge of educating the public and presenting at town meeting in May. Brian Muldoon will follow up with Robert Pontbriand regarding the capital exclusion.
- BM – The Parks department needs 2 lawn mowers. Jeff Thomas stated he was told that these could not be included in the capital plan.
 - MS - Parks never submitted a capital request. They may have money remaining in the FY2011 budget to make purchases.
- TIP money requested by the DPW for paving and repairs of Park Street were denied. The street is eligible for TIP funding since it is State Route 2A.
 - Personnel Policy discussion

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- Pauline Conley - The personnel policy has a line that states all employees and June 30th receive a step increase automatically. The recommended action for the town would be to remove that for all new hires. Step increases are not tied to job performance. Sick time can be accrued up to 1 year of time.
- Brian Muldoon drafted a memo to the BOS requesting that Longevity be used only when an employee has no additional steps or COLA increases.
 - Motion to send the memo to the Board of Selectmen as written.

Motion	SH
Second	BM
B. Muldoon	Aye
J. Reich	Absent
S. Houde	Aye
A. Crowley	Abstain
Vote	2 - 0

- FY2012 budget discussion
 - The budget memo is due to the BOS shortly. Brian requests all minutes be completed from the budget meetings from the past month and a half. Brian will set up a meeting with BOS to discuss budget.
 - Pauline Conley recommends that FinCom reach out to Robert Pontbriand to set up a brain storming session ahead of a BOS meeting.
 - The financial survey is still unresolved. Member SH is waiting to hear from Cindy Knox on the status of the survey on the town website.
 - Next TriBoard meeting in Thursday March 3rd at Page-Hilltop school.
 - Open Floor
 - Pauline Conley
 - A comparison of GIC and Ayer's current health system shows that Ayer's program is more robust and has a lower cost than GIC.
 - Town bylaws Article IX requires that snow removal on sidewalks are the requirement of land owners. The penalty for failure to remove snow is \$10. Perhaps that should be updated. The SJC ruled last year that landowners are required to clear sidewalks within 6 hours of snowfall.
 - Next Finance Committee meeting is Thursday February 17 with the Regional School Committee. The meeting is in the Page-Hilltop Professional Development room at 7pm. This is a joint meeting with the Shirley Finance committee.
 - The opening on the Finance Committee will be discussed at the next meeting with all 4 members present.
- Motion to adjourn at 8:32pm

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 _____

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Scott Houde, Clerk

_____ Date _____

Andrew Crowley, Member

_____ Date _____