

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
Finance Committee Minutes

Wednesday April 13, 2011

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Jesse Reich; Vice Chair, Scott Houde; Clerk, Andrew Crowley; member, Connie Sullivan, member

Absent: None

In Attendance: Pauline Conley, Mary Spinner, Chuck Miller

Called to order at 7:05pm by Brian Muldoon

- Mail
 - None
- Minutes
 - Outstanding minutes are 1/12/11, 1/20/11, 3/09/11, and 3/23/11
- Green Communities Committee Presentation – Carolyn McCreary, Faith Salter, and Ted Staples
 - The Stretch Code will be on the warrant for Town Meeting
 - Why become a Green Community?
 - Reduce energy costs at municipal buildings.
 - Ayer is eligible for green community funds from the state
 - Energy efficient construction for new homes.
 - The grant on year one should be approximately \$150,000 for Ayer
 - Requirements for Green Community:
 - “As of Right” zoning
 - Expedited zoning for green projects
 - Reduce energy use in the town by 20% or more
 - Purchasing only fuel efficient vehicles for the town.
 - Stretch Code for construction increases energy efficiency and provides consumer protection.
 - The Stretch Code affects both new construction and remodeling. Each new home is given a HERS rating showing its energy efficiency. New homes are required to be given HERS ratings. Existing homes that are remodeled may have HERS inspection but it is not required.
 - Question from audience – Can there be grants and incentives for owners of older homes to incentivize them to remodel and update energy efficiency?
 - The program could fund some grants to homeowners.
 - SH - Is there an increase in permit fees due to the HERS rating?
 - The HERS inspection is separate from the building inspection and must be completed by a certified HERS inspector.
 - CS – What about mold in new houses. A tighter house can lead to the breeding of mold?
 - The Stretch Code design is an advantage and increases breathability of houses, reducing mold.
 - Ted Staples – The new building code that will be coming out in the next year is anticipated to be similar to the Stretch Code. There is also a rumor that the Stretch code could be come the building soon.
 - Grants in year one will be approximately \$150,000. The program has large grants for new towns as incentives to be a Green Community. Money comes from the carbon tax program Massachusetts belongs to. The money is pooled and disbursed among Green Communities.
 - The cost for the Town of Ayer is expected to be zero for reducing energy use by 20%. The grant money used to replace the furnace at the waste water treatment plant will be effective enough to reduce the town’s green house gases by 20%.
- Fire Department Update – Chief Pedrazzi

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Bozek, who has been on 111F medical leave, is expected to return to work on April 16. If he does the anticipated deficit from his leave will decrease \$8,000. There is still no word from the insurance company on the town's claim of 111F so reimbursement is not expected any time soon.
- Januskiewicz took Family Medical Leave to care for his wife.
 - BM – Is he using sick time during FML?
 - Yes, he is using both sick and vacation time during his absence. This requires pay out of sick time and wages for replacement.
- Another captain has a torn rotator cuff and will be out of work for 3 months.
- Currently one third of the full time staff is out of work right now.
- The financial impact is salaries are higher than budget right now. The brush fire in July 2010 put a strain on the budget. Now more on call people are required to work longer shifts to cover for out of work individuals who are being paid sick or vacation time. Currently there are two on call people working full time to cover the station. In addition to the cost, there is a smaller pool of individuals “on call” to respond to an emergency. There are 7 new on call people over the last few years but experience is lacking.
- Town Warrants for Annual Town Meeting – Draft 1 of the articles. Articles are presented in minutes in the order on the warrant not necessarily the order they were discussed.
 - Article 1 and 3 – Town Elections and Reports
 - Pass by consent of the committee
 - Article 3 – Freeze Compensation Plan for FY2012
 - No steps or COLA are given for FY2012
 - Motion to recommend Article 3 as written in the warrant

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 4 – Salaries of Elected Officials
 - Discussion – CS – The salaries for the treasurer and clerk should have been lower after the 2010 elections due to new people moving into the position. If there positions are appointed in the future, the salary can fluctuate with experience.
 - The treasurer and clerk positions are at the top step for the pay grid. They are generally given only a COLA increase.
 - Motion to recommend Article 4 as written in the warrant

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | AC |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Nay |
| Vote | 4 -1 |

- Article 5 – Omnibus budget
 - Discussion
 - SH – FinCom recommended eliminating the treasurer's part time person on April 8th. There is an anticipa
 -

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- tion of reduced workload with the regionalization of schools.
 - Motion to reduce Dept 200 Line 05 – Treasurer Wages to \$111,0615

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- BM – There was \$128,000 in expenses charged back to the school district in FY2011. If regionalization is in place why are there no significant savings within the omnibus?
- Motion to approve the FY2012 omnibus budget with the line reduction in dept 200 line 05 to \$111,615

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 6 – Ayer Shirley Regional School District assessment
 - Discussion
 - There RSC is meeting with the towns one more time and may adjust the number. Updated warrants will be available at the BOS meeting on April 19th. FinCom is requested to attend to vote any changes in the articles.
 - Motion to pass on Article 6, 7, and 8 which pertain to RSC business

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 9 – Solid Waste
 - Discussion - None
 - Motion to pass on Article 9 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | AC |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 10 – Ambulance
 - Discussion - None

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Motion to pass on Article10 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 11 – Ambulance
 - Discussion - None
 - Motion to pass on Article11 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 12 – Water
 - Discussion - None
 - Motion to pass on Article 12 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 – Revolving Fund Articles
 - Discussion - None
 - Motion to pass on Article 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Article 19 – Capital Budget Requests
 - Discussion – Amend to add clarification that this capital spending will be from the enterprise funds not the omnibus budget.
 - Motion to pass on Article 19 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 20 – Unexpended Balance Transfer
 - Discussion – Unexpected transfer within the enterprise fund for the Groton School pump station rehabilitation. Amend the article to include the total cost of the project
 - Motion to pass on Article 20 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 21 – Extraordinary Maintenance Requests
 - Discussion – These requests were turn down by the capital planning committee. The article somehow moved forward without approval from capital planning.
 - SH – There is a process in place for these items. If capital planning said “no” we must respect that decision.
 - Motion of “no support” for on Article 21 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 22 – Town Clerk – Binding of Books
 - Discussion – There are other avenues for funding available to the clerk. Other towns have uses Community Preservation Funds for binding historical documents. The BOS will be recommending this article

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Motion to pass over on Article 32 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 23 – Capital Exclusion

- Discussion – On the ballot of the April 25 elections. Requires dual approval by town meeting and ballot.
- Motion to pass on Article 23 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 24 and 25 – Acquire Rakip Property – Central Avenue/Acquire Zodiac Property

- Discussion – FinCom was not aware these would be on the warrant. To no one’s knowledge has there been any additional discussion to acquire these sites.
 - CS – In the fall, there was a purchase and sale agreement for one site and an agreement in principle for the purchase of the other. The properties are selling for less than their assessed value. These are buildable lots.
- Motion to pass on Article 24 and 25 as presented

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | AC |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Abstain |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 4 - 0 |

- Article 26 – Stabilization

- Discussion – The final number will not be known until town meeting itself. There is also funding of GASB45 that is needed within the tax levy.
 - BM – I would like to split the remaining tax levy between Stabilization and GASB45. the \$10,000 for GASB 45 is too low. This is a known liability of \$1.3m per year. The \$10,000 is a token amount.
 - SH – The financial policies state a minimal funding into stabilization each year. The current amount of \$89K is under the minimum calculation. Given how tight the budget is we should fund stabilization to protect ourselves against unforeseen expenses.
 - Article 26 is passed by consent of the committee due to changes within the warrants that will occur within the next week
- Motion to recommend splitting any remaining tax levy between GASb45 and stabilization

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | AC |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Nay |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 4 - 1 |

- Article 27 – Community Preservation Act
 - Discussion - None
 - Motion to pass on Article 27 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Article 28 – CPAC Transfer of Funds
 - Discussion - None
 - Committee passes on article 28 by consent
- Article 29 – CPAC – Passive Recreation Area
 - Discussion – Pocket park located adjacent to the Pleasant Street School. This park is for passive use only. There will be no activity. The surrounding residents have expressed support for the park.
 - Motion to pass on Article 29 as presented

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | AC |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Abstain |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Nay |
| Vote | 3 - 1 |

- Article 30 – CPAC – Old Nutting Building aka Fletcher Building
 - Discussion – There is a bigger question whether CPAC funding should be disbursed to for profit businesses. The builder is requesting these funds to match state funds for rehabilitation of the building. There will be 2 of six units as low income housing. The sitting FinCom member (SH) was not present at the public forum for this building held in February to voice concern and opposition.
 - A motion is made by CS to recommend support of Article 30 as presented. No second is given, the motion dies on the floor.
- Article 31 – GASB45
 - Discussion – This article is for the establishment of the fund. There is no provision for funding. We need to add a second article for funding.

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Motion to pass on Article 31 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | AC |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 – 0 |

- Article 32 – Storm Water Utility Fund
 - Discussion – FinCom was told by the town accountant that this would not be presented again at town meeting until the fall at the earliest. This article as written was defeated in the 2010 STM. The wording of the article allows fees to be established. This is the wording to establish the enterprise fund. A majority of the committee wishes to pass by consent to receive additional information from the BOS regarding this article.
 - A motion is made to “not support” article 32 as presented by CS. There is no second, therefore the motions dies on the floor.
 - The committee passes by consent.
- Article 33 – Care and Custody of Pingry Way
 - Discussion - None
 - Pass by consent
- Article 34 – ByLaw Amendment – Stretch Code
 - Discussion – Presentation earlier this meeting
 - Motion to recommend Article 34 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 – 0 |

- Article 35 – Aquifer By Law Amendment
 - Discussion – None
 - Motion to pass on Article 35 as presented

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 – 0 |

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Article 36, 37, and 38 – Union Contracts
 - Discussion – Union contracts are not final
 - Committee passes on these articles by consent.

- Article 39 – Flannagan (Fletchers) Pond vegetation control – Citizen Petition
 - Chuck Miller of Calvin Street discussed the reason for the citizen petition.
 - There is currently no maintenance plan for the pond. Years of neglect has led to the need for weed control. The pond is almost unuseable in summer due to weeds. Part of the needed maintenance is dam control. Flannagan’s Pond is a flooded meadow and 8 feet at its deepest. The shallow water leads to additional weed growth. The dams have not been topped off in prior years leading to lower water levels in all the ponds. Conservation Committee is charged with maintaining the ponds.
 - The funding being requested is \$35,000. This will be used for weed control treatment and a hydro rake.
 - JR – Does the pond have public access?
 - CM – Yes. There is access on Snake Hill Road, Oak Ridge Drive, Central Ave., and Groton Harvard Rd.
 - The residents have been told for years that the use of fertilizer along the waters edge leads to the weeds. However, in discussion with the company that did the last treatment, Mr. Miller was told the affect of the fertilizer is minimal. Conservation Commission has \$32,000 for pond maintenance in a fund. They are allocated \$8,640 in FY2012 budget for pond maintenance.
 - \$35,000 is for the initial treatment. The future years should be lower with spot treatments. Flannagan’s Pond has been ignored in the past few years, Other ponds in town have had maintenance performed in this time.
 - Motion to recommend Article 39 as presented

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | BM |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Nay |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Abstain |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 3 - 1 |

- Article 40 – SHAVE Program
 - Motion to pass on Article 40

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Abstain |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 4 - 0 |

- Article 42 – Commercial Zoning on Rt 110
 - Motion to pass on Article 41

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- Motion to pass on Article 41

| | |
|-------------|---------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | SH |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Abstain |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 4 - 0 |

- There are possibly 2 articles missing. One to establish a GASB45 fund and the other to fund storm water enterprise fund.
 - CS – Is it possible to fund the storm water amount to Stabilization and then transfer at Fall Town meeting?
- Article 5 – Omnibus Budget
 - BM – There was \$128,000 in expense in prior years charged back to the schools. If regionalization begins in FY2011, why are there no savings within the omnibus?
 - The current budget in article 5 does not include the reduced line item removing the part time employee for the treasurer.
 - Motion to reduce line 200 005 to \$111,615

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | SH |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

- Motion to recommend splitting the remaining funds from the omnibus budget evenly between Stabilization and GASB45

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | AC |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Nay |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 4 - 1 |

- Motion to accept Article 5 as adjusted with reduction in the treasurer’s line item

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | CS |
| Second | JR |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

Motion to adjourn at 10:50pm

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| Motion | JR |
| Second | CS |
| B. Muldoon | Aye |
| J. Reich | Aye |
| S. Houde | Aye |
| A. Crowley | Aye |
| C. Sullivan | Aye |
| Vote | 5 - 0 |

Town of Ayer
Finance Committee
Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Brian Muldoon, Chairman _____ Date _____

Jesse Reich, Vice Chairman _____ Date _____

Scott Houde, Clerk _____ Date _____

Andrew Crowley, Member _____ Date _____

Connie Sullivan, Member _____ Date _____