

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
Finance Committee Minutes

Thursday January 19, 2012

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Vice Chairman, John Kilcommins; Clerk, Michael Pattenden; member
In Attendance: Robert Pedrazzi, Timothy Johnston, Steve Slarsky, Mary Spinner, Lisa Gabree

Called to order at 7:10 pm by Brian Muldoon

- Fire Department Budget
 - RP Led a discussion of the proposed Fire Dept budget.
 - BM-How will the proposed cuts impact the department?
 - RP-The deferred step raises will be felt this year. Also, longevity clauses in the contracts come due yearly. This represents just shy of a \$10K increase alone before we cut the budget.
 - JK-What % of your budget is driven or set by contracts?
 - RP-It may be even higher than the police department. There is not much that I can change.
 - SH-If there are three people on duty and an EMT call comes do you backfill the two that went on the call?
 - RP-Not anymore. We do not backfill unless a call comes in.
 - RP-We continue to pursue grant opportunities as alternative funding.
 - SS Led a discussion of the Call Dept.
 - SS-There is no difference in terms of equipment or training between the Call fire department members and the full time employees. These are part time personnel and not auxiliary or back up.
 - RP-There is a growing difference between the full time and call duty pay rates.
 - RP-The town would need, via arbitration, to prove that it didn't have the money to reduce the number of firefighters on duty.
 - SH-To the public it can look like a big department for our size town.
 - RP-We are comparable to Maynard and Hudson. They don't have on call departments like we do. We also have the rail road, a hospital, heavy industry and a milling operation.
 - SH-Seems like the other towns are under staffed, does this cause a reliance on Ayer?
 - RP-Yes and no. There is mutual aid. Devens is the biggest user of mutual aid.
 - SH-How does our number of calls compare to the surrounding towns?
 - RP-Ours are more than double Groton's. Shirley and Harvard have way less calls too. It can depend on what you term a call. We just count emergencies. Our industrial-residential mix is comparable to Boston; we are not just a bedroom community.
 - MP-Can we get rid of the call boxes?
 - RP-There are close to 50 on buildings, they are not just on telephone poles. Those buildings pay us for their boxes.
 - SH-Is it worth getting rid of the ones on poles?
 - RP-We don't replace them as they break and they don't cost us anything to operate.
 - SH-When were the various Fire Dept fees last updated?
 - RP-March of 2010. Many of the fees are set by the state and we charge the maximum allowed.

- Ambulance Enterprise and Emergency Management Budgets
 - BM- What is going on with the Ambulance Enterprise fund?
 - RP-Over the last 4 years the fund 'made money'. There was a positive net result between the fees and costs. I'm not sure what this year will bring but calls are down.
 - LG-Through November the fund is running \$40K behind last year.
 - BM-The Emergency Management, wasn't this a \$10K budget at one time.
 - RP-Not while I've been here.
 - BM-What should this be?

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- RP-I don't know exactly. We have been getting grant money, without the grants this could be \$3-4K easily. The grants supply things like cots, blankets and trailers to keep them in.
- General Discussion-Health Insurance
 - BM Led a discussion of the town employee health insurance renewals.
 - BM-Elements of the Home Rule Petition passed at town meeting allows for the town to pull health insurance from employee contracts.
 - BM-I would like to write a letter to the BOS asking them to adopt this.
 - SH-Made a motion to authorize the FinCom Chair to write a memo to the Board of Selectmen asking them to enact Section 21 of the Home Rule Petition as enacted by town meeting.

Motion	SH
Second	MP
B. Muldoon	Aye
S. Houde	Aye
J. Kilcommins	Aye
M. Pattenden	Aye
Vote	4 - 0

- SH-The memo should include something to the effect of.....you are the executive body but the legislative body is town meeting and it has spoken...
- Motion to adjourn at 8:27 pm

Motion	SH
Second	MP
B. Muldoon	Aye
S. Houde	Aye
J. Kilcommins	Aye
M. Pattenden	Aye
Vote	4 - 0

Brian Muldoon, Chairman _____ Date _____

Scott Houde, Vice Chairman _____ Date _____

John Kilcommins, Clerk _____ Date _____

Michael Pattenden, Member _____ Date _____