

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
Finance Committee Minutes

Tuesday January 31, 2012

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Vice Chairman, John Kilcommins; Clerk, Michael Pattenden; member
In Attendance: Mary Spinner, Pauline Conley, Dan Nason

Called to order at 7:25 pm by Brian Muldoon

- General Discussion
 - BM provided an updated based on the latest Bi-Board meeting.
 - BM-There will be a change to Chapter 70 funds next year due to an increasing number of students heading to the vocational school.
 - BM-Firefighter step increases will be coming due this year. Lisa Gabree has put placeholders into the budget for now. Vocational education may require a reserve fund transfer or special town meeting for funding.
 - SH-Will update the model for distribution to FinCom.
- DPW Budget-Administration
 - BM-I'd like to go over the request for an Assistant Supervisor.
 - DN-There is a definite need. There are a number of ongoing projects. At the same time there is no human resources presence for the DPW yet I spend a lot of time on personnel management. There is a definite need for a general or civil engineer.
 - SH-Is it the expertise that is lacking?
 - DN-Yes, there is too much day to day work along with the larger projects.
 - SH-You set the salary range at 70-75K? This would be an additional hire and not a replacement?
 - DN-Yes this would be an additional hire. A simple salary comparison does not work. You can't compare Ayer to any other 7,000 person town due to our different infrastructure. Town Engineer would be another option though I prefer it be Assistant Supervisor, someone who could cover for the Supervisor.
 - BM-What would the impact be if we level funded?
 - DN-If there is an increase to salaries then we have to reduce other areas, there is no real good spot to delete.
- Highway
 - DN-Any proposed reduction will result in a cut back in services.
 - SH-How much Chapter 90 money will we see this year?
 - DN-Close to 290K.
 - SH-This all goes to road repair?
 - DN-Yes. This funding hasn't kept up with the times, asphalt prices are up.
 - DN Discussed the remaining unaccepted roads in town. It could cost a couple hundred thousand to accept them.
- Snow Removal
 - DN-This year is looking OK so far.
 - BM-Can deficit spend as an option...
 - DN-May want to think of using a 5 year average for budgeting average for budgeting this area going forward.
- Street Lights
 - BM-Are we where we need to be?
 - DN-I think so. We're trying out LED lights now.
 - MS-It's part of the green communities funding
 - MP-Who do we buy electricity from?

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- DN-Constellation and National Grid.
- Fuel
 - DN-The only way to offset this expense is to buy more fuel efficient vehicles. The snow removal fuel comes from the snow removal budget.
 - BM-It looks like we're where we need to be?
 - DN-Yes, we're doing OK.
- Equipment Repair
 - DN-Cited note 1 on this budget "Any proposed reduction in Vehicle Repairs, Safety Supplies, or Vehicle Supplies will jeopardize the life-safety of municipal vehicles, operators of these vehicles and the mechanic."
 - DN-This budget includes just one individual, it's mostly salary. We can't do much about the rest, not a lot of leeway.
- Water Enterprise Fund
 - DN-I am very conservative on this budget. There are some things we have no control over like steel prices, the price of new meters etc
 - BM-This is where the water rate committee comes in.
- Sewer Enterprise Fund
 - DN-I'm really concerned about the sewer budget for FY12. We had a major process upset last summer and fixing it was a long expensive process. I don't know where the budget will be at the end of the year, there may be a deficit. Some of the unexpected costs will be offset by savings in heat and lighting.
- Solid Waste Enterprise Fund
 - JK-What makes up account 57600 indirect cost? This is a six figure item.
 - DN-Not positive, I noted that the figure came from the Town Accountant.
 - JK-I will follow up with Lisa.
 - SH-Do your figures still show that the transfer station is viable vs. curbside pickup?
 - DN-Yes.
- Stormwater Management
 - DN- I'm afraid for the life of the stormwater budget. Much of the BOS are not proponents but town meeting has spoken. With my departure I fear for this going forward. A RFQ has generated two replies so far.
 - SH-What is the amount needed for plan compliance?
 - DN-320K. That's a conservative number. More money would be great.
 - BM-Where are we with compliance?
 - DN-Behind. We have done the filings but we are not compliant. We need to map out the town's GIS (Geographic Infrastructure System). This should have been done years ago.
- General Discussion
 - JK-If Ayer were to reacquire its historical boundaries, including a built out Vicksburg Square, what would the impact be on the DPW?
 - DN-For us it's less about land acquisition then infrastructure. Their infrastructure does not connect to ours; there is a gap between Devens and Ayer.
 - DN-(In reply to MP's comment on aging infrastructure) We are not alone, all communities have aging infrastructures. There is no financial help but we keep getting new EPA mandates.
 - MP-It seems to me that we really need to find the X number of millions in the next 2-3 years.
 - SH-60% of the budget is contractual wages and benefits.
 - DN-Educating the public is the key.

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- Motion to adjourn at 9:35 pm

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| Motion | SH |
| Second | JK |
| 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 _____