

Approved: 11/2/2017  
Voted: 4-0-0

## ASHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Date: 10/05/2017

Meeting called to order: 7:06 pm

Meeting adjourned: 9:01 pm

Members present: Mary Fitz-Gibbon, Melinda Gougeon,  
Carol Lebold, Ted Murray, Carl Satterfield

Also present: K. Warren-Town Administrator, Emily Robertson-School  
Committee, Poppy Doyle-School Committee

No minutes were presented for approval.

### **Business**

1. Chairman Murray introduced Emily Robertson and Poppy Doyle who discussed current plans of the Mohawk Regional School District and provided various informational topics relative to the district. They stressed the need to discuss financial issues with local town boards because of the impact of the regional school budget on town budgeting. They reported that the pellet furnace installed in the grammar school is working well to reduce heating costs. They also outlined several goals of the district including moving the sixth grade to the regional high school, presenting three amendments to the regional school agreement concerning the Town of Rowe's participation in the district, examining the bussing of students and possibly having the district purchase and operate its own bussing fleet. They indicated that the district is close to finalizing contract negotiations with the teachers. E. Robertson gave the committee a schedule of MTRSD budget meetings for FY19 and encouraged all to attend. Chairman Murray emphasized, based on large expenditures facing Ashfield in the near future, that is important that School Committee and School Department develop a relatively conservative budget request for the next fiscal year.
2. Town Administrator Warren gave a report on the audit management letter and some of the actions taken in response to the letter. She indicated that progress has been made on sewer and water billing and that the cash

management software would be installed and working soon. She further told the committee that it is not now possible to know the impact of broadband on property valuations. Chairman Murray suggested that the impact might be approximately \$5000 per property. In discussing special purpose funds, she informed the committee that such funds could not be closed and any remaining balance made available until the original purpose of the fund had been achieved. During this discussion M. Gougeon indicated that more information is needed before beginning the process of trust fund consolidation. Administrator Warren also informed the committee that she is seeking advice on providing adequate funding for OPEB to cover future retirement costs. Chairman Murray responded that Ashfield has adopted the approach of setting aside several thousand dollars each year for that purpose. In addition, Administrator Warren reported that the auditor will be able to complete cash reconciliation in the near future.

3. Chairman Murray requested suggestions as to future financial needs of Ashfield to be forwarded to the Board of Selectmen. Items suggested included broadband for the town, repairs of Town Hall, various library projects, repairs of town bridges, purchase of a new fire engine, establishing a new senior center, etc.. (See attachment)

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 5, 0, 0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carl Satterfield

**ATTACHMENTS:**

“MTRSD-Draft Budget Calendar FY19”

E-mail circulated by Chairman Murray “Future Financial Needs and Priorities”