

MEETING MINUTES OF ASHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 11th, 2013 at the Town Hall

Members Present: Ted Murray (Chair), Ricki Carroll (Finance Committee Liaison), David Newell Janet Rogers, Tom Schreiber

Ted called the meeting to order at approximately 7:07 PM.

1. MINUTES: Janet moved to approve the minutes of November 6th, David seconded and it passed unanimously. Ted announced he received help to put the minutes up on the Town Website. Ted will post all approved minutes in the future. We need to include enough description for anyone who was not present to know what has transpired at any given meeting.

2. FINANCE COMMITTEE MANUEL: Tom Schreiber will take a look at the document from Amherst, which may be able to be used as an outline of a manual for our Finance Committee. He will come back with comments suggestions to the next meeting.

3. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION: David updated the committee on responsibility for oversight for Voc.Ed. There are large decisions over the next 5 years for the town to make on this. We have reconstituted our Voc Advisory committee with people from Ashfield, Plainfield, Charlemont and Hawley. Decisions will need to be made collectively with the 4 towns.

There are many issues with increased costs of transportation, such as: gas, flat rates, number of students, etc. Dave went on to say we may be able to negotiate the gas clause, this is the largest issue and there may be a way to take gas out of the equation for the bidding. If as a town we buy our own gas, we may save on State taxes and it may change the bid. David's recommendation is to explore this option for the future. David received a consensus to look into this option.

We may be facing a \$40,000.00 increase, perhaps it is time to explore creative routing.

4. UNFUNDED LIABILITIES: Ted spoke about

1-Pensions which will catch up in 20 years, we have no worries on that.

2-Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) needing money are Health Care and Retirement. Ted spoke about putting money away each year into an OPEB stabilization fund to go into at times of need, to limit the impact of these liabilities we could earmark money for this purpose. Ted moved for FY15 the FinCom recommend the establishment and initial funding of an OPEB stabilization account. David seconded and it passed unanimously.

5. DRAFT of ANNUAL REPORT: Ted presented a first draft of the FinCom report for the annual meeting. He will present it with amendments to Lynn for the Town Report.

6. EMAIL FROM RON COLER: Ted spoke of the Retaining Wall at Sanderson Field. This is owned 1/3 by the Town and 2/3rds by the Trustees of the Academy. On Wednesday January 15th Tighe & Bond will give a report at the Town Hall on the retaining wall.

5. There being no other business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 9:02pm

Submitted by, Ricki Carroll