

Town of Ashfield
Select Board and Finance Committee budget meeting
February 29, 2016

The Select Board and Finance Committee had a joint meeting for the purpose of a 2017 budget discussion. The meeting was held at the Ashfield Town Hall in the Upper Hall on February 29, 2016 at 7:00 PM. There were no audio recorders at the meeting.

Select Board: Chair -Tom Carter. Vice Chair- Ron Coler, Todd Olanyk

Finance Committee: Ted Murray-Chair, Tom Schreiber, Carol Lebold, Lindy Gougeon, David Newell

Town Administrator: Kayce Warren (absent)

Asst. Municipal Clerk/Scribe: Lynn Taylor

This meeting was to discuss the budgets for the following departments: **MTRSD and Vocational Schools:** Michael Buoniconti & Emily Robertson School Committee member. **Sewer Commission:** Nancy Hoff & Tom Miner. **Website/IT:** David Kulp.

Carter calls the Select Board to order at 7:06 PM

Murray calls the Fin. Comm. to order at 7:07 PM

MINUTES:

Minutes of 2/17/2016: (document 2)

Select Board - Coler makes a motion to approve the minutes of 02/17/2016 as amended, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE: 3-0-0**

Finance Committee- Newell makes a motion to approve the minutes of 02/17/2016 as amended, seconded by Murray. **VOTE: 4-0-0**

Minutes of 2/22/2016: (document 3)

Select Board- Coler makes a motion to approve the minutes of 2/22/2016 as amended, seconded by Carter. **VOTE: 3-0-0**

MTRSD budget discussion with Emily Robertson and Michael Buoniconti:

(See budget book) There is an increase in the FY 17 School budget from \$2,028,973.00 to **\$2,174,456.00** an increase of 7.17 % for a difference of \$145,484.00. Buoniconti advises that this year is the highest budget he has seen to date. The discussion with the Boards contains many ideas including but not limited to decrease due to enrollment to Voke Schools, Charter Schools, School choice etc. and the closing of Grammar Schools within the district in order to bring the budget down so it is affordable for the Towns. According to both Robertson and Buoniconti they have been dipping into their savings and if the pattern with the budget stays as it is in two years there will be no money at all and E & D would be depleted. Carter asked if it was possible to close Sanderson Academy send our kids to Buckland Shelburne, change the use of Sanderson for Senior housing in Ashfield. The question was asked if all the district kids would be able to fit into Mohawk and BSE if all the other schools were to close. With changes and reorganization of the schools that would be possible. There will be more changes to the regional agreement being put forward for the Annual Town meetings, and Robertson is not optimistic but hopeful they will pass. Buoniconti advises that they are trying to organize and form a Rural Schools Association.

Sewer Commissioners: (see budget book) Tom Miner & Nancy Hoff are at the meeting to present the budget to the Boards. The budget presented has an overall increase from \$140,425.60 to FY17 \$148,504.32 an increase of \$8,079. Hoff explains that they would like to give the Operators of the plant a 3% pay increase above the 2% cola of other Town Employees, but the Boards advise that the cola needs to be more across the board rather than the 3% increase. Other areas of increase are repairs and maintenance, equipment replacement, truck maintenance and fuel. Hoff explains that they are up for license renewal for 2017 which requires a \$20,000.00 Engineering study. Hoff adds that the enterprise fund is roughly \$80,000.00 + or -

Vocational School: David Newell reviews his preliminary budget to the Boards. He will not have numbers on new student enrollment until around early April. A projection of \$514,829.00 for FY17 has been placed in the budget line item until more definite numbers can be worked out. The registration period for Voke has just opened up and already Ashfield has three students who have been approved for the Franklin Technical School. The word is that there will be high enrollment this year for the Voke Schools. Newell thanks the Select Board for appointing Lynn Taylor and Kayce Warren to the VEAC committee, which will be meeting on 3/15/2016.

Information Technology/Website: David Kulp reviews the proposed FY17 budget to the Boards. The FY17 budget has increased from FY16 \$12,170.00 to FY17 \$20,400.00 an increase of \$8,230.00. Kulp goes through the budget line by line agreeing to reduce Wired West dues \$1,000.00, Northeast IT by \$1,300.00, and hardware and software by \$1,000.00 being a reduction of \$3,300.00, which is still an increase over FY16 by \$4,930.00.

Carter hands out a written sheet spelling out budget figures. **(document 4)** and board goes on with budget discussion for FY17. Carters sheet shows the free cash amount \$222,446.00 take \$30,000.00 out for down payment on new backhoe (take a debt exclusion for \$100,000.00 for two years)take \$20,000.00 put aside for a future cruiser. After discussion it was agreed to take the \$30 K for backhoe, take \$12,500.00 put aside for library and \$20000.00 for cruiser. The recommendation is to also take \$100,000.00 from free cash to help balance the budget which would leave roughly \$60,000.00 in free cash. Newell expresses that he is not convinced on the need for two cruisers. For information, \$110,000.00 override would be \$.50 on the dollar.

Coler hands out letter and budget of \$9,000.00 for invasive weeds in the lake **(document 9)**

MOTIONS:

Olanyk makes a motion to request the Town clerk to prepare a ballot question for a Proposition 2 ½ Over-ridefor the amount of \$120,000.00 for the purpose of paying Town and School bills, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0(document 5)** members sign

Carter makes a motion to request the Town Clerk to prepare a ballot question for Proposition 2 ½ Debt Exclusion for the purchase of a new backhoe, seconded by Olanyk. **VOTE 3-0-0 (document 6)** members sign

Fin Comm. adjourns their meeting at 10:01 PM

Olanyk makes a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the contract with Northeast IT, seconded by Coler. **VOTE 3-0-0 (document 7)**

Olanyk makes a motion to authorize the chair or their agent to sign the grant contract with MBI, seconded by Coler. **VOTE: 3-0-0 (document 8)**

Olanyk makes a motion to adjourn the SB meeting at 10:06 PM, seconded by Coler.

SB adjourned at 10:06 PM

Document List

1. **Agenda for 02/29/2016**
2. **Minutes of 2/17/2016**
3. **Minutes of 2/22/2016**
4. **Written sheet spelling out budget figures drafted by Carter**
5. **Drafts of motions by town Clerk for Prop 2 1/2**
6. **Drafts of motions by Town clerk for debt exclusion**
7. **Northeast IT Contract**
8. **MBI Grant contract with MBI**
9. **Letter and budget for invasive weeds in the lake**
- 10.