

MEETING MINUTES OF ASHFIELD FINANCE COMMITTEE

August 27th, 2015 at Ashfield Town Hall

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

Ted called the meeting to order at app. 7:02

1. Minutes:

The minutes of August 13th were read, a motion was made, seconded and passed unanimously to accept as written. 3-0-0 (Janet & Tom were not here yet) (See Doc.2)

2. School Committee:

a. Poppy Doyle and Emily Robertson gave a presentation. Buckland Shelburne had a meeting to discuss repairs of their school building. There is no effect on Ashfield with this.

b. There is a special education student who has a \$250,000.00/year cost and is not in our district. However due to personal family circumstances, the child is paid for in our MTRSD budget completely.

c. There is New Legislation for bus transportation and special needs and returning money to towns.

d. Pre-School enrollment is up to 40 at this time. There are children from Cummington who would like to come to Ashfield; however there may not be room for them. After school opens and we see the actual enrollment and timing of the students this will be reevaluated and they may be let in; this could bring the total enrollment up to 50

e. Interest is rising in Voc Ed which will create a challenge for the Town.

f. Ted mentioned two of the larger possible expenses coming up for the Town: the upgrade of the Recycling Center and the possibility of buying the Dodson Building.

g. David wanted to say thank you to Emily and Poppy for all their great work.

3. Warrant (See Doc 3)

Article 1 Derek Brendizi is asking if \$400.00/mo could be provided for travel rather than used in the \$11,000.00 Health Care costs for him. He is obtaining his own Health Care Coverage and this would save the Town \$7000.00. Moved and Seconded, 4-0-1 (David: not enough information at this time) passed

Article 2 The Lake Invasives, need more treatment, to transfer funds from Belding Park Restoration Account. Moved and Seconded to Pass until more information is obtained, 5-0-0 passed

Article 3 To Transfer money not to exceed \$25,000.00 to repair the Belding Memorial Library Roof prior to this winter, \$40,000.00-\$50,000.00 cost. Moved and Seconded to Recommend 5-0-0 passed

Article 4 Broadband \$2.3m borrowing

Chris Lynch of Matrix thinks we need more, Clark Rowell thought we should borrow \$3.7m. MBI will give us \$1.4m, Eric Nakajima said if we go for \$3.7m then it would signal that MBI might not be good for the money, and he thought \$2.3m should be adequate.

Question for Chris Grey: is wireless technology a possible last mile solution for Ashfield.

Answer: Yes, less it would be significantly less expensive, however it would have a shorter lifespan.

- could build a complete system for less than \$500,000.

- speed with a wireless system is not as quick

- it is easier for fiber optics to scale up for needs

- fiber optics is the best but most expensive option

- wireless is 3x's faster than DSL

Question: Should and how can the Town find out if wireless is valuable

Answer: Yes, other towns are looking into plans

David Kulp from the Technology Committee discussed path forward should they try to do a wireless solution ourselves. Risks: GAW did not pan out, poorly run company and our terrain is challenging.

Rowe and Washington tried wireless, it would require telecommunications towers, not as robust as fiber optic cable, supported by steel and can have interference and engineering problems. Fiber optics has a great deal of external support vs. wireless. Wireless systems have a maximum amount it can handle, fiber optics can update and have a larger capacity in the future.

What about a combined project of wireless and broadband? MBI money would not be available for construction, but only the aggregate \$18m for design of fiber to home. The revenue stream coming in is unknown right now. Conway is on Wired West and has Comcast now, they joined WW to get full service to all homes because not all towns are served.

David Newell asked, are we going about this backwards, putting the cart before the horse? Article 4 Moved and Seconded 3-2(Ricki/David)-0 passed.

David recommended to the Town Meeting article 4 be amended as follows: Prior to such debt being incurred the Town Meeting shall approve the plan for the construction and operating of such Broadband Network. Moved and Seconded 2(Ricki/ David)-3(Ted/Janet/Tom)-0 did not pass.

4. Vocational School Report (See Doc 4)

David Newell gave a report, the bus is currently overloaded, more students on tech van than seats available. \$4000/yr/child if a parent drives which is 10% of the cost if another bus is needed. Motion to accept a parent agreement subject to Town consent, Moved and Seconded 5-0-0 passed.

5. Mary Priscilla Howe's Fund

Janet Rogers contacted Joyce Muka to make two separate accounts, one of 75% of the money to distribute and the other 25% of earning to go back to the principal. A Motion was Moved and Seconded 5-0-0 passed.

6. Future Meetings

September 8th, 6:30 we will go over article 2 with further information from Derek Brindisi.

7. There being no other business before the board, a motion to adjourn was made, seconded and passed unanimously 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at app. 9:47pm.

DOCUMENT LIST

1 - Agenda

2 – Minutes of August 13, 2015

3 - Warrant

4 – Vocational Report

Submitted by, Ricki Carroll, 8/27/2015