



Ashfield Select Board Meeting

Monday, February 13, 2017, 7:00 pm

Ashfield Town Hall, 412 Main Street, Ashfield MA 01330

Finance Committee Members Present:

Ted Murray, Melinda Gougeon, Carl Satterfield, Carol Lebold

Absent: Mary Fitz-Gibbon

Select Board Members Present: Todd Olanyk, Ron Coler, Tom Carter

Also Present: Town Administrator Warren

Members of the Audience included – MTRSD Business Manager Michael Kociela, School Committee Members Emily Robertson and Poppy Doyle, Vocational Education Coordinator David Newell, Belding Memorial Library Trustees Caroline Murray and Marcine Appel (Eisenberg), Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee Chair Alan Rice, Wayne Wickland, Doug Cranson, MLP Director David Kulp.

Finance Committee Chair Murray called the Finance Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Olanyk called the budget meeting with Finance Committee to order at 7:02 pm.

Budget Discussion/Decision Items

A. School Committee

School Committee stipends have not changed from past years, as seen in attachments (Document 2)

B. Mohawk Trail Regional School District Operations & Capital Budget & Assessments

Robertson outlined the budget, as attached (Document packet 3). Business Manager Kociela noted that state aid is flat, as seen in past years, and the minimum contribution for Ashfield is down. This budget reflects significant cuts in many areas, as well as the use of some transportation reimbursement funds and Excess & Deficiency funds to offset costs.

Robertson also stated that Pre-Kindergarten enrollments are not reflected for purposes of receiving state aid as MTRSD has not completed the required DESE process to include them in the school enrollment count. Shouldn't expect those numbers to impact budget development until FY2019.

Kociela noted that there are no new capital requests in the FY2018 budget and none can be expected for the next five years.

Carter requested clarification of the Heterogeneous learning program model. Robertson explained that there was a recent transition to that teaching model in the middle school and that the process had not been as smooth as expected. Superintendent Buoniconti added support staff and expects the model to be working effectively in the next school year.

Kociela noted that so far four (4) students from Ashfield in the middle school have filed requests to attend Franklin County Technical School (FCTS). The Select Board reiterated their school preference that students may choose either Smith Vocational School or FCTS depending on their interest in programs previously communicated to Superintendent Buoniconti.

C. Vocational Education Budget

Vocational Educational Coordinator Newell noted the number of students and reminded everyone that the current budget request amount is a placeholder of 5% above the FY2017 appropriation, subject to confirmation after April 1, 2017 when enrollment applications close. Budget cover page attached (Document packet 4).

D. Assessors Budgets

The Assessors requested that their presentation be re-scheduled. Warren has placed them on the agenda for the next budget meeting, February 27, 2016. See attached budgets (Documents packet 5).

E. Belding Memorial Library Budget

Caroline Murray and Marcine Appel presented the budget (Document packet 6). Murray noted that the budget was up 5.7% due to increased costs and less revenue to off-set expenses. The actual operational budget is higher than the funds appropriated by the Town, paid through other revenue sources such as donation and revolving funds, as well as investment and endowment money.

Circulation is up from 16% in mid-2013 to 29% in 2017. However, revenue such as rental income decreased after the Trustees changed their approach to room rental. They felt that the dividends in library traffic created community goodwill and exposure to resources. The increase in circulation numbers seems to bear that out. Both Finance Committee Chair Murray and Select Board member Carter questioned that.

Satterfield questioned the increase of 10% in the allocation to staff payroll. Murray noted that costs reflect increased hours for staff to backfill for the Director for benefit time (vacation, personal, and sick). It also reflects a COLA increase of 2% as stipulated in the budget memorandum.

Murray asked where the Select Board was with the Salary Study. Chair Olanyk said that it wasn't on this agenda for discussion, but would be on the next agenda of the regular Select Board meeting (2/21/17).

F. Open Space & Recreation Plan Budget

Alan Rice, Chair of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Committee explained that the committee has been revising the OSRP plan, as required every six (6) years. He referenced the project estimate and support letters attached (Document packet 7).

This effort began in 2016 with Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds received from the FRCOG. Additional grant funds are available in addition to those DLTA funds, which might allow the committee to complete the next phase of revisions. He asked the group to consider a funding line item of approximately \$2,500 to match prospective technical assistance grant funds of \$8,950 approved for calendar year 2017. If grant funds were not available in 2018, the OSRP Committee might ask for additional funds to complete the plan.

Rice explained that his experience is that this committee is working diligently and effectively and he is confident that the committee could finish the work within 2 years at most. Not only are these plans useful to obtain future grants for open space and recreational activities, the document could be a useful tool for future conservation efforts.

Carter suggested that the group consider adding a line item to the budget for consideration.

G. FRCOG Assessments

FRCOG Expense and Assessments (Document packet 8) will be reviewed at the next budget meeting.

Finance Committee Chair Murray stated that from this point forward, the with regards to minutes of the joint budget meetings with the Select Board, the Select Board Minutes will also be the official minutes for the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee Adjourn – 9:14 Pm

Motion to adjourn the Finance Committee Meeting at 9:14 pm: Satterfield

Second: Lebold Vote (4-0-0)

Select Board Meeting continued.

Town Administrator's Report

Warren noted that she had passed out a draft budget report (Document 9). The levy calculations have been reviewed by the Town Accountant, but she would like to further review the report for accuracy.

Mail

Several mail items were reviewed, see attached (Document packet 10)

Select Board Public Comment

David Kulp joined the meeting. He explained that he and Chair Olanyk met with officials from MBI to discuss the prospective changes to their Last Mile activities. They asked MBI for three things:

1. Front-loaded contributions to Ashfield's project of the funds allocated for professional services and construction. MBI had originally agreed to 1/3 of the cost up front. 100% of the design funds were requested, but the expectation is that MBI might counteroffer with a lower percentage.
2. Kulp requested a complete accounting of the funds allocated to Ashfield for the project. MBI officials agreed to look into it, but didn't seem to be able to speak to the request without further research.
3. Chair Olanyk and Kulp asked for assistance with the construction oversight (Clerk of the Works or Owners Project Manager) services originally promised to be done by MBI. They were told that a prospective solution for those professional services might be having the original design firm do that work (paid for by the Town), if those services were included as a part of the design services Request for Proposal. MBI is willing to add that to any RFP that they might put out on behalf of the Town.

Overall, the Town should weigh whether to go with MBI as their proposal stands now or whether to push for other considerations such as the release of all the Design & Engineering (D&E) funds to be paid directly to the Town. Kulp stated that he guesses that MBI doesn't want to see D&E funds released to towns. Coler asked whether with MBI vetting the D&E firms, would they be working in the Town's best interests. Kulp noted that MBI seems to be eager to start this process with Ashfield, even if the RFP was only for one town—as opposed to a group of towns.

Chair Olanyk asked if there was any further public comment. Doug Cranson asked that the Select Board have whomever is snow-blowing the sidewalks near the Common and Town Hall not direct the output onto the trees along the street, or find an alternative place to put that material. The salt and sand plowed from the road onto the sidewalks damages the trees. Chair Olanyk agreed to have someone look into it.

Select Board Adjourn – 10:02 pm

Motion to reconvene the regular Select Board meeting and adjourn at 10:02 pm: Olanyk

Second: Coler Vote (3-0-0)

Respectfully Submitted,

Kayce D. Warren

Town Administrator

Document List:

1. Agenda
2. School Committee Stipend
3. Mohawk Trail Regional School District Expense, Operational FY2018 Budget & Assessments (52 pages)
4. Vocational School Expense, Newell explanation email (2 pages)
5. Assessors' Salaries, Assessors' Clerk Salary, and Assessors' Expense (3 pages)
6. Belding Memorial Library Expense, Belding Memorial Library Trustees' Budget Proposal, and Belding Memorial Library Trustees' Capital Plan (3 pages)
7. Open Space Budget Estimate and Letters of Support (8 pages)
8. FRCOG Expense & Assessments (5 pages)
9. FY2018 Draft Budget Report
10. Mail:
 - Stravino email with letter to Superintendent Buoniconti, Mathematics Curriculum, and MTRSD Rural Communities Summit notice
 - Capital Project Request – Police Cruiser
 - Revised Budget meeting schedule