



Ashfield Select Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 18, 2017, 7:00 pm

Ashfield Town Hall, 412 Main Street, Ashfield MA 01330

Pursuant to a notice duly filed with the Town Clerk, a meeting of the Select Board was held in Town Hall at 7:00 PM.

Present: Todd Olanyk, Chair; Thomas Carter, Vice-Chair; and Ron Coler.

Also Present: Kayce Warren, Town Administrator; Bridget Rodrigue, Town Clerk; Ted Murray, Finance Committee; Carl Satterfield, Finance Committee; Carol Lebold, Finance Committee; Melinda Gougeon, Finance Committee; and Mary Fitz-Gibbon, Finance Committee.

Meeting Convened at 7:14 PM

A. One recording device present at this meeting

Consent Agenda:

Minutes	3/28/2017, and 4/4/2017	As submitted
Warrants	W 17-22 Payroll W 17-22 Vendor	

Motion to approve consent agenda: Carter

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

Motion to approve 3/27/2017 Minutes: Carter

Second: Coler Vote: 2-0-1 (Olanyk abstained)

Appointments with the Select Board: None

Discussion/Decision Items:

A. FY2017 Budget Public Information Session

Ted Murray, Finance Committee Chair, encouraged those present to ask questions during this public information session. Mr. Murray announced that he would discuss some of the highlights in the budget. He also announced that handouts of the presentation would be available at the end of this information session.

Mr. Murray used a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the following:

The current total budget for the Town of Ashfield is \$4,783,768. Fiscal Year 2018 is calculated to be \$5,083,753, an increase of \$299,985 or 6.3%. Overall, general government cost have remained level.

The Town's FY2018 Budget has seen an increase in Public Safety Costs (Police and Fire). This is due in part to additional police patrols, the new police chief salary, and investment in new fire department turnout gear. The public safety budget has increased by \$36,314.

The main driver of our budget is education. MTRSD and Vocational Education is 56% of Ashfield's budget. FY2018 shows an increase of 4.9%. The Town has little control over the vocational education expense, and this affects 2/3 of our education budget.

Highway Department expenses have decreased by about 18% because the backhoe was less than expected.

Capital Planning:

Capital items are going from \$100,000 up to \$250,000. These are strategically sound decisions and include the following expenses:

- \$25,000 to Town Hall steeple/bldg. repair
- \$43,500 Highway Pick-Up Truck
- \$15,000 Senior Center Expansion Fund (Ashfield has an aging population)
- \$12,5000 Belding Library Restoration
- \$5,000 Town Hall Wiring
- \$3,425 Parks Commission Equipment
- \$100,000 Broadband Development (Trying to set aside to be ready to augment the borrowing we will have to do once we get into the construction).
- \$50,000 Bridge Repairs (Ashfield has close to 30 bridges in town. Poissant just received \$500,000 bridge repair grant from the state, putting this money aside now to help with the bridge infrastructure in town).

Debt Exclusion:

- \$100,000 debt exclusion article up for vote.
- Under consent decree from MA DEP, Ashfield is required to close landfill and make improvements to transfer station. (Might not show up until FY2019, but helps to plan ahead).
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Long-Term Financial Planning:

The Finance Committee asks departments to provide them with numbers for capital planning purposes (i.e. fire department needs a new engine and this will cost the town upwards of \$400,000). This will go on in perpetuity. Capital has to be continually reinvested in and taken care of.

Reserves and Indebtedness:

Total reserves are kept around \$500,000 which is around 11% of our budget. Want this to be kept at between 10-15% since this is considered good practice. Short term and long term debt numbers have been able to be kept low.

Future Challenges:

- Demographic trends
- Declining school enrollments
- Aging Population
- Updating technology (Broadband)
- Renovation and Maintenance of aging buildings
- Maintenance of Roads and Bridges
- Funding retirement benefits
- Keeping Ashfield Affordable.

Presentation Questions/Discussion:

Ms. Yuryan asks about the transfer station costs. Olanyk stated that DEP informed town of problems with the transfer station. DEP has provided us with a list of items that need to be corrected. Items to be corrected include the removal of overgrown vegetation, re-cover some debris, monitoring of wells (ongoing expense), replacement of fencing and replacement of the compactor. Maintenance that has been deferred but needs to be addressed.

Mr. Schwartz asked about the fire equipment costs. Mr. Murray explained that the fire equipment is being funded in stages. There was also some discussion regarding funding of the highway garage and broadband.

Coler also said you need to remember the Ashfield Dam is a million dollar expense. This is in fair condition and we continually apply for state grants. The retention wall at Sanderson is another large expense. The town is looking for solutions, but these are a few things waiting to be addressed.

Carter explained that the list of capital items only went up by \$150,000. Some of budget has been able to be funded with free cash. For example, the highway pickup truck was purchased with excess funds from the vocational budget. There will be a question on the Annual Town Election ballot about the pickup truck because this had to be decided at the beginning of March. However, tonight's Special Town Meeting has now paid for this out of free cash. Departments are not spending money for the sake of spending money, so any leftover money gets turned into free cash at the end of each fiscal year which helps get things done.

Ms. Yuryan also asks about the Sewer Plant. Warren said they are in the middle of an engineering study and no capital request was received from the Sewer Commissioners this year. Carter explained that the sewer runs through the enterprise fund which has about \$100,000 in it at this point in time.

Olanyk said he wants everyone to be aware that there is an article on the annual town warrant to vote to change the regional school agreement which would vote to close the Heath Elementary School. Second phase would close the Colrain Elementary School. This is part of the long-range school plan and would save towns a lot of money. Olanyk explained that Heath recognizes they need to consolidate now. Heath will close its school and tuition kids to Hawlemont for the next few years. This is a difficult issue for the regional school community, but we are at the point where it is no longer sustainable or financially feasible.

Coler wants to thank Select Board and Finance Committee for working on the budget together. The budget process is exhausting but it has been a pleasure working on the budget together.

B. Service Master of the Berkshires Contract: No Discussion

Motion to sign: Olanyk

Second: Carter Vote: 3-0-0

C. "Chapter 90" Contract:

Warren explained that this is the new Chapter 90 contract which is now a ten year contract. Need to sign contract and have the signatory sheet notarized.

Motion to authorize Chair to sign contract: Coler

Second: Carter Vote: 3-0-0

D. Northampton Cycling Club Race:

The Town received notice about the annual Northampton Cycling Club Race through Ashfield. This event is happening on July 29th. The request has been reviewed by public safety personnel and they have expressed no concerns.

Motion for chair to sign granting permission: Carter

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

E. Salary Study Update: Receive job description by end of next week.

F. Mold Remediation Update:

The mold remediation will be starting tomorrow. Insurance company has an ongoing agreement with Service Master so they will work hand-in-hand on this project.

G. Broadband Project Status Update:

Warren has included meeting minutes for the Board to review. Olanyk asks about Westfield Gas and Electric. Kulp is away and Warren did not hear anything regarding this agreement.

Town Administrator's Report:

ATM --- draft warrant sent out to Buz and Counsel. Warren said there will be some revisions to the Mohawk Trail articles. She consolidated all housekeeping articles. There will also be two OPEB article. One to set up account and another to fund account. Municipal modernization requires town to set up revolving fund guidance. Need to address school articles early. Start with Heath and end with Rowe. Will need to sign ATM Warrant next Monday.

Motion to sign ATM warrant next week: Olanyk

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

Constable will post this warrant on the 25th.

Municipal Bridge Program – Warren said the Town will need a cost estimate for engineering/design. Eric Nelson has offered some engineering services and will keep discuss this offer with Poissant.

Mail:

Nancy Intes has sent in a letter of resignation as a Board of Registrar.

Motion to accept resignation: Carter

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

Warren will prepare a letter of thanks for Select Board to sign next week.

Rodrigue would like to have Laura Bessette fill this vacated position.

Motion to appoint Ms. Bessette to Board of Registrars: Carter

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

Regional Dispatch letter of support has been revised. After some discussion, it was decided to have them use the initial letter of support.

Public Comment - None

Items Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair 48 Hours in Advance of the Meeting

Upcoming Meetings – May 1st Select Board Meeting and May 6th Annual Town Meeting.

Adjourn: 8:20 PM

Motion to adjourn: Olanyk

Second: Coler Vote: 3-0-0

Respectfully submitted,



Bridget S. Rodrigue, Town Clerk

Document List:

1. Agenda for April 18, 2017 Meeting
2. Minutes from the March 27, 2017 meeting
3. Minutes from March 28, 2017 meeting
4. Minutes from April 4, 2017 meeting
5. Service Maser of the Berkshires Contract
6. Chapter 90 10 year contract
7. Northampton Cycling Club Information and Approval Letter
8. Municipal Light Plant March 7, 2017 Meeting Minutes
9. Annual Town Meeting Warrant Highlights
10. Intres Resignation
11. Thank You Letter from Conway
12. Shelburne Control Oversight Committee Letter
13. Dispatch Grant Attestation Request
14. FRCOG Updates
15. MassDOT Municipal Bridge Program