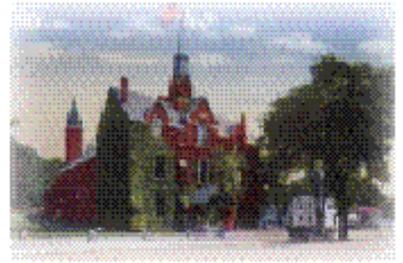


# Town of Ayer

## Finance Committee

### Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room  
Finance Committee Minutes

Wednesday January 11, 2012

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Vice Chairman, John Kilcommins; Clerk, Michael Pattenden; member  
In Attendance: Jim Fay, Phil Crosby, Abby Goldfarb, Pauline Conley, Mary Spinner, Frank Maxtant, Dave Bodurtha

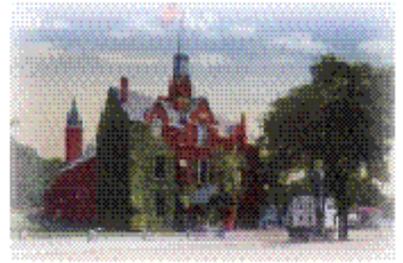
Called to order at 7:06 pm by Brian Muldoon

- Trinity/Vicksburg Square
  - JF Led a discussion of his recent tour of Trinity properties.
  - JF-I want to stress that I am here as a citizen. I went on the tour in order to assess the quality of management and impact on the neighborhoods. The question I asked is whether Trinity is good for Vicksburg Square regardless of Devens' ultimate disposition. I don't believe that Ayer will take back Devens and if that is the case then there is not an economic impact.
  - JF-My conclusion is that this is A+ all around. (A copy of Fay's conclusions is attached to these minutes).
  - Crosby-I was first impressed by the vision and how Trinity made the development part of the community. I asked Jim Keefe if he would be gone in 15 years and he said no. (A copy of Crosby's write up on his findings is attached to these minutes).
  - SH-For the Fincom it's not about what the buildings look like though they're beautiful. We are looking at the project as presented for super town meeting. We also have to consider the impact if the land reverts to Ayer. The nature of the property, high density and low income, deflates the tax rate. This also impacts the cost of providing municipal services.
  - SH-This is not the right type of property; there is neither infrastructure nor public transportation. This requires residents to have a car just to leave Vicksburg Square along with the costs of the car, its gas, and maintenance.
  - SH-I also want to address the issues of Mass Development not effecting us...they do indirectly. The cost of Mass Development results in less local aid per town.
  - SH-The change of the bylaws associated with the Vicksburg Square vote at super town meeting will result in Mass Development controlling the area rather than the three towns.
  - AG-It does not. This vote is not changing 498.
- Feedback on the December 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting.
  - SH- We should propose a process (for collecting delinquent taxes). We need to add a communication process and should meet with the BOS to continue this.
  - BM-Given the budget schedule we should look to meet with the BOS in early March.
  - BM-May need to check with the town clerk in regards to posting delinquent names in the event of an error.
  - SH-I envision a process where a letter is sent first and then the names are posted after a set amount of time.
  - MP Some people may not know they are on the list.
  - SH-That's the difference between a proactive approach vs. a reactive approach. Just posting a list is reactive; the collector needs to pull the payments in.
  - MS-I find it strange that people got tax bills for years and they paid them. Why are we so cautious now? Why can't we do the job now? I asked the old collector how this used to be done. They sent a letter. If they didn't hear from the residents then it went into the paper.
  - DB-All the information needed is here in the office, it's just too low tech. The information needs to get published; there is a certain embarrassment factor to getting people to pay.
  - SH-There are deficiencies in these two positions, this resulted in missing the tax title filing. The position should be tax collector not tax 'sender out-er'.

# Town of Ayer

## Finance Committee

### Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



- JK-The Town Government Study Committee recommended that these positions be appointed rather than elected. Where does that stand now?
- PC-The BOS can act on some of the recommendations but changing these two jobs has to be done at town meeting.
- MS-The town has water and sewer liens of over \$200K. This money could be used to upgrade our old infrastructure. We have rules, regulations, and fines but we don't enforce them.
- MP-I'd like to recommend that FinCom sponsor an article for town meeting regarding changing certain town positions to appointed. I'll draft something for review.
- SH-Acting on the Town Government Study Committee is not up to us. I suggest that ask the BOS to move forward in acting on the town study.
  
- Meals Tax
  - JK-I agree this is worth looking at and will run with it. I will not guarantee anything for spring town meeting due to my other commitments.
  - BM-This just involves the restaurant changing the tax rate from 6.25% to 7%. The town then gets a check each quarter.
  - JK-We'll get resistance from the vendors. They'll say that this creates more work but that is not the case.
  
- RSC Meeting Update
  - BM-The preliminary school department budget shows a 7.5% increase. This is just a draft.
  - BM-Robert Pontbriand, Dave Berry, and Carl Mock will be meeting to put together a plan or vision statement for the two towns.
  
- Zero Based Budget Update
  - JK-An unexpected curveball was brought to my attention a few weeks ago. The governing body for Mass municipal accountants has updated their regulations for the structure of town's chart of accounts.
  - JK-This impacts zero based budgeting in that we do not have a road map until the chart of accounts is compliant. Lisa Gabree has indicated that this is a goal for her department in FY13.
  
- BOS and Licenses
  - BM-PC can you provide us with an update on the licenses?
  - PC-There are several that were not issued, they are still in the vault.
  - MS-What are you doing?
  - PC-The letters were supposed to go out today.
  
- Town Health Care
  - PC-I brought documents to share on an alternative to the current group plan. I'm hoping for an agreement between the BOS and the Insurance Advisory Committee for FY13.
  - BM-What would you like from the FinCom?
  - PC-To observe and monitor developments. This impact the town's financials. A decision will need to be made by the end of the month.
  
- Town Issued Business Certificates/Licenses
  - BM-Haven't received any feedback. Will need to follow up with Dave Maher.
  
- General Discussion
  - BM Led a review of upcoming meetings.

**Town of Ayer**  
**Finance Committee**  
**Ayer Massachusetts, 01432**



- o Motion to adjourn at 8:56 pm

Motion	SH
Second	JK
B. Muldoon	Aye
S. Houde	Aye
J. Kilcommins	Aye
M. Pattenden	Aye
Vote	4 - 0

Brian Muldoon, Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Scott Houde, Vice Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

John Kilcommins, Clerk \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Pattenden, member \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_