

Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
 Finance Committee Minutes

Thursday January 12, 2012

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Vice Chairman, John Kilcommins; Clerk, Michael Pattenden; member
 In Attendance: Robert Pontbriand, Pauline Conley

Called to order at 7:11 pm by Brian Muldoon

- BOS and Town Administrator's Budgets
 - RP Led a discussion of the proposed BOS and Town Administrator budgets.
 - RP-The stipends paid by Ayer are the highest in the area.
 - MP-Ignoring the person the secretary salary seems high.
 - PC-It is a product of the length of time that we've had the secretary.
 - RP-Plans to continue to cover for the secretary during vacations rather than using a temp. This is an effort to reduce the budget.
 - RP-The supply line is a concern. There is no process on how this is spent. Will be centralizing IT purchasing and estimates this may save 19-25K. There is a need to sign off on purchases as well as a need for uniformity as to what can be assigned to each account number.
 - SH-Suggest we lock down who can order what. We need to run this like a business.

- Stipends
 - SH- Given the requirements of the BOS I agree that there should be a stipend, but nobility of public service should be the motivation to serve.
 - PC-If left to me there should be something to cover expenses plus \$100 per year. This is what Shirley does.
 - MP-Motion that the FinCom recommend BOS stipends be reduced to \$1,500 per year per selectman with no additional amounts for the chairman and these stipends shall not be subject to COLA raises.

Motion	MP
Second	SH
B. Muldoon	Nay
S. Houde	Aye
J. Kilcommins	Aye
M. Pattenden	Aye
Vote	3 – 1

- BM-I think it should be zero with related expenses to be reimbursed.
- JK-I like the \$1,500 stipend. There should be something for all the work put in.
- SH-I agree there should be something.

- Town Counsel
 - RP Led a discussion of the town counsel budget line item.
 - RP-I'm confident that the \$68.4K is a fairly accurate number for FY13. This covers the whole town. We should consider parceling out this line item to other departments (such as the Planning Board). When you are responsible for a line item you tend to be more careful.
 - MP-I would like to make a motion that the Town Administrator evaluates the possibility of hiring an attorney as a town employee.

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- PC-We have been with K&P for 15 years. They will not sign a contract; instead rates are set each year. We should shop around.
- RP Discussed the RFQ process for soliciting legal representation.
- MP-Made a motion that the BOS review selection of town counsel on a regular and recurring basis including the possibility of employing a town legal counsel and requesting RFQ's from multiple legal firms.

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

- General Budget Discussion
 - RP-I will update the FinCom with updated insurance numbers for the police and fire departments. I'm estimating a 7% increase and will have numbers to share by the end of February.
 - RP-There has never been a reconciliation of the Maher and Waters settlements. This is a matter of public record and it is on file in my office.
 - RP-Overall the budget process is going well. The five biggest factors in need of resolution are:
 1. Health insurance
 2. OPEB and how to fund it
 3. Stabilization
 4. School assessment
 5. Contract negotiations.
 - RP-We have three themes for 2012:
 1. The issue of collections. We have a lot of work to do in this area. I'm concerned by the very divergent philosophy between the Town Collector and FinCom/BOS.
 2. The alignment of decreasing revenues and increasing expenses. There will be pain in the realignment.
 3. The capital backlog continues to grow. Ayer has an aging infrastructure, how do we continue to be proactive on capital?
- Motion to adjourn at 8:42 pm

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

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Brian Muldoon, Chairman _____ Date _____

Scott Houde, Vice Chairman _____ Date _____

John Kilcommins, Clerk _____ Date _____

Michael Pattenden, Member _____ Date _____