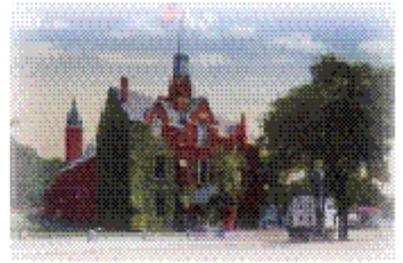


Town of Ayer

Finance Committee

Ayer Massachusetts, 01432



Location: Ayer Town Hall, Meeting Room
Finance Committee Minutes

Thursday January 26, 2012

Present: Brian Muldoon; Chairman, Scott Houde; Vice Chairman, John Kilcommins; Clerk, Michael Pattenden; member
In Attendance: Gabe Vellanti, John Canney, David Bodurtha

Called to order at 8:00 pm by Brian Muldoon

- Building Inspector
 - BM-We'd like to go over rates and fees.
 - GV-The plumbing and gas inspectors get a % of the fees charged on the permits. When the town report goes out it looks like the salary is growing when it's just a function of doing more work. It's the wrong approach to just say lets charge what other towns charge, they're likely out of date.
 - GV-Were pretty reasonable on fees.
 - SH-That's the problem.
 - GV-We usually bring in more than we cost in the building department. The big jobs like Pepsi subsidize the small jobs. We can't charge a home owner \$200 for a permit for a wood stove; they won't come get the permit.
 - GV-We're paying our inspectors less than what the tradesmen earn.
 - JK-Then what is the incentive to being an inspector?
 - GV-Lots of retirees do it to stay active. The code is getting more complicated so it may be less appealing to retirees. They have to keep their trade licenses.
 - SH-Do you have any idea where your fees should be?
 - GV-Plumbing, electrical, and gas are 10-15% lower than they should be. Haven't changed them in 10 years. The fees are not supposed to be revenue generators.
 - BM-But they should pay for themselves. Are all the fees on the web?
 - GV-Think so. My guys have submitted fees from the surrounding town to Robert (Pontbriand).
 - SH-Is there a way to see how many of each kind of permit was issued last year? I'd like to see what we could have collected in total, not at just the change in price per permit. Could you assist me with this?
 - GV-Yes, come see me or send me a list.
 - GV-A concern is that the inspectors don't get raises unless the fees go up. They don't get an hourly rate close to the trade's people and they don't get benefits.
 - MP-I'd like to ask what the median time is for an average job for each type of inspection to set fees. Essentially zero based budgeting.
 - SH-perhaps it's time for a stipend for the inspectors since their income hasn't grown.
 - GV-Harvard fees are close to Ayer but they (the inspectors) get 90% of the fee with just 10% to the town. Ayer is 50/50. A way to increase compensation but not fees is to change the allocation.
- Clerk/Collector
 - BM-We're asking each budget owner how level funding, a 1% cut and a 3% cut would impact their department.
 - SH-Is the Assistant Collector hourly?
 - JC-Yes. The services line item is for printing up tax bills, education costs, and tax title.
 - BM-What piece of the tax title process do you own vs. Stephanie (Ginter)?
 - JC-I do the tax title. Notification to the registry, advertising etc
 - SH-Do we get those costs back from the land court?
 - JC-Yes, we get reimbursed.
 - JK-How much is in tax title now?
 - JC-I don't know, would have to look it up.

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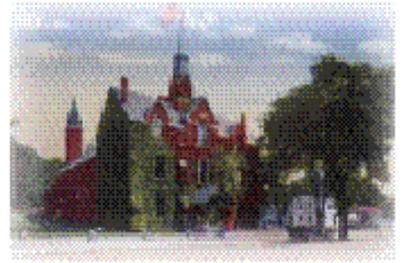


- JK-Your memo mentions MUNIS training, is that in the Town Accountant's budget?
- JC-I would like more one on one training. It would be more impactful now.
- SH-Have you looked at your internal processes. Do you visualize any areas to make more efficient? Can more be automated with software?
- JC-The scanner is new. Not getting as much impact as hoped, there is some fearfulness with the Assistant Collector. We are working to enhance processes incrementally. It's not all technology.
- SH-Technology has allowed businesses to thrive. Were trying to identify holes so we can improve them.
- JC-Another example is that the Deputy Collector now takes online payments. There is a \$17 fee to do this.
- JK-\$17 charge to the town?
- JC-No, a charge for the service provider.
- SH-How many of these transactions have you had?
- JC-Don't know, can't quantify this.
- SH-What does this cost the town?
- JC-I think nothing. Service just makes it easier to pay. I don't think it costs us anything from what I've read.
- SH-Is this something you can look into?
- JC-Yes.
- SH-The FY12 services budget has \$5,800 left. Why? Is there something that doesn't happen annually?
- JC-It's a fairly straight forward item, the number of tax titles will make it vary.
- BM-Local colleges offer courses like excel.
- JC-That would be wonderful, it would help with the data base and data analysis.
- BM-Would the town reimburse you if you took a class?
- JC-If it does I'm not aware of it.
- SH-I'll make you an offer, if you can meet my schedule, I'll teach you excel.
- JC-That would be great.
- SH-Can we create an email address for questions? Or a list for communicating out to people?
- JC-No problem, but it has to be disclosed that it is public record.
- DB-Are you talking about a listserv? There are no options for those who leave town early and return late. A listserv could help here.
- DB-The town vastly underestimates the amount of money it can save by going electronic on records. It would be 10% of the budget, we have the equipment.
- BM-Equipment to...?
- DB-Birth certificates, death certificates etc... You could connect to the town to look these up
- SH-Plus it keeps an image backup of the data

- Motion to adjourn at 9:39 pm

Motion	SH
Second	JK
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 _____