

Town of Ayer

Joint Meeting of the Ayer Board of Selectmen and Ayer Finance Committee

Tuesday, April 22, 2014, 7pm
Ayer Town Hall – First Floor Meeting Room

Meeting Minutes

Attendance:

Board of Selectmen: G. Luca, Chair; C. Hillman, Vice Chair; J. Livingston Clerk; P. Conley

Finance Committee: S. Houde, Chair; J. Kilcommins, Vice Chair; M. Zawacki, Clerk; C. Meussel

Also in Attendance: R. Pontbriand, Town Administrator; T. Horgan, Moderator; S. Gintner, Treasurer; L. Gabree, Town Accountant; Chief Murray; C. Knox, I.T. Director; D. Maher, Economic Development Dir.; and Lt. B. Gill.

Call to Order of the Board of Selectmen by G. Luca at 7:00pm

Call to Order of the Finance Committee by S. Houde at 7:00pm

The first order of business was taken up solely by the Board of Selectmen which was the Layout of Mt. Laurel Way as a Public Way in the Town of Ayer.

J. Livingston, Board Clerk read the notice of Layout of Mt. Laurel Way as a Public Way into the record.

R. Pontbriand advised the Board that all procedural matters were in order for preparation for the Board's consideration to approve the layout.

MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by P. Conley to approve the Layout of Mt. Laurel Way as a Public Way in the Town of Ayer. **Motion Passed 4-0.**

The second order of business was taken up solely by the Fin Com which was a Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$2,075.18 for the Information Technology Department.

MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Kilcommins and seconded by M. Zawacki to approve the Reserve Fund Transfer in the amount of \$2,075.18 for the Information Technology Department. **Motion Passed 4-0.**

R. Pontbriand provided an overview of the Joint Meeting Agenda to the Board and Fin Com.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY 2015 BUDGET and 2014 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

The Board of Selectmen Declared the Public Hearing Open.

The Finance Committee Declared the Public Hearing Open.

The Town Accountant gave a presentation on revenue projections as they pertain to the FY 2015 budget.

The proposed FY 2015 Budget is approximately \$24 million including the ASRSD Assessment.

Proposed uses of “Free Cash” were presented and discussed:

1. Approximately \$50,000 to be used for one-time expenses in the FY 2015 Omnibus.
2. Approximately \$130,000 to be used to fund OPEB liabilities.
3. Approximately \$767,000 in FY 2015 Capital Projects Requests
4. Approximately \$250,000 to be places in Stabilization

Subtotal of these proposed uses is \$1,197,630.00 leaving a remaining balance of \$497,796.00

Presentation of the FY 2015 Budget

S. Houde, Chairman of the Fin Com made a presentation of the FY 2015 Budget.

S. Houde stated that in terms of COLA, the Fin Com recommends a 2% COLA whereas the Personnel Board has recommended a 2.5% COLA.

The Fin Com has recommended a 2% COLA for the Elected Office Holders: Treasurer; Town Clerk; Tax Collector; and Tree Warden.

The Fin Com’s position on proposed new positions were to keep the proposed funding for them in the FY 2015 Budget:

- \$75,000 for proposed full-time day Firefighter position
- \$70,000 for proposed DPW Assistant Town Engineer

The Board asked Lt. Gill, Chair of the Personnel Board to speak on the Personnel Board’s recommendation for a 2.5% COLA for FY 2015.

Lt. Gill stated that the Personnel Board has a lengthy discussion on the issue of a 2.5% COLA. Not all non-union employees in FY 2014 received a COLA. The Personnel Board feels that this would be a good faith gesture in moving toward compensation equity for all employees.

S. Houde stated that there would be an approximate \$7,000 cost impact to the FY 2015 Budget.

R. Pontbriand stated that the metrics used by the Personnel Board for determining a COLA recommendation consisted of a review of the Federal Reserve of Boston’s Cost of Living Data and the CPI Index.

P. Conley state that the Comp. Plan for non-union automatically increase one step a year and depending on the classification of the position a position may received either a 2%, 2.5% or 3% Step Increase plus a COLA. The impact could be anywhere from 4%-5% on the FY 2015 Budget.

S. Houde stated that the Personnel Board is trying to get the Non Union Compensation and Classification Study done and ready for the Fall Town Meeting. There have been delays with the company doing the study, not the Town. The plan is to implement the final study in the Fall of 2014. We should be using 2% guidance until then. There is a \$7,000 difference in the FY 2015 budget impact between the 2% vs. 2.5% COLA proposals.

P. Conley stated that the new study would not reduce any employees salary.

G. Luca stated that non-union employee has been “picked on” while the union employees continued to receive consistent salary increases. It is all about fairness and the 2.5% COLA proposal by the Personnel Board is fair and fine with me.

Lt. Gill stated that he has learned through the process of the Study that the Town needs to consistently apply appropriate COLAs to the Compensation Grid in order to properly maintain it.

MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by G. Luca to accept the Planning Board’s COLA recommendation of 2.5% for all non-union employees for FY 2015 subject to approval of Town Meeting. **Motion was defeated 2-2** (J. Livingston, Y; G. Luca, Y; P. Conley, No; C. Hillman, No)

MOTION: A Motion was made by P. Conley and seconded by C. Hillman to accept the Finance Committee’s COLA recommendation of 2% for all non-union employees for FY 2015 subject to approval of Town Meeting. **Motion passed 3-1** (J. Livingston, Y; P. Conley, Y; C. Hillman, Y; G. Luca, N)

S. Houde presented a review of the FY 2015 Omnibus Budget Line Items, highlighting the following proposed new items:

1. Increased funding to the Reserve Fund taking into account the ongoing Bolduc v. Ayer lawsuit;
2. Funding for a new desk for the Town Treasurer;
3. Funding for a documents management study for the Town Clerk;
4. Funding for the proposed full-time, day Firefighter position;
5. Funding for a full-time Building Commissioner;
6. Funding for a full-time DPW Assistant Town Engineer;
7. Increased funding for snow and ice removal; and
8. Increased funding for the 4th of July Celebration

The Board briefly discussed the issue of using private contractors next year for snow removal to supplement the DPW.

M. Wetzel stated that over one mile of new road has been added as well as the ASRSD parking lots and additional roads which justify this request for increase snow removal funds. The increase funding assumes eight (8) storm events.

S. Houde discussed the issue of “free cash”:

1. \$250,000 proposed for Stabilization Fund which would bring the Town’s Stabilization to the DOR recommended level of funding;
2. \$100,000 proposed for OPEB Liability;
3. Proposed increases to Capital Stabilization

[Note: C. Meussel of the Fin Com left the meeting]

The BOS and Fin Com then reviewed the proposed FINAL DRAFT of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant as presented by the Town Administrator.

The BOS and Fin Com discussed Article 29: OPEB Liability Account and discussed the terms and procedures to set up the account with the PRIT.

G. Luca asked if there was any Public Input or Public Questions on the proposed FY 2015 Budget and/or Town Meeting Warrant. There was none.

After a review of all Warrant Articles by the BOS and Fin Com, both bodies approved the Warrant for Town Meeting:

MOTION: A Motion was made by P. Conley and seconded by C. Hillman to approve the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. Motion passed 4-0.

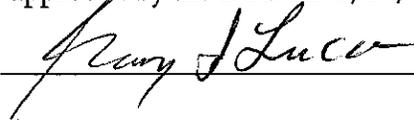
MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Kilcommins and seconded by M. Zawacki to approve the Finance Committee’s position on each of the applicable Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles. Motion passed 3-0.

MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by C. Hillman for the BOS to adjourn. Motion passed 4-0. BOS Adjourned at 9:14pm.

MOTION: A Motion was made by J. Kilcommins and seconded by M. Zawacki for the Fin Com to adjourn. Motion passed 3-0. Fin Com Adjourned at 9:15pm.

Minutes recorded by: R. Pontbriand, Town Administrator

Minutes approved by the BOS on: 8/19/14

Signed:  _____ G. Luca, BOS Clerk