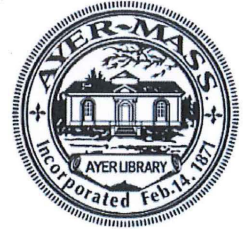


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MAR 22 2021

TOWN OF AYER
TOWN CLERK

9:20am
JP

Town of Ayer
Ayer Select Board
Ayer Town Hall – 1st Floor Meeting Room
Ayer, MA 01432



Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

Monday March 8, 2021
Open Session Meeting Minutes

SB Present: Shaun C. Copeland, Chair; Scott A. Houde, Vice-Chair; Jannice L. Livingston, Clerk
All Via Remote Participation

Fin Com Present: Pat Diamond, Chair; Mark Smith, Vice-Chair; Lou Conrad
All Via Remote Participation

Fin Com Absent: Matthew Selby; Terry Harvell

Also Present: Robert A. Pontbriand, Town Manager
Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager
Both Via Remote Participation

Select Board Call to Order: S. Copeland called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

Remote Access: S. Copeland stated that pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, MGL Chapter 30A, Section 18 and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Ayer Board of Selectmen is being conducted via remote participation. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort has been made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings as provided in the Order. All votes will be taken by Roll Call.

Finance Committee Call to Order: P. Diamond called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.

Second FY '22 Budget Presentation: R. Pontbriand was joined by Finance Manager Lisa Gabree and all Town Department Heads. R. Pontbriand stated that this evening's meeting would be another look at the FY '22 budget beginning on July 1, 2021. He is presenting the version 3 of the DRAFT budget. He then presented several of the Town of Ayer's successes relating to the budget including, but not limited to 2020 Free Cash is estimated to be \$1,000,000; \$2.5M in the stabilization fund and \$1.9M in capital stabilization. He also noted that the Town's bond rating is AA+/Stable, which is the second to the highest level possible. R. Pontbriand then went over the revised revenue projections for 2021, noting that about 82% of the Town's revenue comes from the tax levy. Conversely, the Town receives only 3.1% of their total revenue from state aid. R. Pontbriand presented a history of the omnibus budget increases and regional school assessments, noting that the FY '22 ASRSD assessment will increase by 1.78% and the Nashoba Valley Tech assessment by 9.6%. The Nashoba Valley Tech figure is driven by enrollment.

R. Pontbriand noted that from version 2 to version 3 of the DRAFT budget includes the addition of the COA Outreach Coordinator position and 2% COLA for non-union personnel, elected officials, and call firefighters. The following items have been reduced in DRAFT 3 of the budget: fire department turnout gear has been reduced by \$10,750 (covered by CARES funding) and Town Counsel line item has been reduced by \$10,000. R. Pontbriand then presented the FY '22 Capital Budget items as recommended by the Capital Planning Committee and the Select Board. He stated that the remaining variables in the omnibus budget are the costs of the patrol

and dispatch contracts, 3 personal service contracts, and more detailed information relating to the Town's general insurances.

He again reported that the General Fund Free Cash was for FY '20 was certified at \$1.5M and presented possible uses for that amount, diverting a large portion (\$790,000) into Capital Stabilization. R. Pontbriand then highlighted the next steps in the budget process.

S. Houde asked if the forward payment for retiree benefits was paid. L. Gabree stated that it was tabled at the ATM, but paid in the fall of 2020.

S. Copeland asked when the Police and Dispatch contract negotiations would be completed. R. Pontbriand stated that he hopes to have an MOA to the SB by April 6, 2021. S. Copeland also asked if the 5% increase for the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health was standard. R. Pontbriand stated that it was.

L. Conrad asked about the Clear Gov Budget Book and he noticed that there was an increase. R. Pontbriand stated that last year was a partial invoice and this increased amount represents a full year. L. Conrad also asked about the increase in the unemployment insurance. Kevin Johnston, Benefits and Payroll Manager, stated that the increases represent known claims moving into the new fiscal year. K. Johnston also stated there were some unknown claims during this fiscal year that will carry forward.

Pauline Conley, 40 Cambridge Street asked COVID-19 impacts, stating at the last budget forum there was mention that the Town received roughly \$720,000. L. Gabree stated that amount was the total eligibility and that we are reimbursed per expenses submitted. The Town must go through MEMA first and is then eligible for CARES Act. P. Conley asked if this was related to the increase request for the reserve fund. L. Gabree said that it was part of the reason for the request; she further stated there may be some residual costs moving forward that are not covered by MEMA or the CARES Act, which is one of the reasons for the increase in the reserve fund.

P. Conley stated that the DPW Supt. was looking for 2 new positions and she thought she heard and read that there were no new positions being added. She also commented that it looks silly to only add \$5,600 in stabilization. She then asked about the DRAFT warrant. R. Pontbriand then stated that a preliminary DRAFT warrant will be in the packet for the March 16, 2021. J. Livingston noted that the two DPW positions are under the review of the Rate Review Committee and will be presented to the Select Board next week.

Adjournment: A motion was made by M. Smith and seconded by P. Diamond to adjourn at 6:50PM. **Roll Call:** P. Diamond, aye; M. Smith, aye; L. Conrad, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Adjournment: A motion was made by S. Houde and seconded by J. Livingston to adjourn at 6:51PM. **Roll Call:** S. Houde, aye; J. Livingston, aye; S. Copeland, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 3-0.**

Minutes Recorded and Submitted by Carly M. Antonellis, Assistant Town Manager

Date Minutes Approved by BOS: 16 March 2021

Signature Indicating Approval: 