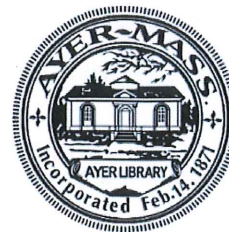




Town of Ayer
Ayer Select Board
Ayer Town Hall – 1st Floor Meeting Room
Ayer, MA 01432



Broadcast and Recorded by APAC

Wednesday January 27, 2021
Public Online Budget Forum -Open Session Meeting Minutes

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

Fin Com Present: Patrick Diamond, Chair; Mark Smith, Vice-Chair; Matthew Selby; Lou Conrad; Terry Harvell
All Via Remote Participation

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 6:02 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.

R. Pontbriand was joined by Finance Manager Lisa Gabree and all Town Department Heads. R. Pontbriand stated that this evening's meeting would be a high-level initial look at the FY '22 budget beginning on July 1, 2021. He stated that the Capital Budget process is near completion and will be posted on the Town's website shortly. 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 showed a 20-year history on the following accounts: Free Cash, Stabilization and Capital Stabilization.

He is recommending that the FY '22 Reserve Fund be increased by \$150,000 to \$300,000 for unforeseen costs due to uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated there is still a lot of volatility at this time and he sees this as a proactive measure in the event there are unforeseen costs due to COVID-19. This would be a onetime increase for FY '22.

The Town's expenses for COVID-19 since early 2020 have been \$180,000 for overtime, employee testing, personal protective equipment, cleaning/sanitization and telecommuting equipment costs.

At this point the FY '22 omnibus is at a 4.65% increase. It is a level services budget, there are no positions being funded by the omnibus budget. There are still some major unknown factors in the budget: school assessments,

health insurance rates, police/dispatch union R. Pontbriand and L. Gabree continue to review and refine the budget.

R. Pontbriand stated that all municipalities are in the business of providing services, therefore the largest expense in the omnibus budget is wages and benefits. R. Pontbriand presented the Town's revenue sources: 84% come from the tax levy, 7.4% in local receipts, 3.2% from free cash and 2.8% in state aid.

R. Pontbriand then stated that public support and involvement is key in the budget approval process. He stated that all relevant information can be found at ayer.ma.us/town-manager/2022-budget. He stated that if there is information you are looking for is not listed on this page to contact his office.

There were no questions from the Select Board nor the Finance Committee. There were no questions from the public.

Fin Com Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by M. Smith and seconded by M. Selby to adjourn at 6:37 PM. **By Roll Call:** P. Diamond, aye; M. Selby, aye; M. Smith, aye; L. Conrad, aye; Terry Harvell, aye. **Motion passed by Roll Call Vote 5-0.**

Select Board Adjournment:

Motion: A motion was made by J. Livingston and seconded by S. Houde to adjourn at 6:37 PM. **By Roll Call:** S. Copeland, aye; S. Houde, aye; J. Livingston, 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: _____

Signature Indicating Approval: _____

3/16/2021
