

New Ashford Select Board Meeting
New Ashford Town Hall
May 3, 2018

Board Present: Jason Jayko (chair), Ken McInerney, Mark Phelps
Others Present: Gus Martin, Lori Jayko
Meeting opened at 6:00

1. Public Comment: None.

2. ATM Warrant: Gus Martin, Assessor, advised the Board on the 2 ½ override amount. He recommended using a whole number, as there are a few places he can make adjustments. The proposed budget is \$870,054.61 with \$30,000 from free cash being applied. The total amount to be raised is \$840,054.61. Local receipts estimates are \$47,500 and state aid approximately \$238,053, taking the amount to be raised by taxes to \$558,248. The levy limit is \$490,662, excluding new growth, which is a small amount from a new house on Greylock Road. The budget is \$67,586 over the limit. The board will set the override amount at \$70,000, leaving a buffer in case local receipts do not come in as expected, etc. The override amount will add \$1.72 to the tax rate. The total tax rate will be around \$14.60. The board thanked Gus for his help. Gus has been trying to meet with the owner of the Springs Motel to do the FY 17 abatement, for the deterioration of the back building.

Gus needs the laptop for printing reports and his password isn't working. Jason will look at the password and plan a time for the laptop to be at the town hall.

The Board would like to reorder the warrant articles to put the budget before the free cash offset, and the override. Jason will reorder the articles and send the revised annual town warrant to the Board. Jason will look up if the override vote requires 2/3 or simple majority for passage.

Jason asked School Committee Chair, Brenda Frye, and Superintendent, Peter Dillon, to have an informational meeting for the town about the school budget before the Town Meeting. Jason was advised that the Finance Committee cannot reject the School Committee's budget.

Jason is waiting to hear back from legal counsel for wording changes for the warrant. Based on previous legal counsel advice, he added the Conservation Commission to the revolving funds and then listed the funds out. Jason talked to Matt Andre at the DOR, who said that the way the Veteran's Chapter 115 account is being handled now is correct, with the reimbursement money going back into the general fund. Jason also called the Veterans' Authorizing Agent to confirm and left a message.

On a motion by Mark, seconded by Ken, the Annual Town Warrant was approved with the reordering changes as discussed and contingent on any new advice from legal counsel received by 5/4/2018. Further if there are substantial changes required by legal counsel, the chair will call another meeting. Also, a contingency article number twenty was preapproved for rolling the Veterans Chapter 115 money over from year to year, if so advised by the Veterans' Authorizing Agent.

3. Budget: The board discussed the challenges of this year's budget, including how the override would still be necessary, even if the School Committee negotiated a lower rate for the elementary school. The broadband project could be paid for out of free cash or stabilization, without needing to borrow money and adding to the tax base.

4. Town Hall Updates: Jason met Chad from Corgi Electric at the Town Hall. He advised that the electric panel not be near the oil tank. Jason is getting the furnace load from H.A. George so that Chad can complete his estimate. The quote will include 200-amp service, a new panel on the north side of the building, and a 22 kva generator on a pad. Wiring from the panel downstairs to the upstairs subpanel may present some challenges that could be met by using conduit. The furnaces should be wired to the panel downstairs, with the upstairs panel being used for lights and outlets. Joe Altier made the same recommendations as Corgi, however he suggested putting the panel in the kitchen area.

H.A. George provided a quote for two, 1,000-gallon, propane tanks linked together, buried off the north side of the town hall for \$6,850. The total cost for the tanks, fittings, labor, and hook up is \$9,392. The town is responsible for protection for the tanks and the excavation work. The furnace and generator hook-ups should be covered under the Community Compact grant.

Jason is meeting with H. A. George at the Town Hall on Monday May 7.

Keith Lacasse offered to measure the grades to the brook in the basement where the board would like to put the Broadband equipment. There was concern for flooding, however the basement has not flooded in the last twenty years. There is a floor drain that should be checked to see if it works. The basement is likely low risk and requires the least amount of prep work with walls and space. There may need to be wall modifications if the equipment is housed upstairs.

5. Broadband: The bids were opened on April 27, 2018. They came in lower than anticipated, dropping the project estimate under \$500,000. \$280,000 of that will be paid for by the MBI grant. If we can get the electric covered by the broadband grant, we can start the work before the new fiscal year. Ken will e-mail Bill Ennen. Jason will measure the space downstairs, draft a plan, and the board will build the hut. Chris LaVertu from Whip City will give a bid recommendation to the town.

Verizon and Eversource have to do pole surveys to see if any poles need to be replaced, etc.

Whip City is checking with Eversource to see where they are in the process.

There is a call with Bill Ennen on May 14, at 4:30.

6. Any other unforeseen business: Ken asked what the plan B for the School Committee is. If the budget gets voted down, the School Committee will go back to the Regional Transition Committee and try to get a lower tuition rate.

Keith got two quotes for repairs for the Salt Shed and will bring estimates to Monday's meeting.

The Game Warden came out and talked to the Chief of Police, and thanked the Board for sending the letter to the State Representative and Senator about funding for EPO's. They are hoping to hire ten new people. They will be back and making a presence.

Mark had inquiries about when Ingraham Road will be open.

Next meeting May 7, 2018 at 6:30

Meeting adjourned at 7:55