

Town of Alton
Budget Committee Meeting
January 3, 2013
Minutes
Approved January 10, 2013

Call to Order 6:20pm

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call

Marc DeCoff, Selectmen's Representative
Andy McLeod, Chairman
Jeff St. Cyr, School Board Representative
Barbara Howard, Member
John Markland, Vice Chairman,
Greg Fuller, Member,

Other Attendees:

E. Russell Bailey, Town Administrator
Ruth Messier, Library Trustee

Approval of Agenda

M. DeCoff motioned to move Approval of Minutes to the end of the meeting and was seconded by A. McLeod, with all in favor.

M. DeCoff motioned to approve Agenda as amended and was seconded by G. Fuller with all in favor.

Public Hearing opened

R. Bailey presented and discussed modifications to the following previous presented warrant articles.

Article 11 was previously voted on for \$36,000.00 and the Selectmen have voted to raise it to \$40,000.00. The additional \$4,000.00 will be used to equip the vehicle with audio/video equipment.

Article 22 - due to the aging of the equipment and the need for replacement and major repairs the Selectmen felt it would be necessary to raise it from \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00. \$50,000.00 of the \$100,000.00 will be covered from surplus.

Article 25 – was not voted on previously. The amount of \$11,452.00 was to be moved from the Highway Shed to the Highway Equipment Account. The DRA stated that the money needs to be taken out of the current Capital Reserve and put in the General Fund Account, then taken back out and put in the Highway Equipment Account. A vote will need to be taken to raise and appropriate and the Budget Committee needs to put their recommendation on it.

Article 27 Gilman Library – Wants to establish a new capital reserve for the library building for maintenance, repairs and improvements and establish it by putting in \$10,000.00.

Ruth Messier, Library Trustee, addressed the Committee and provided them with information regarding plans for the use of the Library warrant article.

R. Bailey provided to all in attendance copies of the following handouts: MS7 Document which shows the estimated revenue of \$2,379,031.00, the 2013 Default Budget showing \$6,423,603.00 which is about \$30,000.00 less than the proposed budget voted on to date, revised Estimated Revenues, and a draft of the 2013 Warrant Articles (*copies attached.*)

Alton Resident Steve Miller addressed and thanked the Committee and asked the following questions:

What is the surplus and what is the goal of the selectmen and at what level do you want to keep the surplus? R. Bailey responded the current surplus is around \$2,000,000.00 and it is the goal of the Selectmen to keep it in that range.

What is the DRA standard for the surplus? R. Bailey responded, the average is 5% to 15% and we are around 9%. Mr. Miller suggested that some time in the future, if and when the town ever has a need for going to the local government center for bonds, the size of the surplus becomes important and maybe that is a consideration and something to think about. Mr. Miller explained that the higher the surplus the better the interest rate. He advised that the Committee check with the Local Government Center to see at what level you get a better rate.

Discussion

Mr. Miller asked what the Budget Committee recommended to either cut or add this year and what was accepted or rejected from the Selectmen. A. McLeod responded that he did not have a list but would get it for him.

M. Miller continued and asked what amount did the Budget Committee submit to the Selectmen? M. DeCoff and A. McLeod responded that the Committee was close to the Selectmen's budget.

M. Miller asked for the definition of close? A. McLeod responded that he did not have the number and he will get it for Mr. Miller.

Mr. Miller suggested to the BC that for the future, if it is possible, if the Committee could get the Operating Budget, the Default Budget and the Warrant articles in line so people can look at them. This will allow people to look at them and see if they want to attend the meeting. Mr. Miller continued there is a \$30,000.00 difference between the operating budget and the default budget, how is that \$30,000.00 accounted.

Meeting paused due to technical issue with recording equipment.

Meeting resumed 7:47 pm

Mr. Miller asked what was the final month that the last charities requested their money? Mr. Bailey stated in November.

Mr. Miller asked if there was a separate Animal Control Line? M. DeCoff informed him that it was staying separate.

Mr. Miller asked if the 2012 valuation number was available yet? Mr. Bailey stated that it was with the tax rate.

Alton Resident Ruth Messier addressed the Committee stated that she agreed with Mr. Miller and is very disappointed that the Committee does not have more answers and that there was not more discussion. She stated that the Committee was not presenting, but handing out papers without any explanation and we have to go through them and decide what we are going to ask about. You have been asked questions and have been unable to provide answers. We just received the material tonight and can't really expect to ask questions. It is a waste of my time to sit here because if I come across something and I have a question, I'm not sure you are going to have the answers for me. For a Public Hearing, I consider this a flop.

Public Input Closed

Article 11 - Police Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund, (previously voted on by the Budget Committee as Article 14.)

There is a requested increase of 4,000.00 for a total of 40,000.00 to equip the vehicle with audio/visual equipment.

Discussion

M. DeCoff motioned to approve Article 11 as presented and was seconded by G. Fuller.

Discussion

Vote: MD Yes, BH No, GF No, AM No, JM No, JS Yes

Budget Committee votes 2 in favor, 4 against (BH, GF, JM, and AM)

Article 22 - Alton Fire Equipment Capital Reserve Fund (previously voted on by the Budget Committee as Article 30.) The Selectmen are recommending increasing the warrant article from \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00.

A. McLeod motioned to approve Article 22 as presented and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Discussion

Vote: MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, AM Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Budget Committee votes 6 in favor, 0 against

Article 25 – Discontinue Highway Shed Capital Reserve Funds (not previously voted on by the Budget Committee)

M. DeCoff motioned to approve Article 25 as presented and was seconded by A. McLeod.

Discussion

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Budget Committee votes 6 in favor, 0 against

Article 27 – To determine if the town will establish a Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$10,000.00 for the Gilman Library (not previously voted on by the Budget Committee.)

M. DeCoff motioned to approve Article 27 as presented and was seconded by B. Howard.

Discussion

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Budget Committee votes 6 in favor, 0 against

R. Messier asked R. Bailey if there was still \$1.00 available in the event funds would have to be borrowed and if there was a possibility that would happen this year. R. Bailey explained that if everything stays on schedule there should not be any issues. There is currently \$2,000,000.00 in the surplus, plus any monies that are raised in the first billing based on the Capital Reserves.

G. Fuller motioned to recess the Budget Committee Public Hearing and re-convene on January 10th, 2013 for the purpose of further discussion of Warrant Article 11 and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Motion passed 6 in favor, 0 against.

Public hearing has been recessed and will re-convene on January 10th, 2013 for the purpose of further discussion of Article 11.

J. St. Cyr motioned to consider candidates who applied on time for the remaining Budget Committee vacancy and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Discussion with public input.

A. McLeod motioned to nominate Lawrence Tilley for the vacated Budget Committee position and was seconded by J. St. Cyr.

Vote: GF No, BH No, MD No, AM Yes, JM Yes, JS Yes

Motion failed, 3 in favor, 3 against, tie vote

Public Input Closed

Old Business

J. Markland recommended that the Committee review the chart of the state bids, previously presented to the Committee, in preparation for the discussion of the police cruiser.

Discussion

J. St. Cyr motioned to approve minutes of December 6, 2012, seconded by M. DeCoff

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Abstain, JM Yes, JS Yes.

Minutes approved 5 in favor, 1 abstention.

Next Meeting is scheduled for January 8, 2013.

A McLeod motioned to adjourn and was seconded by M. DeCoff with all in favor

Adjournment 8:20 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Hawksley
Budget Committee Secretary

Approved January 10, 2013