

Town of Alton
Budget Committee Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
January 7, 2016
Minutes
Approved January 13, 2016

I. Call to Order 6:35 pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Andy McLeod, Chairman
Roger Nelson, Vice Chairman
John Markland, Member
Terence O'Rourke, Member
David Hershey, Member
Lou LaCourse, Selectmen's Representative
Steve Miller, School Board Representative, Arrived 7:05pm

Other Attendees:

E. Russell Bailey, Town Administrator

IV. Approval of Agenda

R. Nelson motioned to approve the agenda as presented and was seconded by T. O'Rourke with all in favor.

R. Bailey stated that the MS7 document shows the Town of Alton Budget, appropriations from the previous year, actual expenditures and the recommended amounts by the BOS and Budget Committee. It is broken down by General Government, Public Safety, Highways and Streets, Sanitation which is Solid Waste, Water, Health and Welfare and Culture and Recreation services.

The total operating budget approved by the Budget Committee for 2016 is \$6,900,267.00. In addition to there are warrant articles that are listed as "special", which can only be spent for the purpose as noted in the article and capital reserves which is \$1,503,428.44. There is also an Individual article, the Ambulance Article, for the withdrawal of funds from the Ambulance Fund. This is a total appropriation of \$8,563,695.44. The estimated revenues are based on prior year is \$2,469,570.00 in revenue which is the net amount to be raised by taxes of \$6,094,125.00.

A. McLeod stated that Article 30 and 39 were being shown as recommended by the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee did not recommend this article. A correction will be made reducing the budget by a total of \$5,121.44

R. Bailey stated that for Articles 16, 17, and 18 the changes were made as requested. On Article 9 the word "only" was added and for Article 35 the words "includes Alton" were added.

R. Bailey informed the Committee that the Default Budget for 2016 is \$6,865,318.00.

V. Public Input I

Kenneth Roberts, Highway Agent for the Town of Alton, requested that Article 25 be read into the record. He wanted to clarify the amount that was being asked as an article that appeared in the paper incorrectly listed the requested amount as \$400,000.00.

Alton resident Raymond Howard asked to address the Committee regarding warrant articles for outside agencies. Mr. Howard believes some of the outside agencies are getting very expensive for the taxpayers and he believes it is sometimes a duplication of services. For instance Caregivers of Southern Carroll County. We are in Belknap County and we already pay a county tax for the same service. The Appalachian Teen Mountain Project for two youths is \$2,400.00 and seems like a lot of money. There are some other towns in our county that won't fund some of these programs because there is no benefit to the community from them. It is too late for this year but he would appreciate it if next year if the Town would look into these agencies a little deeper and see what they are actually giving us for support. It is not just what is coming from the Town there is also the County, State and federal monies involved. Some of these outside agencies have huge budgets and the County delegation will be addressing some of them this year to defund. The taxpayers are being squeezed awful hard and we saw the results of that today in Concord where they passed Senate Bill 146 which basically if the governor doesn't veto, it will throw zoning out the window for all towns. We are trying to accommodate everybody but it is hurting a lot of people. It is driving up the cost of people being able to stay in their homes.

D. Hershey asked Mr. Howard what specific articles he was referring to. Mr. Howard responded Article 34 for Genesis and Article 35 Caregivers of Southern Carroll County. A. McLeod informed Mr. Howard that the Budget Committee had a detailed discussion about Article 35 and that they have included the word "Alton" into the Warrant Article. Mr. Howard stated also the Appalachian Teen Mountain Project Article Number 37.

A. McLeod read into the record Article 41 which would combine all of the public service agencies into one Warrant Article for the future. Each agency would be a separate line item and would allow for adjustment at the Deliberative Session.

Discussion

Maggie Pritchard, Executive Director of Genesis, came to speak to the Budget Committee on behalf of Genesis and to say thank you and because the vote was so close and that concerns her. She wants to understand what they may not be providing for information that may be needed. She provided the Committee with a handout on the Genesis Program. She stated that Commissioner DeVoy from Belknap County came to their Board meeting last month and he was provided with a copy of their audited financials. The financials are also posted on their 990 and can be looked up on the internet and she can provide the Committee with a copy. She stated that she can assure the Committee that the money that is requested from Alton each year is not about double dipping or about the fact that they do get federal dollars and state dollars. It is about the fact that the state mandates that every community mental health center in NH have an emergency department that is on call 24 hours a day for any resident for all counties and they don't pay for it. The cost for running an emergency department is much like the Fire Department and can't be made up by being paid for a service. It would be like trying to fund the Fire Department only by the number of fires they put out and not paying for the physician they have on call 24 hours a day and the emergency worker who is on stand-by to go to the emergency room when the Fire Department or Police Department bring someone in for an evaluation at 2:00 in the morning. Ms. Pritchard again stated she wanted to say thank you and provide the Committee with some additional information and to say anytime you want to look at anything she would be more than happy to bring them to the Committee. She stated this year at their annual meeting we recognized PMHS and the principal there because we have such a good relationship with the Alton Schools and the schools recognize that there are kids that need help and if we are going to make any progress in mental health in the future we are going to have to start with the kids.

The Committee asked Ms. Pritchard questions and she provided information on how many Alton Residents were served. 110 Alton patients were served in the past year. She stated that uncompensated care means that they did not have any insurance and could not pay the bill. She billed what she could and applied the \$2,964.00 she received from the Town to the 110 Alton patients served. She stated she does not ask for money to pay for services she asks towns for support of the emergency care that she is mandated by the state to provide. She informed the Committee that a total percentage of 9% is for administrative costs. All other funds are provided for services to the patient.

Raymond Howard reminded the Board that under the Affordable Care Act that everyone has insurance. The police departments are putting addicts on Medicaid. There were an additional 44,000 families covered this year. D. Hershey stated he believes the issue is that people may not be able to afford the insurance. Some of these people don't have insurance because they can't afford the sliding scale allocated rate to them. Mr. Howard stated that according to the Affordable Care Act they are mandated to have insurance. D. Hershey stated he understood that but that does not mean they do. If they don't have coverage they seek services and then an independent provider such as Genesis is in a position out of compassion provide the service but are unable to get reimbursed for it because the person either chose or can't afford coverage under the Affordable Care Act.

Charlotte Hassett, Director of Children and Family Services at Genesis Behavioral Health spoke on behalf of Genesis and provided the Committee with some information on supporting the children in ACS and PMHS and provided information on the services provided to the children. She stated that Marilyn St. Cyr was innovative in her vision for children because she realized if children were required to travel to Laconia for services when you combine the travel time with the therapy time it would impact those students significantly academically and the majority of our students do suffer from mental health issues and subsequently have an IEP or 504 plan. Ms. Hassatt provided the Committee with a definition of an IEP and 504 plan. We provide those on site services for free. We have clinicians that travel to Alton and they are reimbursed for mileage but Genesis is not. We also provide crisis for any student at PMHS regardless if they are an open client. We provide consultation for their special education and guidance teams and that is not reimbursable as well. We are providing those services at the sites to help increase access to the care for those students. To help decrease the impact it has on them academically and to help sustain a more collaborative relationship with the school and provide interventions that are more pro-active. We also provide education to the school personnel on mental health issues in ways that they can work with these kids. We also provide services as a liaison. If any student is currently not seen at school but receive services at our location in Laconia we work as a liaison. We have a clinician assigned to that. We are able to collaborate more effectively because that person is on site at the school and can relay information so that child receives the best comprehensive care possible.

A. McLeod read the wording changes into the record for Article 16, 17 and 18. He noted that Article 17 was not recommended by the BOS and the BOS want the town's people to decide. Article 17 should read "not recommended by the BOS and recommended by the Budget Committee."

There was a discussion on the wording of the vote on Article 39.

Public Input I closed

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ALTON TOWN CLERK

VI. Old Business
None

VII. Other Business

Next meeting will be held on January 13, 2016 and will include both the voting and public input for the school. No meeting will be held on January 14, 2016 unless the meeting of January 13, 2016 is cancelled due to weather.

The question was raised about the meeting starting earlier to review the School Warrant Articles.

It was agreed that the meeting for January 13, 2016 will be changed from 6:30pm to 6:00pm with the public meeting beginning at 6:30pm. The School warrant articles will be E-mailed to all Budget Committee Members.

VIII. Adjourn

L. LaCourse motioned to adjourn and was seconded by T. O'Rourke with all in favor.

Adjourned 7:30pm

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Hawksley
Budget Committee Secretary
Approved January 13, 2016