

Town of Alton  
Budget Committee Meeting  
January 10, 2013  
Minutes  
Approved January 31, 2013

**Call to Order 6:20pm**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Roll Call**

Marc DeCoff, Selectmen's Representative  
Andy McLeod, Chairman  
Krista Argiropolis, School Board Representative  
Barbara Howard, Member  
Greg Fuller, Member, '  
John Markland, Vice Chairman (Arrived 6:35 PM)

**Public Input I**

Mr. Steve Miller – stated it was his hope that the Budget Committee go into detail on the line item of 3.8 million dollar PMHS budget and give it considerate discussion.

Mr. Miller stated that with all due respect he asks that the Chairman recues himself from voting on the Operating Budget. Since Chairman McLeod's wife works for the school Technology Department Mr. Miller feels that there is a salary and benefit that directly affects the Chairman.

Chairman McLeod responded that he would not recues himself from the vote.

Cathy Dix-Herndon – questioned the Committee with regards to the voting of a new member to the Budget Committee. Chairman McLeod explained that the vote was a 3-3 tie and did not pass. Due to the lateness of the season there would be no additional member.

**Public Input I closed**

**Approval of Agenda**

**M. DeCoff motioned to move Approval of Minutes to old business and was seconded by A. McLeod.**

**K.Argiropolis motioned to add the School Public Hearing and the Reconvening of the Town Public Hearing.**

**M. DeCoff motioned to approve the Agenda as amended and was seconded by A. McLeod with all in favor.**

**A. McLeod motioned to reconvene the town public hearing and to vote for Town Warrant Article No. 11.**

**Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH N, GF Yes, KA Abstain,**

**Budget Committee votes 3-1-1 (against BH) and (abstention KA), motion passed (J. Markland was not present for this vote)**

Ruth Messier requested and was provided an explanation of Article 11.

### **Town Public Hearing closed**

### **Public Hearing for the School Warrants Articles opened**

#### **Chairman McLeod read into the record all of the Warrant Articles**

##### **Article 1 – Choose School District Officers**

Budget Committee does not vote on this article.

##### **Article 2 – To raise and appropriate \$18,665,536.00 for the renovation, reconstruction, repair and construction of an addition to the Alton Central School.**

Andrea Caruso, Alton Resident, believes it is in the children's best interest to approve the renovation of the school so they can learn and be safe.

Ruth Messier approached the Committee and stated that we have been looking at problems with the school for 20 years or so. We need to do something now and I will vote for it.

##### **Article III – Special Warrant Article - To raise and appropriate \$7,000,000.00 for renovation, reconstruct, repairs and construction of an addition to the Alton Central School.**

Cathy Dix-Herndon approached the Committee and stated that she is confused with regards to the Warrant Article and that we have had a Buildings and Grounds Committee working on this for about 7 years. This warrant article has not plan.

Mr. Steve Miller is the author of Warrant Article III and addressed the concerns of Ms. Dix-Herndon. Mr. Miller stated he is a member of the Buildings and Grounds Committee and has voiced an alternative plan in the range of 5-8 million dollars. The school needs to be renovated the modular's need to be eliminated, the roof needs to be fixed and safety issues addressed.

Mr. Miller's believes that 18,000,000.00 is not the only answer and that the \$18,000,000.00 is the only plan from the architect. Mr. Miller informed the Committee and those in attendance his reasons for the warrant Article.

Discussion - the Committee addressed questions to Mr. Miller regarding the warrant article.

Terry Noyes – There may never be a time that Alton qualifies for funding and enrollment is down. The biggest thing is the infrastructure; plumbing, electrical, no ventilation and the heating system is terrible and the roof could be fixed. Ms. Noyes asked that architect C. Krause address the Committee.

Architect Chip Krause gave the Committee and those in attendance an overview on the renovation of the school and stated that you could go with a lesser project but each project is contingent upon another project and they all become co-dependent on each other. The project can be phased and it could take an additional year and a half and the costs would be more. The building was built in 1956 and you are fixing an enormous amount of things.

Discussion – the Committee addressed questions to the architect.

Karl Ingoldsby Alton Resident – Doesn't feel \$7,000,000.00 is enough to get the children back in the building and make everyone safe and believes this is a waste of taxpayer money The Buildings and Grounds Committee has been in force for 9 years and stated Mr. Miller has only attended meetings in the last year before that he sporadically attended. Mr. Ingoldsby continued that he has attended for the past 8 ½ years and we worked diligently on this plan.

**Article IV – Determine and Fix the salaries of the School Board and compensation of any other officers or agents of the District.**

Ms. Messier stated there is confusion previously with this article and it did not pass last year. The voters have said no to this and it is still in the operating budget. Why do we still have this warrant article? K. Argiropolis responded that it is not to raise and appropriate and we are required to have it to determine and fix the salaries.

Loring Carr addressed the committee and stated that K. Argiropolis was mistaken that it was not true. There is an RSA that specifically says that the School Board has to put it in to be determined. There is not an RSA that states the Selectmen's budget appear on a warrant article. If it was voted down they should not be paid and one year it didn't pass and they paid themselves anyway.

Karl Ingoldsby – Stated that if it is an RSA then the RSA should be on the Warrant Article.

Steve Miller I believe the voter's wishes should be honored. The spirit of the ordinance should be honored. No means no. I don't believe on a technically that you should pay yourself and I did not take a salary because the voters said no.

**Article V – To raise and appropriate \$12,711,699.06 as an operating budget.**

Loring Carr requested clarification of various lines items.

Karl Ingoldsby – On Page 11 the salary adjustments are 3% for non-union staff. 80% of the town is scheduled to a 6.1% raise this year through Step, Track and COLA. The people that are not on Step and Track are getting a 4.1% raise. I feel that the people in the line item, aides, custodians, are the lowest paid. They are told they don't get raises because the teachers don't have a contract. The teachers got a 3% contract and the support staff got 1 ½% merit based. They do not get what they deserve and they get left behind. I would like to suggest an increase to the line item to get it equal.

Steve Miller would like to have the Budget Committee in the future request to the School Board that the PMHS budget, that the same document you see here, be included here so that people who do attend can look at the PMHS budget and if they have questions about that budget they can ask them as well.

Steve Miller asked Chairman McLeod why he would not recues himself from the operating budget. Chairman McLeod responded for that particular line item we took more than ½ of the total amount for the school out of my wife's budget. Chairman McLeod believes he can be impartial about the whole process.

**Article VI –Special Warrant Article to create Alton Unanticipated Utilities Expendable Trust Fund to raise and appropriate \$44,242.00.**

**Article VII – Special Warrant Article to approve cost items and to further raise \$43,858.49 for the increase in salaries and benefits.**

**Article VIII – Special Warrant Article – If Article 7 is defeated to call a special meeting to address cost items only. (Budget Committee does not vote on this article**

**Article IX Special Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$16,548.00 to a non-lapsing capital reserve known as the Improvement of Instruction Fund**

Loring Carr questioned whether we pay the PMHS teachers between Alton and Barnstead 50/50? K. Argiropolis responded it is broken down by student enrollment unless it is a cost improvement. If it is something for improvement it is 50/50 otherwise it is by enrollment. Currently Alton has the larger enrollment.

Ruth Messier asked if it was in the contract. K. Argiropolis responded, yes it is and it is in the contract that was last passed in 2007.

**Article X – Special Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$38,828.56 to establish a contingency fund to meet the costs of unanticipated utility expenses for PMHS.**

**Article XI – Special Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$25,000.00 to be added to the PMHS General Maintenance Fund.**

Ruth Messier asked for an idea on what the article is for. K. Argiropolis responded that it was recommended by the insurance company. As the building ages, to take care of issues that comes up. Susan Dillon Business Manager for PMHS stated that some of the items it was used for were the security cameras for the library, costs related to the fire suppression system and the well that was drilled. The current balance is \$108,000.00

**Article XII – Special Warrant Article to raise and appropriate \$14,000.00 for the separating of irrigation water from arsenic media water filtration systems.**

**Article XIII – To hear reports of any boards, committees, trustees, commissions, officials, agents or concerned voters. (The Budget Committee does not vote on this article.)**

Meeting recessed at 8:00pm

Meeting resumed 8:08 pm

J. St. Cyr clarified that the School Board Article is RS194:10 Salaries and School Boards and Officers.

Andrea Caruso – Would like to know what the total operating budget for the town of Alton is and what amount of revenue is generated from all the taxes. Chairman McLeod responded around \$20,000,000.00. M. DeCoff stated that the 1.6 is based on the tax bill that just went out and it runs about \$500,000.00.

A. McLeod read into the record the 2013 estimated Budget Summary Revenues.

Mr. Miller asked that for the record the unreserved fund balance of \$438,179.00 is this the school surplus from last year. Chairman McLeod responded yes. Mr. Miller also asked what the surplus has been for the past few years. There was a discussion on the surplus for the past few years.

Chairman McLeod read into the record the Alton School Department default budget.

**Article I – The Budget Committee does not vote on this article.**

R. Messier asked about child nutrition for \$89,000.00 and the food service income. K. Argiropolis explained that is was monies received for the free and reduced lunch program and is a federal program. The Food Service Income is the revenue from the lunch program as a whole.

Public Hearing Closed

**Article II**

Motion made by A. McLeod to approve 18,665,636.00 for renovation of the school and was seconded by J. Markland.

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

K. Argiropolis called a point of order and asked M. DeCoff about the Board of Selectmen not taking a position on the Buildings and Grounds and would remain neutral. K. Argiropolis was wondering if they had changed their point of view and if they had voted for or advised you on how to vote. M. DeCoff responded that the Board of Selectmen do not tell him how to vote I only have to vote the way the Selectmen want on the Selectmen's budget not on the School budget.

Vote continued: KA Yes

**Budget Committee votes 3-3 (MD, BH, GF), tie vote, motion failed.**

**Article III**

Motion made by A. McLeod to approve \$7,000,000.00 for renovation, reconstruction and repair of the school and was seconded M. DeCoff.

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

**Budget Committee votes 1-5 (AM, MD, GF, JM, KA), motion failed**

**Article IV**

Motion made by A. McLeod to fix salaries of the School Board and compensation of any other officers or agents of the District, and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Discussion

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

**Budget Committee votes 4-2 in favor (BH, GF), motion passed.**

**Article V**

Motion by A. McLeod to accept the School Operating Budget in the amount of \$12,711,699.06 and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Discussion

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, JM Yes, KA Abstained

**Budget Committee votes 5-0-1 (KA). Motion passed.**

**Article VI**

Motion by A. McLeod to accepted Unanticipated Utilities for the Alton Central School for \$44,242.00 and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Vote: AM Yes, MD Yes, BH Yes, GF Yes, M Yes, KA Yes

**Budget Committee votes 6-0 in favor, motion passed**

### **Article VII**

Motion made by A. McLeod to accept PMHS Master Agreement as stated in the article and was seconded by M. DeCoff.

Discussion

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

**Budget Committee votes 4-2 (BH, GF) in favor, motion passed.**

### **Article IX**

Motion by A. McLeod to accept \$16,548.00 for Improvement of Instruction for PMHS and was seconded by M. DeCoff

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

**Budget Committee votes 6-0 in favor, motion passed.**

### **Article X**

Motion by A. McLeod to accepted \$38,828.56 for Unanticipated Utilities for PMHS and was seconded by M. DeCoff

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

**Budget Committee votes 6-0 in favor, motion passed.**

### **Article XI**

Motion made by A. McLeod to accept \$25,000.00 for PMHS General Maintenance Fund and seconded by M. DeCoff

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

**Budget Committee votes 6-0 in favor, motion passed**

### **Article XII**

Motion made by A. McLeod to accept \$14,000.00 for the separating of irrigation water from arsenic media water filtration systems and was seconded by G. Fuller

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

**Budget Committee votes 6-0 in favor, motion passed.**

Steve. Miller asked if the budget committee made any cuts to the School Budget. A. McLeod responded that the Budget Committee cut a total of \$201,000.00. Mr. Miller continued what I understood is that you just put it back in. A. McLeod responded no we approved what we cut.

Public Hearing closed.

Old Business

Meeting Minutes

J. Markland motioned to accept the January 3, 2012 and January 8, 2012 meeting minutes as presented and was seconded by K. Argiropolis.

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

K. Argiropolis motioned to adjourn and was seconded by A. McLeod with all in favor

Adjourned 8:45pm

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy Hawksley  
Budget Committee Secretary

Approved January 31, 2013