

Town of Alton
Town Hall Meeting Room
Budget Committee Meeting
January 14, 2014
Minutes
Approved February 6, 2014

I. Call to Order 6:30pm

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Roll Call

Andy McLeod, Chairman
Elizabeth Dominick, Member
Ruth Messier, Member
Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
John Markland, Member
Lawrence Tilly, Vice Chairman
Krista Argiropolis, School Board Representative, Arrived 7:00pm

Other Attendees:

William Lander, Superintendent ACS
Sydney Leggett, Principal ACS
S. Miller, School Board Representative

IV. Approval of Agenda

There was a discussion on how the public meeting will be held and the Petition Warrant Articles. A. McLeod's recommendation is that the public hearing be opened and left open for the duration of the meeting.

L. Carr stated that the Board of Selectmen has discussed the Petition Warrant Articles and have rejected them.

There was a discussion on the voting of the Petition Warrant Articles.

Under New Business Item VI d Town Budget will be removed and adjust the Agenda date to read "January 14, 2014."

R. Messier motioned to approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by L. Carr with all in favor.

V. Public Input I

None
Public Input I closed

VI. New Business

A. Public Hearing Open

B. Petition Warrant Articles

L. Carr read into the record the petition warrant articles.

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500.00 to purchase audio recording devices for the purpose of recording the audio of all Town meetings of a public body as defined in RSA 91a:2 I “a meeting shall mean the convening of a quorum of the membership of a public body.” The audio recording will also serve as a back-up to any video recordings. Recordings are to be easily accessed for review by the public.

The Selectmen are recommending 4-0, with one member absent and not voting.

There was a discussion and A. McLeod stated he would like to see the amount raised so that both conference rooms would have the ability to have both video and audio recording.

Jane Cormier Belknap County, District 8 Representative signed the petition and stated she will gather additional information.

R. Messier motioned to Table the petition warrant article to raise and appropriate \$500.00. The motion was seconded by Dominick with all in favor.

Lakes Region Planning Commission – Petition Article

To see if the Town will vote not to pay the estimated membership fee of \$7,000.00 to be a member of the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

The Selectmen vote was 2-2 and 1 member absent not voting.

Discussion on what the \$7,000.00 membership fee covers.

L. Carr provided an overview of what the Lakes Region Planning Commission provides to the town of Alton.

Representative Jane Cormier provided the Committee and the public with her thoughts on the Lakes Region Planning. Ms. Cormier stated she has presented legislation to repeal the regional planning commissions within the state. Representative Cormier believes it has morphed into a bureaucratic layer that has no say in the State House from the taxpayer or voter. Representative Cormier stated that reason she signed the warrant article is because each town that pays into the fund to become a member also becomes a member of the Granite States Future. They go into grants from various organizations and those grants make our communities liable for any grant monies that the community takes on through the RPC and these have been harmful to communities in NH and beyond. She continued and stated local communities know best what to do with the issues. If

you look at the list, she believes there is very little actionable stuff that we are paying the \$7,000.00 for. She stated a lot of the communities are currently pulling out of the RPCs because they understand that in reality they are already paying for the services they go and do studies for.

Alton Resident Cydney Johnson addressed the Committee and wondered what the costs to the town would be if the town had to provide the services that the LRPC currently provides. What would it cost us to sub-contract these services on our own? Ms. Johnson stated until she has the details she can't support the article.

There was continued discussion.

J. Markland addressed Representative Cormier about the fact that she has legislation to eliminate the planning commissions and stated if that passes this is a mute issue. Ms. Cormier stated it would be but it would still have to go forward on the warrant article. The Legislation I put in would end regional Planning Commissions in the state by December 2014. Mr. Markland continued that what your hearing is that we could do it better locally. Ms. Cormier responded that she has every confidence. Mr. Markland stated but you signed the other petition to eliminate the Town Planner. Representative Cormier responded absolutely and that she has to do both. She could never go forward on the assumption of either. Mr. Markland asked if we are eliminating the Town Planner and ending the Planning Commission how do we do it? Representative Cormier stated we have a planning Board. She believes it is important to use our local assets and should the Regional Planning Commission bill go through we would have to look at a part time position or some other way to do it. As a Legislator I go through one way and I don't assume to know how anything is going to come out in the end. .

R. Messier stated that are Planning Board Members are very knowledgeable however they are citizens and not professionals where the Town Planner would be.

There was continued discussion between the Committee members.

Petition Article – To see if the Town will vote to end the current employment position of the Alton Town Planner with a 2012 actual salary of \$64,040.00 per year plus benefits.

The Selectmen voted not to recommend with a vote of 3-1 and 1 member absent and not voting

There was a discussion on the cost of hiring a consultant.

Petition Article – To see if the Town will vote to remove the current employment position of the Town Assessor with a 2012 actual salary of \$68,599.00 per year plus benefits.

The Selectmen voted not to recommend with a vote of 3-1 and 1 member absent and not voting

Discussion

J. Markland recommended closing the public hearing on the Petition Warrant Articles and recessing the public hearing until the School Board completed their voting.

R. Messier motioned to recess the Public hearing and was seconded by L. Tilly and passed with all in favor.

Public Hearing Closed

Petition Warrant Articles

L. Carr motioned not to recommend as written the article to end the Town Association with Lakes Region Planning. The motion was seconded by R. Messier.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 5-0-2 (K. Argiropolis and J. Markland abstaining) to not recommend.

L. Carr motioned not to recommend as written the article to remove the Assessors salary. The motion was seconded by R. Messier.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 5-0-2 (K. Argiropolis and J. Marland abstaining) to not recommend.

L. Carr motioned not to recommend as written the article to remove the Town Planners salary. The motion was seconded by R. Messier.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 5-0-2 (K. Argiropolis and J. Markland abstaining) to not recommend.

L. Carr motioned to recommend the article for \$500.00 for the audio recording device. The motion was seconded by L. Tilly.

Discussion

The Alton Budget Committee votes 4-3-0 (E. Dominick, J. Markland and L. Tilly voting against.)

R. Messier motioned to re-convene to the Public Hearing with all in favor.

Public Hearing Re-Opened

C. School Budget

The School Department provided the following handouts; Warrant Articles; Alton Teachers Association Master Agreement; Alton School District Budget Committee Public Hearing booklet.

S. Miller stated that the School Board is still meeting and asked the Committee if they would look at the Warrant Articles he was presenting first so that he may re-join the School Board meeting. The Committee was in agreement to accommodate Mr. Miller.

Article II – Renovation, Reconstruction, Repairs and Construction of an Addition to Alton Central School and for Furnishing and Equipping the School.

S. Miller thanked the Committee for their patience and spoke on behalf of the ACS Renovation Warrant Article. He gave a detailed description of what they are trying to do and what they know they can accomplish.

There was a discussion and the Committee presented questions to Mr. Miller with input from S. Leggett and W. Lander.

Article VI – Teachers Contract

S. Miller stated that the School Board is pleased with the contract and believes the contract is in the best interest of the Town. He provided the Committee with a description of the contract changes.

There was a discussion and questions were presented to S. Miller with input from K. Oblenes.

Article V – Special Warrant Article in the amount of \$13,450,029.00.

The default budget would be \$13,323,617.89.

Alton School District Budget Summary Revenues

L. Carr motioned to accept \$30,000.00 for State Sources, \$240,000 for Federal Sources, and \$158,833.00 for Local Sources for a total of non revenue resources of \$862,579.00. The motion was seconded by R. Messier. The Budget Committee votes 7-0 in favor.

Closed Public Hearing

Vote on Outstanding Warrant Articles.

Article II – Renovation, Reconstruction, Repairs and Construction of an Addition to Alton Central School and for Furnishing and Equipping the School.

R. Messier motioned to recommend Article II as written. The motion was seconded by J. Markland.

The Budget Committee votes 6-0-1 in favor (L. Carr abstains.)

Article III – PMHS Roof System

A public bond hearing will be held on January 21, 2014 for public input. The Budget Committee is unable to vote on this article at this time.

Article V – Operating Budget - \$13,450,029.00

L. Carr motioned to recommended Article III as written. The motion was seconded by L. Tilly.

L. Carr motioned to amend \$13,323,617.89 to \$13,323,618.00. The motion was seconded by R. Messier.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 7-0 in favor.

L. Tilly motioned to approve Article V as amended. The motion was seconded by E. Dominick.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 7-0 in favor of \$13,450,029.00.

Article VI – Special Warrant Article

J. Markland motioned to recommend Article VI as written. The motion was seconded by L. Tilly.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 7-0 in favor.

Article XVI – High School Maintenance Capital Reserve Fund

J. Markland motioned to recommend Article XVI as written. The motion was seconded by K. Argiropolis.

There was a discussion on the wording of the article.

The Alton Budget Committee votes 7-0 in favor.

VII. Public Input II

None

Public Input II closed

VIII. Old Business

R. Messier motioned to table the approval of the minutes of January 9, 2014 until January 21, 2014. The motion was seconded by K. Argiropolis and passed with all in favor.

IX. Other Business

None

X. Adjourn

K. Argiropolis motioned to adjourn and was seconded by E. Dominick and passed with all in favor.

Adjourned at 9:10pm

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peggy Hawksley".

Peggy Hawksley
Budget Committee Secretary

Approved February 6, 2014