

Town of Alton
Budget Committee Meeting
April 21, 2011
Alton Town Hall

I. Call to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call.

Members Present:

Marc DeCoff, Chairman
Doug Kirkpatrick, Member
Barbara Howard, Member
Virgil MacDonald, Member

Members Absent:

Virgil MacDonald, Member
Krista Argiropolis, School Board Representative
Pat Fuller, Selectmen Board Representative

III. Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Public Input.

None seen or heard. Public Input closed.

V. Approval of Agenda.

New Business Additions – Budget committee attorney, Capital Improvements – school. (Steve Miller) Unencumbered funds for town and school. Expenditures of the town for the school on a monthly basis or end of the school year. (Barbara Howard) Request the school provide report of on-going expenditures within 24 after they have been approved, with 7 copies; along with copies approved manifest. (Steve Miller). Input from taxpayers regarding direction, and see what they would like the Budget Committee to do. (Doug Kirkpatrick) Each month – in the Baysider asking folks to show up for input. Steve Miller agrees that it would be good to get input but also Budget Committee is governed by statutes. Doug would like the public to know what the Budget Committee is allowed and not allowed to do.

MOTION by B. Howard to accept the Agenda as amended. Second by D. Kirkpatrick. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

VI. Approval of Minutes. Minutes of March 10, 2011.

MOTION by S. Miller to have the minutes emailed to all Budget Committee members within two (2) weeks of the prior meeting. Second by M. DeCoff. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

MOTION by S. Miller to approve the minutes as presented. Second by M. DeCoff. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

General Discussion:

Recording secretary to send Budget Committee Schedule to all members. Next meetings May 19, September 15.

Discussion that only motions with financial content to speak individually as members for voting.

VII. Old Business.

No old business.

VIII. New Business.

1. Budget Committee attorney. J. Sessler works for the Board of Selectmen. Discussion on prior to the budget being turned in to Russ Bailey to include numbers for an attorney that represents the Budget Committee. May not be needed this year, next year, etc. but to have this in place would be a good preparation. D. Kirkpatrick asked if they would need to put one on retainer. S. Miller one suggestion getting 3-4 names to agree to be on a on-call basis. S. Miller will research and get a number of names for the next meeting to discuss. S. Miller will get an numbers from an attorney he knows to get a range for costs. He will get a proposal from 3-4. (Retainer, strictly hourly basis, or guarantee "X" amount of dollars.) He would like to keep this to a few thousand and every year, if not used, would be returned to the tax payers. Also see what the government center attorney would cost.

MOTION by D. Kirkpatrick for Steve Miller to seek out candidates for attorney to present to the budget committee at the next meeting (May 19.) Second by M. DeCoff. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

2. Capital improvements from the school. S. Miller was at the school board meeting and read in the paper [Baysider] – the school [Alton Central] is investing in a new telecommunications system to be purchased with end of the year funds. Also purchased a new security system for the SAU Office. It should have been put in the budget or next year's budget or a Warrant Article. S. Miller feels it is not right to use end of the year funds, especially now that we are going into a default budget. B. Howard added Jeff St. Cyr noted at the meeting this is a bad economy and that the key question was where would this money be coming from. K. Holt said she was told by the Budget Committee to end of the year funds for this telephone system. B. Howard clarified that V. MacDonald made the comment, "off-the-cuff", on the chairs. B. Howard stated at a meeting, not quoting V. MacDonald, but the affect that we know that you'll just spend the money from end of the year funds on the chairs. B. Howard added that now the School Board has spun that comment and the School Board is stating that the Budget Committee told them to use end of the year funds. It was brought up at that that meeting that the phone system was over \$5000 and since the budget is now closed, they will bring this into the new budget. B. Howard stated it was described a very extravagant phone system. B. Howard asked if the end of the year money amount is ever known before they release the funds to the wish list. S. Miller stated they can ask for a end-of-the-year fund usage report. D. Kirkpatrick stated this is a case of over budgeting each year. B. Howard also reported that it was announced that there was enough money for all to purchase I-pads after taking the \$750 workshop. The Principal is leaving, possible the school will be eligible to get federal funds. S. Miller suggested sending a strongly worded message that the Budget Committee backs the K-plus program as opposed to purchasing capital items such as a phone system. S. Miller questioned why would you spend money on stuff when the kids so desperately need help in being educated property. D. Kirkpatrick noted this new system will all be torn out when they re-furbish the building. Discussion S. Miller will send a letter to the Baysider to convey their message of feelings on this matter (will have a draft for the next meeting.)

MOTION by M. DeCoff for S. Miller to draft a letter, to present to the Budget Committee, showing support of the K-Plus Program at Alton Central School instead of purchasing capital expenditures. Second by D. Kirkpatrick. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed.

3. End of the year funds for the town and school. How do you know how much is left before they start spending the end of the year funds? M. DeCoff noted they can ask for copies of receipts so you have hard copies of receipts and then you will know from there from what they spent. S. Miller suggested to ask for expenditure and revenue statement. S. Miller suggested to get the end of the year information from the town as well. Suggested to ask Paulette for a ledger showing encumbrances and amount remaining. M. DeCoff to ask Kathy O'Blenes for the up to date encumbrances and amounts remaining at the end of the year.
4. Review of town expenses. (discussion if this is default budget) B. Howard noted the town is required to hire outside assessing (\$35,000) dividing this for two years (\$20,000 this year and remaining the following year.) and asked where is this money coming from? Also noted the difference on the price of the land purchase. Noted issues with the Police Department and legal services. Budget Committee line 139 General Expenses (\$103) and advertising (\$33.08) , and contracted services – M. DeCoff to check with Russ. S. Miller noted even though this is a default budget - it is very well managed by the town. D. Kirkpatrick agreed they have done a great job. S. Miller noted it is early to find any significant variances.
5. No other new business.

XI. Public input. None seen or heard. Public input closed.

XII. Calendar. Next meeting May 19, 2011 at 6:30 p.m. – change to 6:00.

XIII. Adjourn. MOTION by D. Kirkpatrick to adjourn. Second by S. Miller. No discussion. All in favor. Motion passed. (7:30 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Schaeffner
Recording Secretary

RECEIVED