

8/26/2021

Meeting of the Alton Budget Committee @ Gilman Museum

Called to order at 1805

In attendance: Ruben Parker, Patrick O'Brien, David Hershey, Leann LaPlante, Jacob Bemis, Brock Mitchell, and no public.

Absent: School Board Representative.

Motion was made to approve the agenda by David Hershey, 2nd by Brock Mitchell, Call to a vote all in favor.

New Business:

- a. New members were introduced and welcomed.
- b. Chairman OBrien advised he would be stepping down from the committee due to full time employment with the town effective September 18th. Some discussion over position responsibilities, Vice Chairman Hershey advised he would maintain the vice chair position, Chairman OBrien suggested Ruben Parker for the chairman position. Mr Parker expressed interest, only with assistance as needed due to only 1 year of experience on the board. Motion was made by D Hershey to appoint Ruben Parker to Chairman and himself to Vice Chairman, 2nd by Brock Mitchell, there was no further discussion, called to a vote and all were in favor.
- c. P OBrien announced the resignation of former recording secretary Carolyn Schaffner due to scheduling conflicts, she was thanked for her years of service to the board. The committee discussed how to proceed with various options such as hiring a new secretary, recording and transcribing minutes after the meeting by an employee or contractor, or utilizing voice recognition software and editing following meetings. Board consensus was to look into VR software and present at the next meeting. In the meantime, P OBrien would record the minutes.
- d. Members discussed possible goals for the next budget season. P O'Brien recalled in previous sessions discussing the possibility of issuing budget instructions in conjunction with the board of selectmen to department heads on goals for department budgets. There was much discussion on how in years past there have not been instructions and departments were left to make reductions at the end of the budget season. D Hershey suggested requesting full budget proposals, then one with a 5% reduction, and another with a 10% reduction, with both clearly outlining the areas where the reductions were made. The group ultimately decided to consider these suggestions and others and review at the next meeting.
- e. The current budget year to date was presented to the board for review. No action.
- f. D Hershey reviewed the previously established benchmark survey that was sent to other communities to see how we compared in various aspects of the budget. D Hershey advised we did not get any responses to the requests for information. There was discussion on the relevance and how it would be helpful. There was also discussion on how some areas may not directly compare however the intent was for reference. The general consensus was to attempt to gather information again to complete the survey if possible.
- g. The idea of department liaisons was discussed. P OBrien advocated for the liaisons to give BC members a deeper look into various departments and so those departments would have

representation in their absence at meetings. General consensus was to move forward with this as time allows, the idea was to meet with department heads 1 on 1, 1 or 2 times before the start of budget season to review and better understand budgets. Members decided to focus on the larger departments only. D Hershey offered to review Police, Fire and Solid waste, with J Bemis assisting. R Parker offered to review DPW and Water with P OBrien. L LaPlante offered to review Parks and Recreation and Library.

h. There was no other business.

There was no Old Business

D Hershey move to accept meeting minutes from the January 5th 2021 and January 13th 2021 as written, 2nd B Mitchell. No further discussion. All were in favor.

The board discussed planning to meet weekly on Thursdays moving forward through the budget season.

Motion By B Mitchell to adjourn 1930, 2nd P Obrien, no further discussion. All were in favor.