

Town of Alton
Budget Committee Meeting
Town Hall Meeting Room
November 10, 2016
Minutes
Approved December 6, 2016

1. Call to Order at 6:30 pm
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
Roger Nelson, Chairman
Michael Ball, School Department Representative
Andrew Levasseur, Member
John Markland, Selectmen's Representative
David Hershey, Member
Greg Fuller, Vice Chairman

Other Attendees:

Kathy Oblenes, ACS Business Manager
Pam Stiles, Superintendent
Naim Syed, Technology Director
Jen Katz-Brown, Special Education Director
Deb Brown, Administrative Assistant

4. Approval of Agenda
D. Hershey motioned to approve the Agenda as presented with all in favor
5. Public Input I
None
Public Input I closed
6. Old Business
A. 2017 School Department Budget Review

M. Ball presented the budget to the Committee and provided an overview.

The ACS budget is based upon the schools goals and they subscribe to be a model school. The budget is based upon a zero dollar approach. There are no warrants at this time, but two are being considered. One would be for asbestos and one for improvement of instruction. The budget is 5.56% less than last year and there are some new.

The Committee reviewed the budget, asked questions and discussed various line items.

There are some discretionary changes, some went up and some went down.

Enrollment has progressively declined. Enrollment for 2016 is 481 and in 2007 it was around 600. There are 36 students in kindergarten. Pre-K will consist of 4 sessions, two morning and two afternoon sessions. They are projecting 460 students for next year.

There was a reduction of 5 teachers. Teachers that have left or retired have not been replaced.

R. Nelson stated he believes the school is over staffed. There has been a reduction in enrollment over the years and the number of teachers has stayed the same.

There was a discussion regarding the renovations scheduled for the older part of the school including installation of new windows and the roof and what line items the funds should come from.

R. Nelson stated 3 years ago \$300,000.00 was returned to the town, two years ago over \$600,000.00 was returned and this past year it was just over 1 million dollars was returned. The budget this year is \$881,000.00 less than last year. K. Oblenes stated they build from a zero based budget. R. Nelson stated he doesn't understand how the School Board can say we are saving the tax payers money this year when the amount returned from last year has not been removed from this year's budget.

There was a discussion on the comparison of the gross budget from last year to the gross budget this year. The comparison should be made using the final results of last year's budget, less the 1 million that was returned to the tax payers, to this year's projected budget.

ACS Technology Director Naim Syed answered questions on various IT line items and computer equipment including laptops and computer servers.

There was a discussion on the cost of software licensing.

Jennifer Katz-Borin Special Education direction answered questions on various line items. She is mandated to provide special services for children requiring them. There is a federal Medicaid to Schools Program which reimburses a percentage of the cost of therapy to the school. K. Oblenes stated last year the school was reimbursed about \$80,000.00.

J. Katz-Borin stated it is the school districts responsibility to provide services to students who qualify. Students qualify based on their needs.

There was a discussion on what role private insurance has for students requiring services.

J. Katz-Borin stated the school team makes recommendations for the student's educational growth. The service would be in accordance with the child's IEP.

There was a discussion on how often children are tested and the school is able to measure their success and measure specifically an individual specific needs. We question why scores have not increased and take a more deliberate approach.

7. New Business
None

8. Public Input II
None
Public Input II closed

9. Other Business
The next meeting will be held on December 6, at 6:30pm.
The second School Budget meeting scheduled for November 15th will be cancelled.

10. Adjourn

D. Hershey motioned to adjourn and was seconded by A. Levasseur with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Peggy Hawksley
Budget Committee Secretary
Approved December 6, 2016