

# Alstead Advisory Budget Committee

## Minutes for the January 21 meeting

### Members in attendance:

Chris Hansen  
Carol Reller  
Chris Rietmann  
Priscilla Sawa  
Juliana Stevens  
Sam Sutcliffe  
Mary Ann Wolf

### Also present:

Joel McCarty  
Matt Saxton  
Marcello D'Alessandro  
Bonnie Chase

### Topics discussed:

- Marcello explained that he has always wanted to transition eventually into an education-related position, and an opportunity popped up unexpectedly in Hinsdale. He is willing to stay on part-time as police chief for at least six months, at the discretion of the SB.
- Joel will meet with the State Police on Friday about getting additional coverage. Since the budget has to be finalized tomorrow, it will be too late to change the Police Department budget to reflect the new reality. We discussed again the need to figure out what level of police coverage we want in the long term.
- We discussed the "hard" questions that we heard at the preliminary hearing:
  - why do we need even a 3% increase in the operating budget.
  - how does money come into the fund balance,
- The SB plan is to fund the operating budget from taxation, the dump truck from the DPW capital reserve fund, and all the others from the fund balance.
- When we write amendments to the proposed budget, it is better to omit the details. For example, "add \$45,000" to the DPW budget, not "add \$20K to this line in the DPW budget, \$15K to that line," etc.
- After all, there is no COLA in the proposed budget. The proposed budget is already close to the 3% cap without the COLA. Joel costed out an 8% COLA at \$64,000.
- We discussed whether to propose a COLA for all employees as well as a recommending that the SB establish a performance review process to support merit raises in the future. Before we can recommend a COLA

amendment to the budget, we need a list of employees and their wages, so that we know the cost.

- Joel says that we should form the COLA as an amendment to the Gen Gov budget rather than as a new line in the department budgets. It would be better to present the recommendation for a performance review process at the deliberative session and get an official "sense of the meeting". Or we could put the recommendation in a committee report to the Select Board.
- It would be good to stand up and express the recommendation of the committee (pro or con) for each article. It is too late to include our recommendations in the list that will be posted on Monday; however, our recommendations will be posted next to them.

### Motions:

- Juliana moved that we add to the minutes of the January 14 meeting Priscilla's summary of the opinions in support of the DPW subcommittee's recommendation of additional road maintenance materials.
- The meeting minutes of January 14 were approved, as amended. (7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions).
- We voted on the following warrant articles. (We did not vote on 1 and 2):

3	Purchase a 2015 5500 Dodge Truck	\$ 112,966	7 votes in favor
4	Establish CRF for Transfer Station	\$ 5,000	7 votes in favor
5	Add to Ambulance CRF	\$ 2,500	7 votes in favor
6	Paving roads	\$ 130,000	7 votes in favor
7	Add to Library CRF	\$ 15,000	7 votes in favor
8	Add to Highway CRF	\$ 25,000	7 votes in favor
9	Add to Fire Dept CRF	\$ 25,000	7 votes in favor
10	Add to Police CRF	\$ 2,500	7 votes in favor
11	Cut trees in cemetery	\$ 5,000	7 votes in favor
12	Stripe roads	\$ 10,000	7 votes in favor
13	Dredge Vilas Pool to open gate	\$ 25,000	7 votes in favor
14	Insurance inspection of the VP bridge	\$ 6,000	7 votes in favor
15		\$ -	
16	Lease and equip Police Cruiser	\$ 17,115	7 votes in favor

	Appropriate from fund balance to Bridge		
17	CRF	\$ 65,941	7 votes opposed
18	Discontinue the Town Hall CRF	\$ -	7 votes opposed
19	Authorize CRFs to pay management fees	\$ -	7 votes in favor
20	Adopt solar exemption	\$ -	7 votes in favor of not taking a position
21	Adopt wind powered exemption	\$ -	7 votes in favor of not taking a position
22	Adopt wood heating exemption	\$ -	7 votes in favor of not taking a position
	Add to Bridge CRF	\$ 25,000	7 votes in favor
	total	\$ 472,022	

#### Action items:

- We need to write up the amendments we plan to propose at the deliberative session.
- Sam will send an email with the draft of the possible amendment for COLA and the recommendation for the job review process.

#### Next meeting:

January 28 at 7:00 pm at the Town Offices.

#### Agenda items for next AABC meeting:

- Review of proposed amendments (one for DPW and two for Gen Gov)
- Review of answers for the hard questions

#### Comments from the public:

- Bonnie said that she heard good feedback on our contributions to the preliminary hearing.
- Matt expressed his support for our efforts.