

Alstead Advisory Budget Committee Minutes for the November 4, 2015 meeting

Members in attendance:

Bonnie Chase
Glenn Elsesser
Chris Hansen
Carol Reller
Marge Noonan
Donna Sabin
Priscilla Sawa
Nick Sintros
Juliana Stevens
Sam Sutcliffe
Jonathan Wildes
Mary Ann Wolf

Also present:

Michael Gordon
Joel McCarty
Barbara Viegener

Old Business:

- We discussed whether to dissolve the New Town Hall CRF, which has about \$64K in it. We might be able to use these funds to repair the floor and windows of the Vilas School gymnasium for use as the Town Hall. (We might also be able to use the funds in the Vilas School CRF, which has \$176K.)
- The Select Board is generally in favor of spending the remainder of the \$12K allocated for raises in 2015.
- We discussed whether we recommend budgeting for a Town Manager in 2016. We don't feel we have enough information at the moment. At least we need job descriptions for the current town office employees. Priscilla volunteered to begin the process of gathering information on the feasibility of adopting such a position, or an administrator, for Alstead.
- We discussed whether to do a line-by-line review of the expenditures and/or budget, but there was insufficient enthusiasm to put this on the agenda.

Gen Gov committee:

The committee reviewed the GG and Welfare budgets line by line and decided to move some items into other departments in 2016 in order to better identify department expenses.

The committee urged the Select Board to make repairs on town buildings with the funds allocated for 2015.

Julie is still not on the list of people who can review the U.S. Cellular phone bills, but she has learned enough to raise questions about whether various pieces of equipment and various services are being used efficiently.

Quarterly Report committee:

The next quarterly report will explain how the 2016 tax rate was set by the Select Board. Sam will start a draft after the Select Board meeting on November 10.

EMSG committee:

The Request for Proposals went out to fire truck vendors this week. Bids are due back on January 4. The RFP is for a new truck. The warrant article will need to be written properly such that a fire truck, new or used, can be bought, with a not-to-exceed price.

The committee will work next on a document that will present the reasons why a new truck is needed.

A contractor has agreed to submit a bid to fix the fire station door.

The Ambulance budget may change as well if one or more paramedics join - this will affect the wages category. The PD and FD budgets will also undergo some changes. The Select Board has approved applying for a FEMA grant to update the hazard mitigation plan.

DPW committee:

Joel has confirmed that it is OK to spend the funds approved by a 2016 warrant article in 2017, as long as we have an invoice for the purchase by the end of 2016. However, bonding is the preferred method for holding allocated funds over more than one year.

Financial Planning/Tools committee:

Jonathan has drafted some new report formats that can probably be created in MuniSmart. Once we review the formats, we can ask MuniSmart for a quote on training a town employee to create these reports and/or creating those reports for us.

Select Board:

At the November 10 meeting, the Select Board will set the tax rate. We have \$726K in fund balance, compared to a low of \$527K in 2012, \$560K in 2011 and 2013, and a high of \$780K in 2014.

We could drive the discussion on the tax rate by considering a list of possible warrant articles.

Review the Punch List:

Probably the items on the punch list will not be assigned until after the 2016 budget process is complete.

Other old business:

None.

Motions:

- We recommend that the Select Board disperse the remaining funds. (Moved by Sam, seconded by Julie: 10/yes, 0/no, 2/abstentions)
- The meeting minutes of October 21 were approved. Because the October 28 meeting did not have a quorum, the minutes could not be approved, but they were accepted for posting to the public.

Action items:

- Joel will post the Select Board agendas on the town website.
- Joel will analyze the wage and benefits data collected by the CBEC and come up with a plan for spending the remainder of the \$12K allocated for 2015 raises.
- Priscilla and Joel will follow up on the work of the HR committee (as described in the CBEC report) by creating job descriptions.
- Glenn will find out how much it would cost to repair the floor and windows of the Vilas School gymnasium.
- Carol will forward notes about the EM budget to Joel.
- Jonathan will send out new report formats for our review.

Next meeting:

November 11 at 7:00 pm at the Town Offices.

Agenda items for next meeting:

- Review the new MuniSmart formats.

Comments from the public:

- None.

Minutes submitted by Priscilla Sawa