

## **Alstead Advisory Budget Committee**

### **Minutes for the November 18, 2015 meeting**

#### **Members in attendance:**

Bonnie Chase  
Glenn Elsesser  
Chris Hansen  
Carol Reller  
Marge Noonan  
Priscilla Sawa  
Sam Sutcliffe  
Les Thomas  
Jonathan Wildes  
Mary Ann Wolf

#### **Also present:**

Joel McCarty  
Michael Gordon

#### **Selectmen's meeting:**

Alstead's portion in the proposed 2016 school budget rises by 1.16% over last year. The budget will be proposed to the School Board on Nov 30 at the High School library at 6:30 pm.

We are pricing the cost of replacement windows at Vilas School. One proposal will keep the original shape of the windows; the other will replace the windows with cheaper, more standard windows.

The Selectmen do not plan at this moment to put a line in the 2016 budget for a town administrator. Joel will attend a meeting in December for NH town administrators.

The Selectmen met for the second time with town employees regarding possible changes to health insurance. The town might offer a plan with a higher deductible and then make deposits to employees' Healthcare Savings Accounts to cover that deductible. This would allow the town to avoid the penalty that will be imposed on "Cadillac health plans" starting in 2018. (This is a 40% excise tax on plans above \$10,200 for individuals and \$27,500 for family coverage.) The response from town employees at the second meeting was more positive than previously.

The Select Board would welcome a proposal for how to compensate employees who opt out of the town's health insurance plan.

Joel discussed the town bridges that are "on the red list" with two engineers that worked with the town after the 2005 flood. There are two choices: temporary (30-

year) bridges or 70-year bridges. The 70-year design will probably get approved by the state, once the state bridge fund is refunded. We want to prepare for possible bridge closings by having a plan, getting bids and saving money to our bridge CRF.

The candidate for Police Chief is not certified in NH and not eligible for the required training until August, 2016. The Selectmen have re-opened the search. They have also signed a 60-day, 15-hours-per-week contract with the State Police to cover the town while Roger Landry recovers from back surgery. The contract specifically requires consistent staffing and adequate reporting. The cost will be covered by the funds set aside for the Police Chief. Marcello is still spending two hours a week at Alstead meetings.

Joel has drafted a list of warrant articles for 2016, based on Glenn's list. No comments have been received from his fellow Selectmen yet.

### **Old business**

The DPW is still in good shape, but it could run out of money if there is a lot of snow.

The Select Board might hire different auditors next year, just to get a fresh pair of eyes.

AABC members can ask the town office to "run the detail" on a particular line item, if we don't understand what expenses are included in that item.

There was no un-refundable double payment to the State. It was a fine for not paying the town's federal with-holding tax on time. (This was an unintentional error by a new employee.)

Jesse will present an updated proposal for the 2016 Ambulance budget with a different wage structure and increased fees to be charged to insurance companies.

There is no schedule for department heads to appear at the Selectmen's meetings.

Joel has asked a few local carpenters to look at the ADA entrance at the town offices and the town garage, with the intention of spending the funds left in building maintenance.

Joel has updated the punch list and Priscilla will repost.

### **EMSG committee:**

The Select Board has sent letters to two former town employees about returning fire department equipment.

### **HR committee:**

Priscilla and Joel reviewed the job descriptions collected by the CBEC. They have given one of the descriptions to the Selectmen's assistants and will sit down with these employees and ask whether this description completely and accurately describe what they do. This is the first step in creating job descriptions for the office staff, possibly including a town administrator.

#### **DPW committee:**

Still waiting on a bid from Patriot on the new truck so that we can evaluate the pros and cons of buying new vs. used.

#### **Quarterly Report committee:**

Sam has started drafting the quarterly report.

#### **Gen Gov committee:**

Joel reported that Juliana has been approved to review the town's phone bills.

#### **Financial Planning/Tools committee:**

We discussed the sample reports that Jonathan created and agreed that they are ready to be forwarded to MuniSmart.

#### **Motions:**

- The meeting minutes of Nov 11 were approved.
- Priscilla moved that we cancel the Nov 25 meeting and meet next on Dec. 2. (10 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions).
- Les moved that we change the meeting start time to 6:30. (8 yes, 1 no, 1 abstention).

#### **Action items:**

- Joel will share the info about possible changes to the town's health insurance plan, in particular, the proposed compensation for opting out of the health insurance program.
- Joel will forward his draft of the warrant articles to Chris H.
- Joel will forward the agenda for the Selectmen's meeting to Priscilla for posting.
- Jonathan will forward the reports to the MuniSmart rep and ask whether these reports are feasible.
- Priscilla will update the town calendar with the new meeting time.
- Mary Ann will make a sign announcing the new meeting time for display at the town offices.

#### **Next meeting:**

Dec. 2 at 6:30 pm at the Town Offices.

Nov 30 at the High School library at 6:30 for the presentation of the school budget to the School Board meeting.

#### **Agenda items for next meeting:**

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*Minutes submitted by Priscilla Sawa*