

Alstead Advisory Budget Committee Minutes for the October 21, 2015 meeting

Members in attendance:

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

Also present:

Michael Gordon
Chris Rietmann (listening in via live-stream video for some part of the meeting and communicating via email with Carol)
Barbara Viegener

Select Board:

Bob Quagland will try to find an intern from a local college to create job descriptions for town employees. We discussed whether it would be possible for the current employees or department heads to create job descriptions, but decided not to make recommendations to the Select Board at this time.

The Select Board meeting next Tuesday, Oct 27, will be cut short to accommodate a public hearing on Tom Pratt's possible use of sludge as fertilizer on his farm.

There was no line-by-line review of the budget or expenditures at the Oct 20 meeting.

Gen Gov committee:

The Select Board approved the committee's request to allow Julie to review the town's phone bills. This still needs to be communicated to the phone company.

Quarterly Report committee:

We discussed various topics that we might cover in the next quarterly report, including explaining how the tax rate is calculated, the Capital Improvements Plan, possible warrant articles, and so forth. We expect input from the state concerning the 2016 tax rate within the next few weeks.

EMSG committee:

The committee's goal is to have the detailed specs for the rescue combo truck available for bidding by the first of November. That would leave 30 days or so for the bids to come in from the vendors. We are looking into whether we can encumber funds appropriated by a warrant article over to the next year, in case the truck is not delivered by the end of the year.

The current version of the 2016 Ambulance budget is 3.2% less than last year. However, the bottom line will increase because two paramedics will join the squad, probably requiring additional supplies and insurance. We will probably also raise our fees to be more in line with other squads in the area.

The Police Chief presented a budget that is less than last year's. The Prosecutor Program line is lower because the programs fees have dropped. The health insurance, medi, retirement and wages lines are tentative because the new chief is not yet on board. The budget includes a 16% wage increase for the new admin and 5% for the full-time police officer. There is a new line, Equipment Lease, for \$6123, for the fax/printer and taser lease. We questioned how these leases could be signed without being in the 2015 budget.

The Police Chief is asking for a 4% raise for PD employees for this year.

DPW committee:

The committee will meet with Dave next week. The department has gone on to winter hours.

Financial Planning/Tools committee:

Jonathan sent email to AABC members recommending that we explore MuniSmart capabilities before looking at other software. We need to clarify whether we will have to pay an expert to create the report formats we need or whether there is training available.

Other old business:

- **Welfare:** The 2015 report from Southwestern Community Services shows that SCS has provided \$232K of welfare services to 234 Alstead households. Highest items are Head Start, Nutrition/Health, and Energy. Alstead is liable for 1% of this.
- **Countdown** have seven more regularly-scheduled meetings before the end of the year (not including the Christmas week).

Motions:

- The meeting minutes of September 14 were approved (8/yes, /no, 1/abstentions)

Action items:

- Priscilla will contact Chris R about posting the HR report.
- Priscilla will follow up with Jonathan about exploring MuniSmart capabilities.
- Mary Ann will follow up with the Select Board about the Gen Gov budget.
- Julie will follow up on the phone bill.

Next meeting:

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

Agenda items for next meeting:

- Discuss dissolving the New Town Hall capital reserve fund.
- Discuss the situation with our bridges – would we get federal funding faster if we have a bridge design?

Comments from the public:

- None.

Minutes submitted by Priscilla Sawa