

Alstead Advisory Budget Committee Minutes for the October 28, 2015 meeting

Members in attendance:

Bonnie Chase
Glenn Elsesser
Chris Hansen
Marge Noonan
Priscilla Sawa
Mary Ann Wolf

Note: not enough members attended to reach quorum.

Also present:

Michael Gordon
Joel McCarty
Barbara Viegener

Select Board:

Concern about increasing drug usage in Alstead was expressed, but there were no practical ideas about how to tackle this problem. (Jack Wozmak was appointed NH drug tsar in January. See <http://governor.nh.gov/media/news/2015/pr-2015-01-09-john-wozmak.htm> for more information about Wozmak.)

The DPW is going to fix the Town Hall septic tank in the hopes it will last another year. This expense will come out of the General Gov Buildings line.

Joel suggested postponing further research on warrant articles until the Select Board. However, he invited our opinion on the following issues:

- Dispersing the remainder of the \$12K earmarked for raises in 2015. (Currently, Alstead pays less than any other similar town for all positions in all departments except one position in one department.)
- Outsourcing some of the DPW maintenance chores, such as lawn mowing.
- Continuing to put money into Capital Reserves instead of paying cash.
- Including funds in the 2016 budget for a town manager.
- Hiring a Police Chief without requiring a background check or drug test.

A rep from DRA will come to the town offices in November with the proposed 2016 tax rate, but we don't have an exact date. This committee is invited to attend the meeting.

On Nov 16 the Select Board and any interested town employees will meet with the Health Trust. This committee is invited to attend this meeting as well.

Quarterly Report committee:

No known progress on the Q4 report.

EMSG committee:

Carol talked with Penny about the leased equipment in the 2016 PD budget – the copier (\$50 per month), the taser (\$900 per year) and computer for the cruiser (\$1300 per year).

The town has completed the work required for us to move forward with the hiring of the Police Chief, but we are waiting for Troop C and NH Standards to do their work – the background check and drug test.

DPW committee:

The committee met with David yesterday. The number of part-time hours is still tentative and might be reduced. Glenn will look at the detailed data for this summer to get a better handle on this.

We discussed DPW warrant articles – the bridge design (\$?), the paving of Walpole Valley and March Hill Rds (\$247K), the striping and the new 10-wheeler (\$190K). (Ten-wheelers retain value better than six-wheelers. It might be cheaper to lease a 10-wheeler and turn it in after five years.) Also, we might need a warrant article for Hill Rd (\$?) in order to use the FEMA money that we have received. The trailer we use to move equipment needs to be replaced (\$15K).

Gen Gov committee:

Mary Ann met with Linda to go over the 2016 General Gov budget. Mary Ann will follow up with Joel and Linda next week. It makes sense to split out some large line items, such as Fuel, by department, but this should only be done at the start of the fiscal year.

Financial Planning/Tools committee:

No progress on creating new MuniSmart report formats..

Other old business:

- We discussed briefly whether to dissolve the New Town Hall capital reserve fund.
- Linda provided a town by town comparison of funding from SWCS.

Motions:

- No motions were made because of the lack of quorum.

Action items:

- Priscilla has received the source files for the HR report and will post on the town web site, after merging the files.

- 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:

November 4 at 7:00 pm at the Town Offices.

Agenda items for next meeting:

Discuss whether to recommend the following:

- Dissolving the New Town Hall capital reserve fund.
- Dispersing the remainder of the \$12K earmarked for raises in 2015.
- Outsourcing some of the DPW maintenance chores, such as lawn mowing.
- Continuing to put money into Capital Reserves instead of paying cash.
- Including funds in the 2016 budget for a town manager.
- Hiring a Police Chief without requiring a background check or drug test.

Comments from the public:

- None.

Minutes submitted by Priscilla Sawa