

## **Alstead Advisory Budget Committee Minutes for the November 29, 2017 meeting**

### **Members in attendance:**

Glenn Elsesser  
Chris Hansen  
Joe Levesque  
Marge Noonan  
Carol Reller  
Chris Rietmann  
Priscilla Sawa  
Sam Sutcliffe  
Mary Ann Wolf

### **Review agenda and minutes**

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as amended.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

#### **Communications Committee:**

Sam is drafting an AABC mailing/posting to answer this question: how much money would you save if the municipal tax rate went down 10%? The answer is that lowering the municipal portion of our taxes would not result in big savings for an individual taxpayer but could mean a loss of important services for all.

#### **Vilas Pool Committee**

Chris H. forwarded to the Select Board the list of questions that the AABC Vilas Pool subcommittee drew up.

#### **Ambulance Committee:**

Mary Ann needs documents from Jesse in order to make her **update** to the Select Board. She has been waiting four weeks for these documents.

### **2018 Budget**

The 2018 budget proposed by the departments came to a \$61K increase over the 2017 budget. At the working meeting this past Monday, the Selectmen trimmed that increase to \$15.5K.

We discussed several issues of possible concern in the proposed budget:

- The line for crack sealing was deleted from the 2018 budget. If we can show that crack sealing will save money in the long run, we should add it back to the budget or make an appropriate warrant article.

- The wages for DPW don't make sense but will probably be sorted out when the DPW budget is reviewed next Tuesday.
- Bruce has not presented a budget for the Cemetery department. The Select Board raised the 2018 budget by \$5.6K over 2017, but we don't know whether Bruce is also counting on income from the cemetery CRF dissolved this March.
- We voted to recommend to the Select Board that performance reviews be carried out before employees receive raises. (yes/8, no/0, abstain/1)
- The Select Board cut the budget for Conservation by 60% because the 2017 budget was underspent by a similar amount. There was no one at the meeting from the Conservation Committee.
- We want to look at the bills for internet service to see if there are some cost-saving measures.

### Unassigned Fund Balance

Since we don't know how much is in the unassigned fund balance (UFB), we don't know how much can be used to cover 2018 expenditures.

The DRA's 2017 tax rate breakdown reported the UFB as \$571.9K. However, Trish has confirmed that if the amount of taxes in arrears is decreased, the UFB is decreased accordingly. Thus, it is likely that the UFB has decreased due to the sale of properties seized by the town for back taxes. In order to determine how much the UFB has decreased, Glenn has asked Trish for a report of the current amount of taxes in arrears.

Separately, Glenn has estimated that the 2017 funds flowing into the UFB are:

- \$100K (unexpended budget)
- \$ 50K (unexpected revenue)
- \$115K (dissolved capital reserve funds)

The proposed funding for the current list of warrant articles (revised 11-28-17) draws \$198.8K from the UFB. This is less than the total estimated 2017 funds flowing into the UFB (\$265K).

### 2018 Warrant Articles

Regarding the proposed warrant articles:

- There is currently no warrant article to establish a cemetery maintenance fund. Bruce requested this new fund last year when he recommended the dissolution of the old cemetery CRF. (The old CRF could be used only for purchasing property.)
- We voted to consider a draft warrant article that would establish AABC as an independent body. (yes/7, no/0, abstain/2)

## Grants

Joe met with Kelly regarding the application for a USDA grant to improve the Town Hall. We need to make the Town Hall ADA compliant in order to qualify for federal funds. The deadline for this grant is December 8.

Joe is also planning to work on a grant for the library.

## Action items

- Glenn will forward to us an article on crack sealing.
- Chris H. will draft a letter to the Select Board recommending that employees receive performance reviews before receiving raises.
- Chris H. will ask Bruce if he plans to propose a warrant article to establish a cemetery maintenance fund.
- Chris H will ask Kelly to prepare print outs for our bi-weekly meetings of the 2017/2018 budget and warrant articles.
- Sam will call Sarah Webb and let her know that the Conservation budget has been cut.
- Sam will draft a potential warrant article to establish AABC as an independent body.
- Joe will ask Kelly for copies of the internet service bills.

## Next meetings

December 13

December 20 and/or December 27

## Important dates for the 2018 warrant

**January 9:** last day for petitioned warrant articles;  
also post notice of Budget Hearing

**January 16:** last day for Budget Hearing

**January 29:** last day to post warrant

**February 2:** last day to declare candidacy for town office

**February 3 or 10:** Deliberative Session

**March 6:** annual town report with final budget and ballot available

**March 13:** Town Meeting

*Submitted by Priscilla Sawa*