

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Select Board

Approved Minutes for Meeting of January 17, 2025 at 5:00 PM

Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joel McCarty, Chair, and Gordon Kemp.

STAFF PRESENT:

Name	Position	In Person	Google Meet
Misty Gratacos	Town Administrator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stephen Murrell	Police Chief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prescott Trafton	Dir Emergency Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Susan Norlander	Moderator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person: Barbara Viegener, Joe Levesque, Carol Reller; **Google Meets:** Bobbie Wilson

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 10:21 AM and then proceeded with leading the agenda-based discussion.

GUESTS:

ACTION ITEMS: Budget work with Department Heads prior to Budget Hearing on Tuesday, January 21.

Mr. Kemp says that 57% needs to be cut from the current list of Warrant Articles, which equates to approximately \$8,400. Mr. Levesque asks if the plan is to cut it from the Operating Budget, and Mr. Kemp says he'd like to leave that up to Mr. McCarty and Mr. Saxton. Mr. Kemp suggests starting with General Government Buildings, since he tried to put as much of that necessary maintenance in there as was received in invoices from Bellows Construction, other than the \$33,000 which was for insulating the Village Fire Station.

Mr. Levesque asks if the deadline to submit new Warrant Articles has passed, and Mr. McCarty says that the group at the table can create a new warrant article, if the Board agrees to add it.

That said, the deadline for petitioned articles has passed, and as of 1/21 the deadline for any Warrant Articles with money attached to them will have passed.

Ms. Norlander asks when it would be appropriate to mention the change in wording for her petitioned Warrant Article. Mr. Kemp says he's not sure that they are allowed to do that, but Mr. McCarty notes that Ms. Norlander sought legal advice about this. Ms. Norlander said she is still awaiting a reply, but is simply looking to add the words "raise and appropriate". Mr. Kemp also sought legal advice about this from the Town attorney and DRA, and was told by DRA that wording can be changed from the floor at the Deliberative Session (he is still waiting to hear back from the attorney). He also asked if they need to count petitioned Warrant Articles with appropriations against the Tax Cap, but DRA would not provide an answer to that question and said to await the attorney's response. During the course of this conversation Ms. Norlander did receive a response to her legal question and was advised to make changes to wording at the Deliberative Session. Mr. McCarty asked her to forward the response to the Board, Mrs. Gratacos, and Mr. Levesque.

Going back to the proposal to remove \$9,000 from General Government Building Maintenance and Repairs, Mr. McCarty asks the group if they want to discuss how that will be done, or if they'd like the Board to simply "make it so". Mr. Levesque asks the Board what the plan was for the original \$30,000 budgeted amount. Mr. Kemp says Director Moore brought Barry Bellows around Town to review various projects that needed to be done with Town buildings. Mrs. Gratacos adds that there is a request to add a lockbox on the outside of the Town Office building so that residents could drop off Tax Bills, Invoices, etc. after business hours. Mrs. Reller asks if the gazebo roof could be zeroed out and funded with donations. Mr. McCarty says that the Warrant Articles need to be presented to the voters with the necessary dollar amounts to complete them, and if the voters decide they'd like to zero any out the Board can then look to other means of funding, like donations. Mrs. Reller asks since the Warrant Article hasn't been officially submitted yet, could they make the change now before presenting to the voters (as a means for reducing the amount that needs to be cut from General Government Building Maintenance and Repairs). Mr. McCarty says yes, they can do that. Mr. Kemp agrees that the Town building maintenance projects are a higher priority for him than the gazebo. Mr. Levesque supports this idea and suggests that the original builders (Bensonwood) may be willing to donate materials/time to make the repairs. Mr. McCarty asks if the group agrees to make these changes to the gazebo repairs Warrant Article, and the group agrees. Mrs. Reller also suggests that the Part Time Police Wages could be cut to \$20,000. Chief Murrell and Mr. Kemp note that these numbers have already been cut. Mr. Trafton suggests taking some money out of line item #4312690 - Glass Road Base Cleanup. Mr. Kemp asks how much the estimate for this cleanup was, and Mr. McCarty says it was \$31,000. There is \$35,000 in this line item, so this would drop to \$32,500.

Mr. McCarty and Mr. Kemp review the proposed changes to the budget:

- Reduce Warrant Article 17 (gazebo roof) to \$1, and
- Reduce line item #4312690 - Glass Road Base Cleanup, to \$32,500.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: No minutes to review.

OLD BUSINESS: Not discussed.

NEW BUSINESS:

OTHER ITEMS:

Sub-account numbers for the Library and Executive Wages –

- Mr. Kemp says that sub-accounts are under the Town's judgement and don't require the State's input. Mr. McCarty has asked Mrs. Reller to convene with the Library Trustees to assign a sub-account number for the Library, and he will work with Mrs. Gratacos on the sub-accounts for Executive Wages.

Mrs. Wilson asks if she wants to add a small amount to the Selectboard Operations Budget for a paid Google Meets account, should she bring it up at the Deliberative Session and does there have to be a line item. Mr. Kemp says he doesn't believe this needs to be brought up at Deliberative Session since the monthly cost is so low. Mr. Kemp motions to purchase the account, and Mr. McCarty agrees that it should be done and wants to discuss it further.

Mr. Levesque asks if a digital copy of the budget will be projected during the Budget Hearing to see how it works. Mr. McCarty confirms that this is the plan, and Mr. Trafton has been tasked with bringing the big screen to the Town Hall. Mr. McCarty asks if anyone has a suggestion for how many packets should be made available for the Budget Hearing. Mrs. Reller asks if the budget will also be available on the Town website, and Mr. McCarty confirms that it will. She suggests that this be made widely known to the public. Mr. McCarty also asks Ms. Norlander to confirm that those who attend the meeting online versus in person are able to participate in the discussion, but are not permitted to vote on any matters during the meeting. She confirms that this is true.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS: Not collected.

BOARD REPORTS: Not collected.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/QUESTIONS:

INFORMATIONAL:

EXECUTIVE SESSION/S:

On a motion made by Mr. McCarty and seconded by Mr. Kemp ***the Board Chair adjourned the public meeting at 11:03 AM.***

Important Upcoming Events/Meetings

Date/Time	Subject	Location	Notes
January 17 at 10:00 am	Selectboard Working Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic Street	
January 21 at 5:00 pm	Town Budget Hearing	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
January 23 at 5:00 pm	Public Hearing re: Walpole withdrawal from FMRSD	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
January 28 at 5:00 pm	Selectboard Meeting	Town Offices; 15 Mechanic Street	
February 1 at 10:00 am	Deliberative Session	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	
February 10 at 6:00 pm	FMRSD School Board Meeting	High School	2nd Monday of each month
February 11 at 5:00 pm	Public Hearing re: Vilas and Warren Dams update	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	Selectboard meeting to follow
March 11 8:00 am - 7:00 pm	Town and School Voting Day	Town Hall; 9 Main Street	

Respectfully submitted,

Shelley Steuwe

Recording Secretary