

TOWN OF ALSTEAD, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Select Board
Approved Minutes for Meeting of January 18, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.
Town Offices, 15 Mechanic Street, Alstead, NH 03602

SELECT BOARD PRESENT: Joseph Levesque (late arrival), Joel McCarty, Matthew Saxton.

STAFF PRESENT: In person: Julie Bacon, Town Clerk/Tax Collector; Ben Hoy, Transfer Station Supervisor; Stephen Murrell, Police Chief; Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator; Jesse Moore, Ambulance Chief; Prescott Trafton, Road Agent; Bobbie Wilson, Ambulance Lieutenant.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS: In person: Judith Willis, Gordon Kemp.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER: In the Board Chair's absence, Mr. McCarty called the Select Board meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

ACTION ITEMS: Finalize the budget and review the first draft of the warrant articles.

MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS: No minutes were presented for approval at this meeting.

BUDGET REVIEW: Goal is to ensure all departments are treated fairly in the effort to keep the budget under the 3% cap. Mr. Levesque arrived. The admin noted that both copiers have been misbehaving; particularly the conference room copier, which is unrepairable. Conclusion is that the only action possible at this stage of the budget process is an emergency replacement should that be necessary; not able to add copier remediation into the budget now. Budget is currently \$800 and change under the cap. Ms. Wilson wondered if the Transfer Station is satisfied with its current budget; the answer is yes. Re: the outstanding question of buying at least one new computer for the Supervisors of the Checklist between January 1 and March 14, the answer from NHMA is, it isn't advisable. There was additional discussion of Board authority to move money around within the budget. The default budget was discussed; Mary and Charlotte went through and produced a default budget based on the 2022 budget and their understanding of the rules. The result is higher than last year's budget and exceeds the cap; it was questioned whether that is allowed. Mr. McCarty sent an inquiry to NHMA to get an answer to that question. The group suggested that the \$1,692,584 budget figure be placed in Warrant Article 2; the Board agreed. The Budget discussion concluded and review of the proposed Warrant Articles began.

Article 01 - Election of officers: No discussion.

Article 02 - Operating Budget: Proposed budget is 1,692,583. Default budget answer pending. Includes no raises.

Article 03 - Additional Cost-of-Living Adjustment: Remove "Additional" from title and text. Suggested to change number from last year's number to \$23,322, which is a 4.5% increase plus accommodation for the PTO cash-out benefit that was added by in the PTO policy approved in January and set to begin in 2023. Additional calculations might be required before the budget hearing.

Article 04 - Paving: Mr. Levesque suggested returning to Mr. Elsesser's suggestion of \$500,000, with 403,575 from unassigned fund balance, 81,424 from the special one-time highway payment, and 15,000 from taxation. It was agreed that the preference is to minimize what we take from unassigned fund balance.

Article 05 - New Truck: Mr. Levesque noted an error in the draft that called for some of the money for the truck to come from the one-time highway grant. It was suggested to change description to "New 10-wheel Dump Truck" and to go with Mr. Elsesser's suggested figure of \$255,000, with 180,000 from capital reserve and 75,000 from taxation. There was additional discussion about minimizing the realization of loss associated with removing money from capital reserve; Mr. McCarty reminded all about the scheduled January 31 meeting with the fund managers at Town Offices at 10 AM. There was some jocularly about debating the virtues of different brands of truck. It was suggested that this article be non-lapsing.

Article 06 - Sweeping and Striping: It was suggested that we alternate sweeping / striping with roadside mowing and eliminate this article in favor of the mowing article.

Article 07 - Roadside mowing - keep

Article 08 - Dust control and pavement patching: Mr. Levesque observed that cold patch should be in the operating budget. The need for magnesium chloride versus calcium chloride - is because calcium chloride is undesirable around the lake. It was suggested to strike this article from the draft.

Article 09 - Add to Bridge Capital Reserves: Should we keep the \$45,033 one-time bridge payment for paying for the 10% of the MOBIL bridge project? Mr. McCarty noted that he was told that adding that to the bridge capital reserve was an excellent idea. Ms. Willis wondered whether the wording was clear enough about where the money is coming from. There was more jocularly

about laundered federal money. Mr. McCarty also noted that Mr. Saxton would be calculating the tax impact on every warrant article.

Article 10 - Add to Transfer Station Capital Reserves: No discussion.

Article 11 - Add to Library Capital Reserves: Add "Memorial" to the title, after Shedd-Porter. No other discussion.

Article 12 - Add to Ambulance Capital Reserves: Current fund balance is \$188,329 as of 9/30. Inflation is outpacing what we can raise to make the purchase. There was additional discussion about the intent

Article 13 - Purchase and equip a used ambulance vehicle: No additional discussion.

Circled back to Dust Control article because the Road Agent arrived. It was decided to add the dust control article back in. Re: sweeping/stripping and mowing: Road agent suggested keeping sweeping/stripping and eliminating mowing, with emphasis on the stripping over the sweeping. Suggested to drop the sweeping completely. Keep the \$11,000 amount. Mr. Kemp asked whether Dust Control and pavement patching belong in same article. It was suggested that we strike the pavement patch from the warrant article and add it back into the budget during deliberative.

Article 14 - Add to Police Capital Reserve: change "ambulance" to "Police." No other discussion.

Article 15 - Add to Vilas Pool Park capital reserve fund. Some debate about the amount. Mr. Kemp argues that the park has money and his preference is to use that money up first before adding to taxpayer burden. There is a \$50,000 CD that is available for use. It was suggested to strike this article. Mr. Levesque notes that the cost of fixing the spillway that frequently results in damage to 123A is external to the park. Mr. Moore suggested that it's reasonable to put some money aside for repairs OUTSIDE the park in the form of infrastructure. \$5000 shows intent by the town to contribute to the infrastructure needs. It was suggested to keep the \$5000 as written. Take to the hearing and see what the Town has to say.

Article 16 - Paint Historical Society Steeple: \$40,000 from taxation. Mr. Saxton recalled a time when the steeple was left so long that it needed to be replaced; the goal is to avoid that. The contractor indicates that if it passes it cannot be completed in 2023 so it must be non-lapsing.

Article 17 - 9 Main Street: Add language to the title that indicates the intent to purchase. \$76,000 from taxation. Some objection to the number. Mr. Saxton suggested \$35,000. Add "up to" to allow negotiation. Ms. Bacon went to get the valuation, which is \$26,000; she pointed out that 9 Main Street is actually the fire station. The desired property does not have a 911 number. Suggested "Main Street Property" and indicate that it's the property next to Town Hall, add the map and lot parcel ID.

Article 18 - Repair Fire Engine 3: Concern that if it fails, we can't repair it. Suggested to leave it in as is, adding "up to \$25,000;" move to zero out the article and add it back into the operating budget during Deliberative, to avoid being constrained. Mr. Elsesser is meeting with the Fire Chief to get more information.

Article 19 - Self-containing Breathing Apparatus: Change "containing" to "contained;" Add "up to."

Article 20 - Adopt a new 5% tax cap: Mr. Saxton wondered if the order of the tax cap articles should be switched - rescind first, then pass new. There is RSA-mandated text for these two articles - replace existing text with that mandated text.

Article 21 - Rescind the 3% tax cap: switch order - rescind first, adopt second. Intent is to adopt 32:5 without any modified language. Public hearing required at least 15 days but not more than 30 days before voting takes place - sometime after 2/12.

Article 22 - Large-scale municipal solar generation and EV charging: Discussion, left as is for hearing.

There was discussion about the deadline for petition warrant articles - answer is January 10th. Filing period for candidacy is 1/23 - 2/5.

There being no further discussion of the articles, on a motion from Mr. McCarty that was seconded by Mr. Saxton, **the Board Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:40 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Schoppmeyer, Office Administrator