

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2013

6:00 PM

1 Monument Square

Alton, NH 03809

Approved: November 4, 2013

R. Loring Carr convened the meeting at 6:00 PM and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following members and staff were present:

R. Loring Carr, Chairman
Cydney Johnson, Vice Chairman
David Hussey, Selectman
Marc DeCoff, Selectman
Robert Daniels, Selectman
E. Russell Bailey, Town Administrator

Approval of the Agenda

David Hussey made a motion to approve the agenda as presented and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Appointments

None

Announcements:

Halloween Trick or Treat Hours; Thursday, October 31, 2013 from 5:00 PM to 7 PM; Town Hall will be open and credit cards are now being accepted in both the Town Clerk and Tax Collector Offices.

There will be candy handed out at the Town Hall, Police and Fire Stations.

Selectmen's Committee Report

Robert Daniels reported on the Budget Committee; Elizabeth Dominick was appointed to fill the Board vacancy and the next meeting is October 24, 2014.

R. Loring Carr reported on the ZBA meeting; Work Force Housing was discussed and modified a bit more and it will be presented to the Planning Board shortly.

Town Administrator's Report and Updates

Senior Center

A handout was provided by E. Russell Bailey; he is not looking for a final okay tonight, with the next phase of the center being the kitchen area. The key item is that there is no physical change to the structure of the building; it is just an interior expansion which is towards the bathroom into the reading room area. The largest cost items are the appliances with the idea of making it more commercial. The money is in the Senior Center account between the donations and the money that the townspeople have put forth plus Clough Morrill is giving 20K towards the project. Looking for direction from the Board; should we proceed forward and fine tune the information based on any questions. We don't know who is going to do the work or if it is going to be all volunteers. Marc DeCoff inquired if this would go out to bid; it would be dependent on volunteers; that would determine this. The concept of the plan can be okayed tonight.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the plan presented to us for the kitchen expansion which will add 40% to the size of the kitchen with the renovation costs not to exceed \$36,740.00 and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion. (Note: There is a 10% contingency in the cost)

Town Hall Tree

The tree in front of the Town Hall is interfering with the driveway of the abutter. Kellie consulted with three (3) different companies. A handout was provided with different options; Option 1: the least expensive solution is to just cut the lower limbs of the tree which would take care of the immediate problem but there are concerns of how it will look. Option 2: take the tree down and plant something smaller in its place. There is a definite need to do something with the tree and David Hussey suggested that Parks and Recreation possibly could do the work. The tree is lit at Christmas time for Light Up Night. Cydney Johnson prefers that the tree be pulled and replaced with a smaller tree; David Hussey and Marc DeCoff preferred to have the tree trimmed this year 4 to 5 feet and see how it looks with the town staff doing the work then decide how to proceed. The general consensus of the Board was Option 1.

Workshop Schedule

There is a need to schedule a Workshop to look over the Warrant Articles and talk about the capital reserves. This needs to be done by the first week in December as it needs to be presented to the Budget Committee. There are roughly thirty five (35) Warrant Articles. R. Loring Carr mentioned cutting down the non profits to 1 Article but every time we try to do that we seem to get

resistance. The Workshop will be scheduled for Monday, October 28, 2013 at 5:30 PM.

Landfill/Dahl Property

At the Dahl property the two (2) additional wells are in; talking with Scott they are between 120-140 feet and they need to sit for two (2) weeks to stabilize then the test company comes out to test them which usually takes 2 weeks to get the results so it will be around mid November for results. Everything is gone from the property with a bit of landscaping to be done. R. Loring Carr inquired about the continued use of the property for the storage of excess gravel. There is no reason not to use the property until the Board makes a long term decision and that wouldn't be until the test results are in. David Hussey asked about core samples and E. Russell Bailey will need to check with the engineer.

Public Input I

Greg Brooks approached the Board to clarify what was reported in the newspaper last week regarding the electrical on the Christmas tree. About 9 or 10 months ago Kellie came to him to get an estimate for the Christmas tree itself because there had been repairs on some of the outlets; it was discovered that a new service was needed due to the Co-Op stating that they were going to stop giving out free power. An estimate was provided for a meter, breakers and since there are six (6) circuits feeding the tree not just one (1) circuit running out there, I suggested putting in contactors which is six (6) switches coming in at once which is controlled by a photo cell that would control all six (6) outlets on the pole. There is a bit more to it, than just putting a single meter there. Greg talked with a couple of the people from the ABA and offered to do the work for free.

R. Loring Carr wanted to correct an issue regarding a citizen who came to the last ZAC meeting stating that there was no agenda for the meeting and he had looked back at his paperwork and he had an agenda, evidently it was overlooked on the table.

Approval of Selectmen's Minutes

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the minutes of the Budget Workshop Session, October 3, 2013 and R. Loring Carr seconded. The vote was: 3 approved, 0 opposed, and 2 abstentions, Cydney Johnson and David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 7, 2013, Public Session I as presented and Marc DeCoff seconded, R. Loring Carr made a change on Page 2, Ginny Douglas Park paragraph, Line 6 after electrical add the word "work". The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 7, 2013, Non Public Session releasing Items 3, 4, 5 & 6 and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 7, 2013, Public Session II and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 8, 2013, Budget Workshop Session I and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 8, 2013, Non Public Budget Workshop Session releasing none and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 8, 2013, Budget Workshop Session II and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10, 2013, Budget Workshop Session I and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10, 2013, Non Public Budget Workshop Session, releasing none and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 10, 2013, Budget Workshop Session II and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was: 4 approved, 0 opposed, 1 abstention, David Hussey.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of October 14, 2013, Budget Workshop Session and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Old Business:

Road Reconstruction Update

The work is ongoing on Depot Street, the main water line is done and the drainage work has been started which should easily be done in the next 2-3 weeks. This fits into the schedule and paving needs to get done as the paving plants close around Thanksgiving. R. Loring Carr noted that this all ties in with the Town Hall septic.

Town Hall Septic

E. Russell Bailey provided a handout of the layout of the Town Hall and the back area; met with the septic engineer/designer and John Dever in the backyard area and the septic can be put in that area which is ideal as it doesn't have to be under pavement or concrete. We own almost to the house, there would be a 10x30 foot leach bed and we could pump into our existing tanks so we won't have to purchase tanks. The town crew can install with a certified licensed installer overseeing the project and the engineer is willing to do this. We will need to move the propane tank and the generator and would like to bury the tank. The slope needs to be changed to be equal to the base of the tree and the large tree near the road has to come down. E. Russell Bailey recommends from the stone wall along the back area, take the stone and build a wall along the entire line of the abutting property; it will first become the slope of the leach field and second it will have a swale for drainage and it will also define the property line. The goal will be the second week in November to begin the work. We will cap the tank and have it pumped weekly as necessary until the leach bed is in. The design should be ready this week then it needs to be submitted to DES for approval which should be no more than a week. We would save money based on our crew doing the work. There is no cost yet for the materials until the design is ready and this can come out of the Town Hall maintenance improvement fund. Marc DeCoff questioned whether we needed to buy the propane tank or can we use the existing tank. There are choices, we can buy a tank to bury or go with the existing company, they will provide a tank and if we change companies then we would have to buyout the life of the tank. It would be easiest to use the existing company's tank with them doing the work.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to move forward and Cydney Johnson seconded with all in favor of the motion.

2013/2014 Budget/Tax Rate

The 2013 budget is holding its own; pending snow season. We have a bid out for plowing as the current company was bought out by someone else and they are not available. Due to it being seasonal most of the cost will be from January 1st on. The price is expected to be higher than the prior contract.

A breakdown of the approved proposed budgets by the Board was provided.

The budget books for the Budget Committee are ready for pickup with an email going out to the members. The first meeting is Thursday.

A very rough handout of the Warrant Articles was provided to the Board; the Articles are not numbered until later and no final decisions are needed tonight. There are some items that need to be thought about:

- Selling town property, as written now, all money raised from the sales if they went through would go into the general fund. In the past you had it dedicated for a particular purpose unless we specifically have other language.
- Two (2) new items were talked about during the Budget meetings was to establish:
 - a. a reserve for highway equipment maintenance; the account we have now is for buying equipment, DRA has no problem with this, and;
 - b. maintaining the highway building and we need to look further into the roof issue.
- Stockbridge Corner, E. Russell Bailey talked with the property owner, it has been discussed that when you discontinue the road, normally the property goes to the abutting property owner. Jim Sessler was consulted; in this case the state is the owner so it would go to the state and I am not sure this was the Board's intent. It would make more sense that this go to the other abutting property owner so the article would need to be written accordingly, pending the Board's decision.

R. Loring Carr questioned whether to try and tackle the non profit articles; to make them one article as previously attempted. The concerns are: not knowing if there was agreement amongst the Board members and secondly there is the Budget Committee and they have always had an issue with this. R. Loring Carr stated if we took the last three (3) years and if they passed by over 60% or something like that then we would lump them together but the Budget Committee didn't like this. E. Russell Bailey suggested getting a feel from the Budget Committee. Cydney Johnson voiced a concern that this would be a big number and didn't think it would be fair to the organizations. Robert Daniels inquired about the discussions on this; it was explained that they are discussed at the Deliberative meeting and then at the Budget Committee meetings they are discussed in detail.

Robert Daniels also questioned the Budget Worksheet, expenditures which were based on the Selectmen's Budget as approved by the majority. We discussed and voted on each one, with the insurance numbers still unknown, the bottom number has not been voted on as things may change. E. Russell Bailey noted that this is your approved budget as presented to the Budget Committee and the Board might want to take a vote. The Selectmen can change their mind up until the Budget Committee vote in their meetings.

David Hussey made a motion to approve the Budget as presented tonight with our option to change it up to \$6,776,340.00 and Marc DeCoff seconded. The vote was 4 approved, 1 opposed, Robert Daniels.

Tax Rate

Everything has been sent to the DRA hoping that they will begin working on the tax rates tomorrow. There are no numbers back to confirm the revenues; the expenses are fixed because that's what is loaded in at town meeting. E. Russell Bailey has run some numbers for the rate and it is possible to have the tax rate by the end of this week. I have done some calculations and if my numbers are close to the DRA figures for revenues, keeping overlay the same at the 46K since last year, war service credits has gone up a little bit, this year is our first year in three (3) years that we have actually seen an increase not a decrease in our assessed base of about 1.2%. Estimating keeping the tax rate flat we are talking about 120K-130K in that range to be used from the town surplus. Our surplus is \$2.3 million and I would recommend trying everything we can to keep the tax rate flat; David Hussey was in agreement. We are looking at an increase with the proposed 2014 budget due to things that are beyond our control. This is based on my numbers as there are no final numbers from DRA on the revenue. I believe that it will not be any higher than 150K but I think it will be less surplus to be used for level funding for the tax rate, this is just for the town tax rate not the school or the county. There are two (2) options: wait until the 28th and hopefully have the rate or approve up to a certain amount tonight, if the DRA sends an email tomorrow with the rate, I have to let the DRA know the surplus amount. E. Russell Bailey is recommending not to exceed 150K in surplus (fund balance).

David Hussey made a motion to use surplus, up to and not to exceed 150K and Marc DeCoff seconded; R. Loring Carr questioned waiting. Robert Daniels asked for further explanation with E. Russell Bailey and the Board members elaborating. Marc DeCoff questioned, if we were where we needed to be with surplus with E. Russell Bailey responding, we are right in the middle where the DRA would like us to be, around 9-10%. Following the discussion; all were in favor of the motion.

Gilford has sent a letter to the County reminding them since we are not going to pay directly for our fire dispatch to make sure that it will be removed from our County tax bill.

Cydney Johnson made a motion to follow suit with a letter and Marc DeCoff seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Tax Bill Insert

Previously approved were two (2) inserts for the tax bills this would be in addition to them. The Fire Department came to E. Russell Bailey asking to add this insert referencing 911 for large reflective address signs. They are sold for \$20.00 through the Fireman's Association. R. Loring Carr has concerns that this

might be misconstrued as mandatory. Possibly add voluntary and not mandatory on the notice.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to put the notice in the tax bill with the necessary changes and Cydney Johnson seconded; R. Loring Carr asked that E. Russell Bailey check with the Attorney; all were in favor of the motion.

New Business:

None

Public Input II

None

Police Grant

E. Russell Bailey brought forth one more item; this was tabled from a previous meeting and was overlooked at workshops, the Police Grant, Highway Safety Grant.

Marc DeCoff made a motion to approve the Safety Grant and David Hussey seconded. The vote was 4 approved; 1 opposed, Robert Daniels.

Non-Public Session

R. Loring Carr made a motion to enter into non-public session pursuant to RSA91-A:3,II(a) personnel (c) character/reputation and (e) claims/litigation and David Hussey seconded with all in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN:

R. Loring Carr, Chairman

Cydney Johnson, Vice-Chairman

David Hussey, Member

Marc DeCoff, Member

Robert Daniels, Member