

**MINUTES FROM THE 2020 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING HELD ON
03/02/2020 WITH RESULTS OF LOCAL ELECTIONS AND
BUDGET VOTE HELD ON 03/03/2020**

PRESENT: Schoolboard represented by Chairman, Michael Savage, Stephanie Waters, Mallory Ovitt and Trevor Creller – Moderator Terry Tatro for both.

Selectboard represented by Chairman, Lee Kimball, Vice-chair, Cheryl Moomey, Chuck Pease and Ken Millman – Clerk Donna I. Bohannon – Present for both.

GUESTS: Charles Blair, Jeff Wheelock, Kaitlyn Pease, Julie Pease, Carol Behrman, Susan Millman, Martin Giuffre, Ariel Brace, Danielle James Choiniere, Jennifer Hebert, Jennifer Parro, Mike Donoghue, Robert Gess, Tom Jacobsen, Susan Aspinwall, Tyler Gotshall, Linda Gotshall, Nancy Gales, Moe Theoret, Peg Theoret, Kathy Iwasaki, John Lombardi, Mona Reed, George McGrath, Joseph Deyo, Kevin Creller, Bonnie Creller, Ron Kumetz, Bernard Savage, Janice Oscarson, Elsie Oscarson, Dick Ernest, Jamie Gotshall, Heidi Gotshall, Jed Ladd, JP Ladd, Eric Morton, Dan Girard, Mary Fortin, Paul Fortin, Tom Jacobsen, Laura Limoge, Doug Disabito, George Boutah, Donna Polk, Ed Polk, Brian Markwell

NOTE: All money issues were voted by printed ballot on Tuesday, March 3rd, 2020 from 7:00am to 7:00pm at the Municipal Building.

➤ Results of ballot votes will appear at the end of the minutes.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: The legal voters and residents of the Town of Alburgh met at the Alburgh Community Educational Center in said Town on Monday evening March 2nd, 2020.

Moderator, Terry A. Tatro opened the School segment of the meeting at 7PM with the reading of the warning as it was written, including all articles.

Article #1: To hear and act on the reports of the Alburgh Town School District Officers as published in the Town Report as of June 30, 2019.

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
 - There was no discussion on this topic.
- *James Gotshall motioned to approve the reports as written – seconded by Lee Kimball - Moderator Tatro asked for those in favor – ayes were heard – Moderator Tatro asked for those opposed – no nays were heard – the Ayes have it – motion passed – reports accepted as written.*

Article #2: Will the Alburgh Town School District authorize the School Board to borrow in anticipation of taxes?

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
 - There was no discussion on this topic.
- *Martin Giuffre motioned to approve the article to allow the Schoolboard to borrow money in anticipation of taxes – seconded by Ed Polk - Moderator Tatro asked for those in favor – ayes were heard – Moderator Tatro asked for those opposed – no nays were heard – the Ayes have it – motion passed – The Schoolboard is authorized to borrow money in anticipation of taxed for the fiscal year 2020-2021.*

Article #3: To transact any other business proper to come before this meeting.

- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any discussion about the school budget and stated that it could be discussed now.
- Michael Savage explained that the Schoolboard would like to give a presentation before addressing questions.
- Mike read from the presentation that talked about the Mission of the school and budget highlights.
- Lee Kimball asked why there was a 16% increase in tuition – Mike replied that eleven more students are or will be attending various high schools.
- Jen Parro asked if it would be possible to limit which high school the students attend.
- Mike replied that it is possible to designate up to three high schools and that the family would have to pay any excess tuition if a student were to attend a high school other than one of the designated schools but the schoolboard hasn't discussed doing that.
- There was also a question as to whether the schoolboard could make that decision without a vote of the town. This will have to be researched.
- Mike Savage talked about the spreadsheets that were the presentation which were designed to explain the budget. (Spreadsheet can be found at www.alburghvt.org)
- Martin Giuffre asked how the \$18,000 cost per equalized pupil compares to the per equalized pupil cost in the rest of the county.
- Mike Savage explained that although the business manager, Michael Gess, and Beth Hemingway, school principal are not residents of Alburgh, they would be best suited to answer that question and stated that if the voters didn't object, he would defer the question to them.
- No objections were heard.

- Michael Gess answered that the state average is \$17,000 to \$18,000 and Grand Isle county fell in that same range.
- Carol Behrman asked how many students are enrolled including high school.
- She was informed that there are 337 students total, consisting of 221 pre-k through 8 and 116 in various high schools.
- Carol asked about the \$53,000 for the supervisory board.
- Michael Gess and Beth Hemingway explained that in FY2018 some grant funds had been disallowed and that the decision was appealed.
- \$53,000 is Alburgh's portion of the assessment of disallowed funds. This amount will have to be paid back to the state if the appeal fails.
- James Gotshall asked how many guidance counselors there are at Alburgh school.
- The answer was that there is one part time counselor.
- Employee health benefits were questioned and the reply was that it is an 80% school – 20% teacher split.
- The question was asked, of the students enrolled, how many of them qualify for special needs help.
- The answer was that of the 221 pre-k through grade 8, 46 students qualify as special needs and 17 are on a 504 plan.
- Martin Giuffre referred to page 51 of the Town Report, asking about the budget increase of \$9,000 for field trips.
- The answer was that the teachers would like to attend field trips with the students.
- Martin then asked about the \$10,500 budget increase labeled club stipend.
- The answer was that there isn't currently an after-school program. They would like to implement one.
- Page 54 shows a 45% increase in special education aides. Martin asked if there were additional aides added and if so, why.
- The answer was that more aides were added because there are 54 new students and some of them need one on one paraeducators or one on one behavioral specialists.
- Page 74 shows the nurse's salary for GISU and Martin asked how much of that salary falls on Alburgh.
- The answer was that the nurse is in Alburgh 1.5 days per week, which is about 30% of the week. Alburgh is responsible for 30% of the nurse salary based on this information and gets billed for the number of days the nurse was in Alburgh.
- Martin asked what Alburgh's share of the supervisory unions budget is.

- The answer was that it is 33.49% of the total GISI operational cost.
- Martin was trying to assess if there was a way to know what Alburgh's share of the different areas of the GISU budget.
- The only way is to compute the total GISU budget item and take 33.49% of it.
- Someone asked how many students have left the school this year.
- The reply was that 12 students have moved; 53 students were gained and 4 have left.
- Peg Theoret asked how much it costs per student for each high school.
- Cost to attend N.C.C.S is \$13,300 per student, cost to attend B.F.A is \$17,000 and other vary within that same range.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any other business to discuss.
- *Donna L., Bohannon made a motion that the voters consider moving the school portion of Town meeting to the Saturday before voting – seconded by Ariel Brace – Moderator Tatro asked for ayes, ayes were heard – he asked for nays – nays were heard.*
- Moderator Tatro could not determine if there were more ayes or nays and proceeded to ask for a show of hands. A count of hands determined that the motion did not pass.
- It was suggested that this be a ballot item in a future year.
- *At 7:47pm Ed Polk made a motion to adjourn from the school portion of the meeting – seconded by Jen Parro – all were in favor – motion carried.*
- School portion of Town meeting adjourned.

At 7:52PM Moderator Terry Tatro called the Town portion of Town meeting to order.

- Moderator Tatro began by reading the warnings and explaining that they were mis numbered. He read them as they appeared – corrections will be listed here in ().

Article #1: To elect by Australian Ballot the following officers: (All 1-year positions unless specified otherwise.)

- The article was read –
- 12 Positions to be voted were read to the audience.
 - Moderator Tatro explained that this was a ballot item and would be voted on the following day by Australian ballot.
 - There was no discussion on this topic.

Article #2: To consider and act upon the reports of the Town Officers.

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.

- Ed Polk commented that the Town reports not being mailed was irresponsible as people that vote absentee count on them to make an informed decision.
- *Ed Polk motioned to not approve the reports of the Town as written – seconded by Jed Ladd - Moderator Tatro asked for those in favor – ayes were heard – Moderator Tatro asked for those opposed – more nays were heard – the nays have it – motion was not passed – reports were accepted as written.*

Article #3: Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of 745,436 with the amount of \$520,268 to be raised by taxation, to be used for general purposes for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
 - Moderator Tatro explained that this was a ballot item and would be voted on the following day by Australian ballot
- Tyler Gotshall noted that the \$75,000 for a capital equipment fund for the fire department was not part of the budget and wanted to know where the money was going to come from.
- Lee Kimball stated that they will take the money from other accounts and double it up next year if there isn't another way to pay the department.
- Kevin Creller asked when the omission was noticed to which he was told that it was only noticed on Saturday, too late to include it in the budget.
- Paul Fortin explained that he thought it was supposed to be a separate article each year to which it was explained that it was a separate article last year and should have been included as a line item in this year's budget.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there were any other questions or any more discussion about Article #3. No questions or discussions were heard.
- There was no other discussion on this.

Article #4: Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of \$629,000 with the amount of \$535,500 to be raised by taxation, to be used for year-round maintenance of Town Highways for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
 - Moderator Tatro explained that this was a ballot item and would be voted on the following day by Australian ballot.
- Heidi Gotshall asked what constituted a town highway.

- She explained that the half road by her house was at one time a town highway but that it does not have a name and as a town road should.
- James Gotshall asked if the town intended to “shoulder” Windmill Point, as it is dangerous without shoulders and a liability to the town if someone goes off the road.
- He stated that when roads were paved, the entire job should be done or nothing at all.
- Lee Kimball replied that Alton Brusco, Road Commissioner might have a better answer but was unable to be at the meeting due to a family emergency.
- Lee said that he will talk with Alton.
- Mona Reed asked if Missile Base road was going to be fixed this year as it is in bad condition.
- This too will be referred to the Road Commissioner.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there were any other questions or any more discussion about Article #4. No questions or discussions were heard.
- There was no other discussion on this.

Article #6 (5): Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of \$55,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for general purposes for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
- Moderator Tatro explained that this was a ballot item and would be voted on the following day by Australian ballot.
- There was no discussion on this topic.
- **Article #7 (6): Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of \$15,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for a reserve fund to be used to purchase equipment for the fiscal year 2020-2021?**
- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
- Moderator Tatro explained that this was a ballot item and would be voted on the following day by Australian ballot.
- There was no discussion on this topic.

Article #9 (7) Shall the voters of the Town vote to pay the current taxes to the Town Treasurer in four installments with due dates as follows: September 10, 2020, November 10, 2020, January 10, 2021 and April 10, 2021.

- The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.
- There was no discussion on this topic.

- *Jed Ladd motioned to accept the payment dates as written – seconded by James Gotshall - Moderator Tatro asked for those in favor – ayes were heard – Moderator Tatro asked for those opposed – no nays were heard – the ayes have it – motion passed – payment dates accepted as written.*
- **Article #10 (8): Shall the voters authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes, to pay the current expenses of the Town and sign notes for that purpose?**
 - **The article was read – Moderator Tatro opened the floor for questions and discussion.**
- There was no discussion on this topic.
 - *Kevin Creller motioned to authorize the Selectmen to borrow money in anticipation of taxes, to pay the current expenses of the Town and to sign notes for that purpose – seconded by Linda Gotshall - Moderator Tatro asked for those in favor – ayes were heard – Moderator Tatro asked for those opposed – no nays were heard – the ayes have it – motion passed.*
- **Article #14 (9): To transact any other business that may properly come before this meeting.**
 - Kevin Creller asked about the figures on page 16. They appear to be inaccurate.
 - It was explained to him that they are listed in one off order from the way they should be and there is an additional sheet at the entrance table that explains it.
- *At 8:30 PM Kevin Creller motioned to adjourn – seconded by Laura Limoge – all in favor – motion carried – Town meeting adjourned.*

APPROVED BY:

Terry A. Tatro – Moderator

_____ Date: _____

Lee Kimball – Selectboard Chair

_____ Date: _____

To elect by Australian Ballot the following officers – (all one-year positions unless otherwise specified):

667 Ballots were cast resulting in the following votes.

Moderator – 1 Year - Not more than 1

Terry Tatro - 580

Write in – 5

Undervotes - 82

Town Clerk – 3 Year – Not more than 1

Donna L. Bohannon – 488

Linda Poissant Gotshall - 147

Write in – 4

Undervotes - 28

Town Treasurer – 3 Year – Not more than 1

Donna Bohannon – 446

Linda Poissant Gotshall - 189

Write in – 5

Undervotes - 27

Selectman – 2 Years – Not more than 1

Chuck Pease - 544

Write in - 24

Undervotes - 99

Selectman – 3 Years – Not more than 1

Lee Kimball - 529

Write in - 32

Undervotes - 106

Lister – 3 Years – Not more than 1

Write in – 211

Write in majority – Cheryl Dunn - 61

Undervotes - 456

Auditor – 3 Years – Not more than 1

Write in – 120

Write in majority – Lynn Blair O'Neill - 58

Undervotes - 547

Deed Agent – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Terry Tatro - 552

Write in - 5

Undervotes - 110

Town Agent – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Terry Tatro - 559

Write in - 7

Undervotes - 101

Constable – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Ariel Brace - 271

George McGrath - 167

Write in – 166

Write in majority – Jerid Creller - 160

Undervotes - 63

Delinquent Tax Collector – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Terry Tatro - 566

Write in - 8

Undervotes - 93

Grand Juror – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Ralph Tatro - 436

Write in - 9

Undervotes - 222

VOTED ARTICLES:

Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of 745,436 with the amount of \$585,486 to be raised by taxation, to be used for general purposes for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

Yes – 337 No – 190 Undervotes - 140

Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of \$629,000 with the amount of \$535,500 to be raised by taxation, to be used for year-round maintenance of Town Highways for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

Yes – 438 No – 174 Undervotes - 55

Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of \$55,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for general purposes for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

Yes – 425 No – 162 Undervotes - 80

Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of \$15,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for a reserve fund to be used to purchase equipment for the fiscal year 2020-2021?

Yes – 447 No – 163 Undervotes - 57

School votes

School District Moderator – 1 Year – Not more than 1

Terry Tatro - 544

Write in – 12

Undervotes - 111

School Director – 2 Year – Not more than 1

Stacey Gould – 2 Year – 393

Whitney Maxham - 137

Write in - 13

Undervotes - 124

School Director – 3 Year – Not more than 1

Write in – 177

Write in majority – **Whitney Maxham – 89**

Undervotes - 490

Shall the voters of the school district approve the school board to expend \$6,784,186 which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,671 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 7.3% higher than spending for the current year.

Yes – 268 **No – 334** Undervotes - 65