ALBURGH TOWN MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 2ND, 2015

Town and School District Meeting

⮳ Results of Australian Ballot Vote, March 3rd, 2015 ⮲

The legal voters for the Town School District and the Town of Alburgh, Vermont met at the Alburgh Community Educational Center in said Town on Monday evening, March 2, 2015. The meeting opened at 7:00pm with the reading of the Warning by Moderator, Terry Tatro. The following business was transacted:

NOTE: All money issues were voted by printed ballot on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 from 7:00am to 7:00pm at the Municipal Building.

455 Voters cast their votes.

Past practice dictates that the Town portion of the meeting would begin first however, there was a presenter for the school that wished to show a Power Point presentation so upon request the Selectboard agreed to allow the school to open the meeting.

At approximately 8:00pm the school meeting adjourned.

At 8:08pm, Moderator Terry Tatro began the Town portion of the meeting.

Article #1 – To elect by Australian Ballot the following officers:

Auditor for three years Auditor for two years

Auditor Constable

Deed Agent Grand Juror

Delinquent Tax Collector Town Agent

Selectman for three years Selectman for two years

Town Clerk Town Treasurer

Lister for three years Moderator

The following were elected:

Auditor for three years, *Corinne Russin with 358 votes*.

Auditor for two years, *Barbara Baker with 399 votes.*

Auditor, *William Karstens with 349 votes.*

Constable, *Terry Tatro with 374 votes.*

Deed Agent, *Terry Tatro with 382 votes.*

Grand Juror, *Ralph Tatro with 369 votes.*

Delinquent Tax Collector, *Terry Tatro with 374 votes*.

Town Agent, *Terry Tatro with 379 votes*.

Selectman for three years, *Guy Palardy with 346 votes.*

Selectman for two years, *Alton Bruso with 413 votes*.

Town Clerk, *Donna Bohannon with 245 votes, Roxanne Creller with 123 votes, Linda Gotshall with 81 votes.*

Town Treasurer, *Donna Bohannon with 192 votes, Roxanne Creller with 122 votes, Linda Gotshall with 134 votes.*

Lister for three years, *Donna Bohannon with 272 votes, Cheryl Dunn with 157 votes.*

*Moderator, Terry Tatro with 389 votes*

**Article #2** – To consider and act upon the reports of the Town Officers – *Ed Polk objects to the current format of the reports and requests that the reports be returned to a four column format the was used in years past – Ed Polk made a motion to change the formatting of the Town Reports back to a four column format – seconded by Paul Hansen – Terry Tatro (Moderator) reminded Ed, and the assembly that, this wasn’t a warned vote therefore it may not be binding but it would be noted in the minutes.*

***Also under article #2,*** *Ed Fisette stated that he would like to see the figures for the Rod and Gun Club and the Fire Department as they have been granted tax exempt status and he feels that the public should be able to see what the value on those properties are. He feels that if they are given tax relief there should be a report in the Town book showing their numbers. Mr. Fisette also inquired as to the benefit that the Town sees from these tax exempt entities – Mr. Bruso stated that an assessment of the entities in question would be required to get figures. Mr. Fisette stated that there should be a statement in the Town Report. Moderator Tatro, stated that Mr. Fisette’s request would be noted in the minutes.*

***Also under Article #2,*** *Paul Hansen stated that although donations and assessments are a small amount, most of the entities receiving them submit a report to be included in the Town Report. He also noted that there was not a Selectmen’s Report in this years’ book and he would like to see that included in the Town Report in the future.*

***Geoff Pretty motioned to accept the Town Reports as written – Darlene McGrath seconded the motion – all in favor – motion carried***

**Article #3** – Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of $572,864.00 with the amount of $150,000.00 to be raised by taxation, to be used for general Town purposes, including Transfer Station activities, for the fiscal year 2015/2016 –

 ***Article #3 passed with 297 YES votes and 142 NO votes.***

*John Beaulac noted that there was a large surplus from the previous year and asked why there needs to be any taxes raised this year. Alton Bruso (Selectman) responded that they (the Board) are working on reducing that surplus. John B. then asked how that surplus came about to which Selectman Bruso responded that they (the Board) are not sure but that they now have better numbers to work with and will continue to move forward.*

***Also under Article #3****, Jennifer Theoret questioned why the General Fund allocation to the Transfer Station went from $30,000 last year up to $40,000 this year. Linda Gotshall (Town Treasurer) stated that the Transfer Station is in the deficit and in order to cover the expenses of the Transfer Station, the money had to come from the General Fund. Guy Palardy (Selectman) stated that revenue from trash is down as there is more recycling taking place. Selectman Palardy also informed the assembly that the Town is going to be changing the method of collecting for trash to a weight based charge. The Town gets charged by the weight to dispose of the trash therefor it makes sense that the Transfer Station collect fees based on weight.*

 ***Also under Article #3****, Amee Gotshall suggested that the Transfer Station be closed as she feels that the taxpayers are paying twice for their trash – once when they bring trash to the Transfer Station and again in taxes and John Beaulac agreed. John B. also stated that if the Town were to close the Transfer Station the residents would have to pay for curb side service from a vendor of their choice. “If you make the trash, you pay for the trash”.*

***Also under Article #3****, Selectman Palardy reminded the assembly that there have been 3 Town Treasurers in the past five years as well as a new bookkeeping system put into place and those two factors have made it difficult to get and keep accurate figures. Amee G. stated that even though there have been changes, the Board should have been “on top of” the numbers. Selectman Palardy stated that the Board has no control over the Treasurer to which Moderator Tatro, stated that they may not have control over the Treasurer but they do have control over the funds. Kevin Creller questioned why the Auditors did not find the surplus to which Selectman Bruso stated that it was there but because of the changes that had taken place they were not sure that what they had for figures was accurate, He also stated that they have a better handle on the numbers now.*

***Also under Article #3****, Angela Prefontaine questioned what Northwest Solid Waste District services are utilized by the Town. She was informed that there are several services that the Town takes advantage of but that many of the services that are offered are in Georgia.*

***Also under Article #3****, Ed Polk wanted to know how there was a surplus that large in the General fund and how the Board proposed to rectify it. Moderator Tatro reminded Mr. Polk and the assembly that there were still several months left in this fiscal year that will still require funds to be dispersed.*

***Also under Article #3****, John Beaulac wanted to know if Alburgh still had to abide by Vermont’s Act 148 (Universal Recycling and Composting Law) since our trash goes to New York which doesn’t have that law. There was some discussion about this and it was stated by several members of the Selectboard that we do need to abide by the laws because we are in Vermont therefor the trash is generated in Vermont.*

 ***Also under Article #3,*** *Jed Ladd asked how much surplus can be carried over in the General Fund to which Terry Tatro replied that by law there cannot be any surplus carried over in the General Fund. Selectman Palardy replied that it is not an exact science as we cannot predict exactly what is going to be coming in to the Town nor can we predict exactly how much is going to be spent from the Town. He stated that it is like shooting at a moving target.*

**Article #4 –** Shall the voters of the Town vote to approve a budget of $618,282.00 with the amount of $378,932.00 to be raised by taxation, to be used for year around maintenance of Town Highways for the fiscal year 2015/2016. *–*

 ***Article #4 passed with 309 YES votes and 133 NO votes.***

*Selectman Palardy stated for public record that there can be a surplus carried over in the Highway Fund budget.*

***Also under Article #4,*** *Jennifer Theoret questioned why the blacktopping fund had gone from $60,000- to the $143,397 – that it is now. Selectman Bruso stated that part of that growth in number came from F.E.M.A funds that were paid to the Town due to the 2011 flood.*

***Also under Article #4,*** *Ed Polk noted that last year there was a separate line item in the budget for $60,000- to be used for blacktopping and that it was also a separate article last year as well but this year it was just in the budget and not included as a separate article. He wanted to know why that was. Moderator Tatro stated that it was in both places last year thereby raising that money twice. Paul Hansen stated that in the past it had been included in both places because the Board had put a cap on how much can be added to the budget so in order to raise enough funds to cover the expense of blacktopping they also included it as an article. Several of the Selectmen responded that it is costly to blacktop even just a mile and that they would be using that money for blacktopping.*

**Article #5 –** Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of $55,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for general purposed for fiscal year 2015/2016.

 ***Article #5 passed with 315 YES votes and 124 NO votes.***

 *There was little discussion or comment on this article.*

**Article #6, -** Shall the voters of the Town vote the sum of $15,000.00 to the Alburgh Volunteer Fire Department Incorporated for a reserved fund to be used to purchase equipment for the fiscal year 2015/2016. *Donna Bohannon (Town Clerk) stated that there had been a misprint on the ballots for this article which made it appear that they Fire Department was asking for 15 million dollars not 15 thousand dollars. Clerk Bohannon wanted the public to be aware of the mistake and explained that there would be a separate paper ballot for that one article.*

***Article #6 passed with 321 YES votes and 123 NO votes.***

**Article #7, -** Shall the voters of the Town vote to pay the current taxes to the Town Treasurer in four installments for fiscal year 2015-2016 with due dates as follows: September 10, 2015; November 10, 2015; January 10, 2016; and April 10, 2016. *Paul Hansen made a motion to adopt article #7 – motion seconded by Michael Savage – motion carried.*

**Article #8, -** Shall the voters of the Town authorize the Selectman to borrow money in anticipation of taxes, to pay the current expenses of the Town and to sign notes for that purpose for the fiscal year 2015/2016. *Kevin Creller made a motion to approve article #8 – motion seconded by Ed Polk – motion carried.*

**Article #9, -** To transact any other business that may properly come before this meeting. *Amee Gotshall stated that she wanted to dispel some rumors that she had heard about the number of people that it now takes to run the Town office. There has been talk that it used to take only two people working in the office and it now takes four but Amee wanted the people of the Town to know that she is not employed by the Town as she is The Village Clerk and Treasurer. She wanted it to be noted that neither she nor Terry Tatro receive any money from the Town. She also wanted it to be known that neither Clerk Bohannon nor Treasurer Gotshall receive benefits through the Town – Selectboard agreed to that statement being correct.*

*Moderator Tatro informed the assembly that our district representatives, Bob Krebs and Mitzi Johnson were available for anyone to speak if there were no objections. There were no objections. Representative Johnson spoke a little bit about budget cuts and the education bill and stated that if anyone wanted to speak with her or Representative Krebs that they would be around for a little while after the meeting.*

***At 8:23 Michael Savage made a motion to adjourn – motion seconded by Renee Patterson – motion carried – meeting adjourned.***