

**Alburgh Town Select Board
Regular Meeting
Alburgh Fire Hall
March 23, 2021 - 7 PM**

Present: (in person) Lee Kimball, Shawn Creller, Danielle James Choiniere, Russell Duchaine, Chuck Pease, Nicholas Palmer, Terry Tatro, Matthew Lefluer (electronically) Cheryl Dunn, Gina Lewis, Greta Brunswick, Jane Dwinell, Ken Millman, Kimberly McCracken, Mallory Ovitt, Susan Smith, Alton Bruso, 2 devices with no names attached

MEETING OPENED

Called to order at 7:06 PM by Chair Lee Kimball.

ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA

Tax question (relayed by Danielle James Choiniere), Highway department truck (Russell Duchaine), Health Officer (Lee Kimball).

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- *Chuck Pease motioned to accept 2/23/21 minutes as presented. Lee Kimball seconded, all in favor. So approved.*

Terry Tatro commented the agenda should have read 3/9/21 minutes, not 2/9/21.

- *Lee Kimball motioned to approve 3/9/2021 minutes as written. Nicholas Palmer seconded, all in favor. So approved.*

VISITOR INPUT

None.

NEW/ OLD BUSINESS UPDATES/ TABLED TOPICS

◇ Alburgh Family Clubhouse Grant- Greta Brunswick required key items be approved/signed to close out planning phase. Architects estimated the costs to build the childcare facility to be \$1.4 million, about \$319 per square foot. There was some dismay at the high price estimate. Gina Lewis commented the specs for childcare buildings are rigid, so many square feet per child, heated floors, etc. Lee Kimball asked if the building was cheaper, would this save on the \$1.2 million grant? And the answer was it was tied to construction, so if the building was cheaper, excess funds would return to their origin. There is no basement. Greta Brunswick clarified these are architect estimates, not bids. Ken Millman asked if the architect firm could talk to the board but there was no time, the deadline to approve the documents were before our next board meeting.

- *Chuck Pease motioned to have Chair Lee Kimball sign planning phase end paperwork. Russell Duchaine seconded, all in favor. So voted.*
- *Chuck Pease motioned for Chair Kimball to also sign a cover letter for an amendment and enhancement to grant. Lee Kimball seconded, all in favor. So approved.*
- *Lee Kimball motioned to publish necessary advertisement in the Islander and website. Nicholas Palmer seconded, all in favor. So approved.*

◇ Goose Point Fireworks Display- Terry Tatro corrected the date on the agenda to be the 3rd of July, not the 5th. He informed the board the fire department agreed to do the legwork and necessary steps for \$1,000 donation. The campground owners are paying for the display and it should be ½ hour. Russell Duchaine asked if it would interfere with the town's fireworks and Terry said it shouldn't, but it was up to the board if they wanted to hold town fireworks. It is within the budget. Lee Kimball said they need to respect the noise ordinance and the sheriff's department should be informed to divert any calls. If the state is cool with gatherings in July, the parade and fireworks are okay. Matthew Lefluer mentioned Green Mountain Fireworks are looking to return to Alburgh and are looking for board support to our State reps.

◇ Matrix & Broadband- The board needed to approve ballot language for the May 11. Alburgh is getting over \$200K from the American Recovery Act so broadband could be a subject to put this revenue towards. Terry Tatro mentioned the ballot language had to be approved before the next board meeting to be warned in time for the May vote. Mention of a small building on town property to house broadband hardware as the town office is too crammed as is. Steve Whitaker of Montpelier spoke from a phone that he worked in broadband for many years and spoke with Matrix and their prices are very high. He testified in the

legislature regarding broadband services and had spoken with state officials within the Department of Public Service. Ken Millman countered he had also spoken recently with the same officials who blessed this pursuit. The NWCUD is open to any and all providers, not just Matrix.

- *Lee Kimball motioned to accept the ballot language as is. Nicholas Palmer seconded, all in favor. So voted.*

◇ NWCUD- Chaos in Montpelier regarding new broadband laws and language. More money to fun projects will be coming to Vermont and the CUD is trying to get traction regarding all these new developments.

◇ Outside Audit- Outside auditors had several improvements across multiple areas and wanted a board response. Lee Kimball has started the process and should be completed by the end of next week. Things like having coupons at the transfer station would be hard to achieve.

◇ Bookkeeping/ Financial Matters- Lee Kimball would like to see the town convert to online instead of paper as much as possible like a scanner for bank deposits. There is a virtual meeting with Cynthia of NEMRC this Friday.

◇ Transfer Station Topics- The new attendant is doing okay. Some brush was inadvertently burned on Sunday when someone dumped ashes on the pile. The fire department placed foam around the brush pile to prevent it from spreading. The Northwest Solid Waste District has offered attendant training whenever the town wishes. The board suggested after the new attendant's probationary period ends.

◇ Streetscape Billing to Village- Alton Brusco and Donna were working on tracking physical deposits received by the Village back in time. Speaking via phone, Alton mentioned he had contacted Bethany Remmers from the NW Regional Planning and she provided all costs of the project. Alton explained some costs the Town paid prior to the agreement between Village and Town was signed. Lee Kimball was awaiting a paper trail.

◇ Town Properties- Terry Tatro refreshed memories that the Town owns a property on South Main and has people interested in purchasing it. The Town also owns an unlanded trailer formerly owned by Matthew Aldridge and people have potentially been squatting there in the 1+ years the Town's owned it. The board discussed compiling the costs taxpayers have paid associated with the tax sale and offering to sell it back to him if he wishes. Terry Tatro can help address some amounts for the next meeting.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

◇ Highway truck sale- Russell Duchaine said the town has a truck available to sell. He can work with the highway foreman to compile a sales ad the town can then post.

◇ Health Officer- Information needed on getting this position switched from Lee Kimball to Jane Dwinell. Asst Clerk can look up.

◇ Tax Question- Asst Clerk received a call on 3/22 regarding a penalty a resident received on her tax bill. The penalty was for filing a Homestead Declaration late with the State of Vermont last year. The State gives towns the ability to assess a penalty for such and Alburgh has this in place. The reason for the objection was the homeowner was elderly and unwell and did not file necessary paperwork before their deadline. A relative helped his aunt get her affairs in order and filed the paperwork after the fact, hence the penalty. The board empathized with the situation but did not want to unfairly waive this penalty but not others left intact for other residents in the past. It could also influence future precedence.

- *Nicholas Palmer not to waive the penalty. Shawn Creller seconded, all in favor. Motion carried.*

ADJOURN

- *Lee Kimball motioned to adjourn at 9:23 PM. Nicholas Palmer seconded, all in favor. So adjourned!*

Respectfully submitted,
Danielle James Choiniere
Assistant Town Clerk

Audio for the meeting found here: https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/C6NvRwwhYbjlGZbX0EpmXxt6-A9wgX-FRBVx7rchAGPqwbULHoy-ToXyAwviQWeT.PUDAqZobdU_5xaO