

TOWN OF ALBURGH

MINUTES FROM 02/28/2022 TOWN MEETING.

THE MEETING WAS HELD VIA ZOOM. THE RECORDING CAN BE FOUND BY CLICKING THE LINK HERE:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/kwrcrDtISNWJ4O0uUIXNYzNddpboO3flcPbrEEIsRhRp3MbdaRysQXtubV1DDbD1.QizGkU3wUv981G-j?startTime=1646091631000>

PRESENT: Chair, Josie Henry, Russell Duchaine, Shawn Creller, Nicholas Palmer, Donna Boumil, Clerk, Donna L. Bohannon

GUESTS (IN PERSON): Carol Behrman, Jennifer Parro, Willie Burbank, Paul Fortin, Mary Fortin, Terry Tatro, Ron Kumetz, Loretta Knight, Gina Lewis, Tara Clarke, G. Moe Theoret, Alex Clarke, Susan Clarke, Eric, Martin Giuffre, Danielle Choiniere, Steven Choiniere, Bill Gett, Gina Lewis, J.R. Cox, Brian Markwell, Chuck Pease, Julie Pease, George Hakey, Lorraine Brusco, Skip Deyo, Kerri Deyo, Raleigh Palmer, Adam Vincelette, Alton Brusco, Mallory Ovitt, George Boutah, Dick Ernst, Doug DiSabito, Katherine O'Reilly, Charles Kelly

GUESTS (VIA ZOOM): Heather Darby, Connie Boutin, Kelly Tessier, Michael Poquette, Wendy Savage, Tom Jacobsen, 802-395-1134,

The meeting was called to order at 7PM by Moderator, Terry Tatro

Terry read the warning as it was written, explaining that there would be nothing voted from the floor, but it would all be on the ballot on March 1st. He also explained that the polls would be open on March 1st from 7am to 7pm.

The articles were read as follows:

ARTICLE #1. TO ELECT BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS:

(ALL 1 YEAR POSITIONS UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE.)

- **MODERATOR**
 - **SELECTMAN FOR THREE (3) YEARS**
 - **SELECTMAN FOR TWO (2) YEARS**
 - **SELECTMAN FOR THREE (3) YEARS (WITH ONE (1) REMAINING)**
 - **DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR**
 - **AUDITOR FOR THREE YEARS**
 - **AUDITOR FOR THREE (3) YEARS (WITH ONE (1) REMAINING)**
 - **LISTER FOR THREE (3) YEARS**
 - **GRAND JUROR**
 - **CONSTABLE**
 - **DEED AGENT**
- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #1 and explained that these were items that would be voted on the next day and no action was needed at the meeting.

ARTICLE #2. TO HEAR THE REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS.

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #2 and explained that this was not a voted item, but for information only.
- He opened the floor for public comment and/or questions.
- Alton Brusco was recognized and asked what the new position of Administrative Assistant to the Selectboard was.
- Josie Henry, Selectboard Chair, explained that it is a new, proposed position that was created to help the Selectboard in the day-to-day operations of the town.
- She explained that there is a draft summary of some of the tasks that person will be performing.
- She also explained that the person filling that position, should the budget pass, will be hired by the selectboard and will answer directly to the selectboard. They will not have any power to act without direction from the selectboard.
- Alton asked if the proposed amount of compensation is warranted and needed.
- Terry Tatro reminded all that it is built into the budget so if the budget does not pass, the position will be a part of that.
- Raleigh Palmer talked about the reasons this position is needed and that the proper person in that position will be a benefit to the town, as he or she will be able to find and write grants as well as take on some of the tasks that the selectboard does not have time for.
- Josie then explained that a grant was almost lost because the person that was the administrator for that grant left.
- Carol Behrman asked how the position was going to be hired if the budget passed.
- Josie explained that it would be done like any other position hired out; ads would be placed with a description of the job, candidates would submit their applications/resumes and then be interviewed by the board.
- She also explained that the position would not start until July 1st, 2022, when the new fiscal year begins so there would be enough time to hire the best candidate.
- Doug DiSabito asked if there would be a residency requirement.
- Josie replied that it will most likely not be limited to Alburgh residents.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on Article #2.
- None were heard.

ARTICLE #3. SHALL THE VOTERS OF THE TOWN VOTE TO APPROVE A BUDGET OF \$510,939.50 WITH THE AMOUNT OF \$434,939.50 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION, TO BE USED FOR GENERAL TOWN PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 2023 (Ballot Item)

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #3 and asked if there were any questions or comments on the article.
- None were heard.

ARTICLE #4. SHALL THE VOTERS OF THE TOWN VOTE TO APPROVE A BUDGET OF \$733,337.32 WITH THE AMOUNT OF \$637,122.32 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION, TO BE USED FOR YEAR-AROUND MAINTENANCE OF TOWN HIGHWAYS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2022 - 2023 (Ballot Item)

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #4 and asked for comments or questions.
- Alton Brusco commented that he would like to see the surplus amounts show in the budget.

- Josie Henry replied that the surplus amount was roughly \$238,000.
- Raleigh Palmer asked George Hakey if he was able to operate the new loader.
- George replied that it is top heavy.
- Raleigh stated that the board should consider investing in weights for the back of the loader to offset some of the weight issues.
- George Boutah asked if there was a plan for replacing equipment on a schedule.
- Russell Duchaine replied that there were two pieces of equipment replaced recently and that the fleet is slowly being upgraded.
- Raleigh Palmer commented that the capital equipment fund is vital for the replacement of equipment.
- Skip Deyo asked why the sidewalk machine and the backhoe are not a priority.
- Russell explained that the backhoe is still in the fleet but the new loader has taken the place of it for certain jobs.
- Paul Fortin asked if the board has considered purchasing anew sidewalk machine as the current machine breaks down every time it goes out.
- He was informed that it has not been discussed but it may be a possible use of some of the surplus funds.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on Article #4.
- None were heard.

ARTICLE #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 2022 - 2023 (Ballot Item)

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #5 and asked for comments or questions.
- Terry explained that Alburgh Fire and Rescue are looking at splitting and making the rescue and possibly making the EMS a paid position.
- Ron Kumetz explained that there is a lack of certified people to answer rescue calls, especially during the day.
- He also explained that the fire department will remain a volunteer department as the amount of fire calls is less than rescue calls and that the volunteers are able to “hold down the fort” while waiting for mutual aid from surrounding towns, something that isn’t always possible with rescue calls.
- Ron also explained that other surrounding towns are in the same situation as Alburgh and that all the towns need to cooperate so that they aren’t competing for the same qualified people.
- Paul Fortin asked what the time frame is for separating the two entities.
- Ron explained that they would like to start the new fiscal year with the fire and rescue being separate.
- Chuck Pease explained that the two entities are separate in name already. The rescue has been set up with its own name and getting licensed to operate under that name is in the works. Hiring will take place once that has been completed.
- Paul asked if they would require a new building to house the employees.
- The reply was that it wouldn’t be necessary immediately as the majority of the needs would be during the day and there are already areas that can be utilized for day use.
- Carol Behrman asked if other towns would be contributing to the pay for the hired EMS if they participate and she was told that yes, any towns that participate would contribute.
- Carol asked if the new sign for the front has come in and she was informed that the electronic part of the sign is in and that as soon as the ground is unfrozen, they will be installing it.
- It was also explained that the non-electronic part of the sign hasn’t arrived yet.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on Article #5.
- None were heard.

ARTICLE #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 2022 - 2023 (Ballot Item)

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #6 and asked for comments or questions.
- Josie Henry asked if an ambulance has been purchased.
- Terry Tatro stated that it has not been purchased yet and if the department would like to use the money for another purpose, they will ask to use it elsewhere.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on Article #6.
- None were heard.

ARTICLE #7. SHALL THE VOTERS OF THE TOWN VOTE TO PAY THE CURRENT TAXES TO THE TOWN TREASURER IN ONE INSTALLMENT WITH DUE DATE AS FOLLOWS:

April 10, 2023 (Ballot Item)

- Moderator, Terry Tatro read article #7 and asked for comments or questions.
- Raleigh Palmer expressed concern about lost interest if tax payments didn't come in through the year.
- Treasurer, Donna Bohannon replied that it would not amount to much more than a few hundred dollars if that and explained that taxes can still be paid throughout the year if people choose.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on Article #7.
- None were heard.

Moderator Terry Tatro asked if there were any other comments or questions to put before the board.

- Carol Behrman asked if the transfer station was going to continue to be managed by the town.
- Josie Henry explained that the transfer station needs a complete overhaul in how it is managed, or it needs to be taken over by a different entity that is capable of managing it properly.
- She also explained that the town has asked Northwest Solid Waste Management District to take over operations of the transfer station and that NWSWD is exploring the feasibility of doing that.
- Josie also explained that if a private company took over the transfer station, there would most likely be a price increase, but if NWSWD takes it over, prices should stay the same or close to the same.
- Josie also explained that if NWSWD takes over, it would not affect tax rates.
- Shawn Creller explained that two new compactors were purchased last year.
- George Boutah asked what the difference was between tip fee and hauling trash and C&D.
- Treasurer Bohannon explained that the tip fee was the fee that is charged by the site where the trash or C&D is brought and hauling fee is the cost to bring those items to the site.
- Josie Henry brought up the topic of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds that the town has been granted.
- She explained that the funds were issued through the government and that Alburgh was awarded \$640,000 to use as the town sees fit.
- Josie also explained that the selectboard would like input from the public on how those funds should be used to help the town.
- Donna Boumil passed out a survey that would give the public a voice in how the funds allocated to Alburgh should be spent.
- Carol Behrman asked if there would be a special meeting for residents to voice their opinions.

- Josie answered that the town will have a couple of years to spend the money and that it will be a topic on the regular agendas unless there was a large project that the board had in mind.
- Moderator Tatro asked if there was any more discussion on any of the articles.
- None were heard.
- Moderator Tatro entertained a motion to adjourn.
- *At 8:13pm Alton Brusco motioned to adjourn – seconded by Russell Duchaine – all in favor – motion carried – meeting adjourned.*

Approved by:

Moderator – Terry Tatro

Date:

Selectboard Chair – Josie Henry

Date:
