

MINUTES
Alburgh Selectboard Meeting
09/25/2023

The Selectboard met in the municipal office conference room on Monday, September 25th at 6:00PM. *Municipal Officials Present: Josie Henry, Donna Boumil, Jim Hokenberg, Russell Duchaine, Alex Goddard* *Municipal Officials Absent: Elliot Knight.* *Public Present: Alton B, Rodney James, Matt Lefluer, George B, Terry Tatro, Steve Mikel, George Hackey, Irving Weatherbee*

6:00pm – Josie Henry called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

6:05pm – Adjustments to agenda - ARPA committee report / brief moved to 6:15pm

6:10pm – Minutes from last meeting

- Reword missile base discussion from last meeting, “known to cause cancer” (strike from minutes, that was opinion of SB member, and not to be considered as fact)
- Tyler Skinner should read Tyler Shannon
- Donna Boumil motions to accept the minutes of previous meeting as amended, Russell Duchaine seconded, all in favor, so moved.

6:15pm - ARPA Committee recommendation memo to the board for funding allocations

- ARPA committee received and reviewed about a dozen proposals from the public for consideration of the ARPA funds that are available.
- ARPA committee briefed the board on their recommendations to proceed with funding
- Committee recommendations included some due diligence to be completed on some proposals, citing a need for competitive bidding.
- In the committee's recommendations, they left 90K in funds unallocated
- The Selectboard will review the proposal in detail, consider other uses for the funds not included in proposal, and begin assigning funds in the coming months

6:20pm – Department/Committee Updates

- Highway Department
 - Excavator was able to be repaired with some welding and is back in service
- Transfer Station
 - Anonymous EPA complaint of smoke from burning brush – board discussion
 - Board briefed on recent complaint of smoke causing a nuisance, Russell to provide an overview with bullet points to send back to EPA on burning process which is a sanctioned activity
 - Temp employee hired by TS manager to cover callout last weekend.
 - Donna Boumil motioned to pay Temp employee 8.5 hours at \$18/hr. Jim Hokenberg seconded, all in favor – so moved.
 - Town Administrator needs copy of I9, and W4 to add temp employee to payroll system. Discussion on needing these documents prior to an employee working to add them to payroll system, and insurance in the event they are injured on the job
- Town Office
 - Shelby Barber accepted the position of Animal Control Officer and has begun working in that role
 - VLCT, PACIF, & VERB Voting Delegate
 - Donna Boumil motions to approve Josie Henry to vote on behalf of the Town of Alburgh at the annual VLCT conference. Jim Hokenberg seconds, all in favor, so moved

6:35pm – Old Business

- IRS Tax Issue – Updates on progress
 - Continued progress, audit findings should be complete in the coming weeks
- Speed Study / Request to change posted speed limits
 - Speed study underway, awaiting results
- Border Patrol communications – brief update on solution actioned
 - Border patrol was able to work with an area partner to install concrete barriers
- Ash Tree Removal / Urban forestry grants
 - Short discussion on grant opportunity, tabled to next meeting with more information to decide
- Highway Department Raise and Long Term Pay Scale:
 - Alex Goddard, Town Administrator, briefed the board on a long-term step / pay schedule, and local research he conducted on standard pay increases for the board to consider adopting during the budget process.
 - Russell Duchaine proposed an 8.9% pay increase for all highway department employees.
 - Josie Henry and Donna Boumil expressed concerned about exceeding the voter-approved budget for highway payroll. In addition, they noted the issue had previously been voted down because the employees opted for keeping the platinum health insurance coverage at 100% for them and one dependent in lieu of a cost-of-living pay increase.
 - Josie Henry noted there was some surplus that could be used, but it wouldn't likely cover an 8.9% increase.
 - Discussion continued until Jim Hokenberg proposed a compromise, immediate increase of 6.75%, seconded by Donna Boumil. Jim Hokenberg – Aye, Donna Boumil – Aye, Russell Duchaine – Aye, Josie Henry – Aye. Motion carried with all present members voting.
 - Josie Henry expressed concern during the voting process over the Road Commissioner's close ties to the town employees, after he questioned the town employees on how he should vote, before casting his vote.

7:45pm – New Business

- “Bell Property” - board discussion on potential uses for property and path forward
 - Board to continue research on uses of the bell property
- Building Resiliency in Communities Grant – board discussion on acceptance
 - Discussion tabled to next meeting
- “Lover’s Lane” - Trail maintained by Sno Springers – Reporting local farm’s agriculture equipment using trail and causing significant damage – board discussion of action
 - Discussion on damage to trail by agriculture vehicles, further discussion and potential action tabled
- Setting of the Tax Rate
 - The Selectboard set the tax rate for the upcoming tax bills.
 - Tax rate set at **.5412%, an increase from last year of .4019%.**
 - Highway Department .3298%
 - General Fund .0732%
 - Alburgh Rescue start-up funds .1037%
 - AVFD Ballots .0328%
 - 4th of July 5k .0017%
 - Josie Henry motioned to approve the tax rate as calculated, Donna Boumil seconds, all in favor, so moved.
 - Tax bills to be printed and mailed in the coming week

- Closing of FY 2023 books – update
 - Margaret Brescia, Town Treasurer, briefed the board and the public on the closing of the 2023 books
 - Treasurer’s Report: Town to consider borrowing in anticipation of taxes, a normal practice to ensure we have available cash to fund town operations prior to receiving taxes
- Town Administrator probationary period review
 - Moved to executive session at the end of the meeting
- Brendan Deso’s recent email communications to the board – HOA, Enforcement of Town Ordinances, etc.
 - Josie Henry read email communications from Brendan Deso, threatening potential litigation surrounding his perceived lack of enforcement of town ordinances in his development.
 - Discussion tabled
- 135 Main Street Property - Property Owners: Jeff & Tina Lamos - overgrown grass / weeds encroaching sidewalk, discussion by board
 - Board would like to send a certified letter to owners of 135 Main Street to obtain voluntary compliance in property upkeep
 - Board to research nuisance property, as town has not been able to establish communication with the property owners
- Little Beach Road E-911 addresses
 - Board recommends ordering a survey of the land in question to aid in E911 address numbering

9:30pm - Warrants

- The board reviewed the warrants presented, and signed
- Pursuant to VSA 313(a)(1), Josie Henry Motioned to enter executive session at 9:45pm to discuss the evaluation of an employee. Donna Boumil seconded, all in favor – the board entered executive session to discuss the 90-day probationary period of the Town Administrator, Alex Goddard, and review the probationary salary.
- The board exited executive session at 9:55pm, upon exiting executive session, Donna Boumil motioned to end the probationary period of the Town Administrator and increase the salary from the probationary salary to \$65,000 annually. Jim Hokenberg seconded, all in favor, so moved.
- Josie Henry motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm, Russell Duchaine seconded, all in favor, meeting adjourned

