



Draft Minutes
Alburgh Selectboard Meeting
01/22/2024

Municipal Officials: Josie Henry, Russell Duchaine, Donna Boumil, Elliot Knight, Jim Hokenberg, Alex Goddard

Public Present: George, Terry Tatro, Eric, Stephen Bellows, Aimee Gotshall, Tyler Gotshall

Josie Henry called the meeting to order at 1806

MEETING AGENDA

- **6:00pm** – Josie Henry called the meeting to order at 6:08pm
- **6:05pm** – Adjustments to agenda
 - + Add Library Heating issue for discussion tonight to approve either repair or replacement of the system
- Chair Henry read aloud the rules and regulations surrounding open meeting law, and her expectations on decorum being maintained throughout the meeting.
- Donna Boumil read aloud a section from Title 13 defining disorderly conduct and penalties associated with behavior rising to the level of disorderly conduct.
- Chair Henry explained the format of the meeting, how and when the public would be called up for comment, and should the public be unable to maintain decorum how the meeting would be adjourned.

- **6:10pm** – Minutes from meetings: 01/08, 01/15, 01/17
 - Donna Boumil motioned to accept the minutes of the from 01/08, 01/15, and 01/17 as written, seconded by Elliot Knight. All were in favor and the minutes were adopted.

- **6:15 – 6:30pm** – GICSD complaint: Stephen Bellows, “Eric”
 - Stephen Bellows and his associate “Eric” would like to address the board regarding the results of the internal investigation completed by Williston P.D. of the GICSD traffic stop(s) in question.

- Chair Henry explained that the board's goal was to look at this from a policy perspective. GICSD is contracted to provide police services, however that does not grant the board Jurisdiction over the department to deal with personnel issues. Elliot Knight supports this statement, adding that the board is not here to adjudicate the case
 - Chair Henry – What is your specific ask of the board?
 - Stephen and Eric spoke at length regarding their frustrations with both the traffic stops and the results of the internal investigation, asking the board to take administrative action against GICSD.
 - Jim Hokenberg / Elliot Knight – would like to see more engagement from Sheriff Allen on this issue as there is only so much the board is able to gather from the results of the internal investigation. Russell Duchaine abstained from commenting on the topic.
 - Chair Henry – are there any motions for administrative action? Hearing none, the board moved on to the next item of business.

- **6:30 – 6:35pm – Alburgh Industrial Corporation Deed Execution**
 - *Donna Boumil motion to accept the conveyance of the 90 +/- acres parcel from the Alburgh Industrial Corporation to the Town of Alburgh. Elliot Knight seconded the motion; all were in favor of accepting the conveyance. Motion passed unanimously.*
 - An update of this will be added into the Town Report

- **6:35 – 8:00pm – Department/Committee Updates**
 - Highway Department
 - No updates from the Highway Department

 - Transfer Station
 - Transfer Station Locks – Colby returned one key, lost others. Elliot Knight would like a comprehensive list of who should currently have access to the front gate. Consider changing that lock in the future. Tabled.
 - Russell reports that the compactor is back up and running after minor repair.
 - Northwest Solid Waste District Transition – Chair Henry would like to plan to move forward with additional scoping meetings with NWSWD to transfer operations to their control.
 - Russell Duchaine sees no benefit in the transition as he feels operations are currently going well.
 - Chair Henry notes that this board will not always be here to ensure operations maintain consistency. The taxpayers have covered upwards of \$500,000, if not \$1,000,000 (estimate) of deficits related to the Transfer Stations' poor management. Operations are currently going well, but there is still a lack of strategic long-term planning, now is the time to move forward with transition talks.

- Russell Duchaine – who would own equipment, insurance, etc?

- Town Office
 - Delinquent Tax Collector Position - position transferred to an appointed position due to last year's ballot item. Terry is willing to be appointed for a short period of time after Town Meeting Day to allow for a smooth transition to the person(s) who will be taking on his workload.
 - The Town Clerk, Town Administrator, and Town Treasurer will be dividing duties to mirror current operations. TC – recording taxes, TA – Administrative paperwork and processes (i.e.: executing tax sales) TT – processing bank transactions / payments, etc.
 - Terry notes whoever takes over the role will need to be here to interface with the public during the day
 - Alex suggested that we move to a system where individual meetings are scheduled with those who would like to talk about delinquent tax bills to maintain privacy and not discuss private financial matters in the lobby.
 - The board would like to see a procedure established to file grievances. Look to other towns to capture their process.
 - *Chair Henry motioned to appoint Terry Tatro as the interim D.T.C. from 03/06/24 - 07/01/24 at a pay rate of \$300.00/wk to allow for proper transition of the role. Jim Hokenberg seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.*

- Library Heating Issue
 - Gotshall's Heating – called to assess the heating issue at the library, performed a service call and special ordered a part for repair. Part will not arrive until early next week. Other contractors were contacted due to single digit temperatures over the weekend, will sub 0 windchill projections. The library is currently being heated with plug in electric heaters, concern for fire hazard.
 - Tyler requests the board chose a contractor and stick with them as he shuffled his schedule to complete the repair next week
 - Donna Boumil – It would be typical to solicit multiple proposals for replacement, Town would send out an RFP for non-emergent services
 - *Donna Boumil motioned to charge the repair expenses to the Town Property Maintenance line item, seconded by Elliot Knight, all were in favor and the motion carried.*

- IRS Bill – what to include in Town Report
 - Town has requested an abatement letter be drafts by KBS. Tim Streeter is working that, no significant progress on abatement has been made

- The board expressed their frustration in the non-action up to this point, as they need to put something in the Town Report for the Voters to review.
 - Elliot Knight would like to stress in the Town Report update that this was an accumulation based on years of errors starting in 2014 that pre-date the current board and current Treasurer. Chair Henry – the Town has created a system of checks and balances by appointing the Treasurer and hiring the Town Administrator.

- **8:00-8:30pm – New Business**
 - Town Report Dedication
 - After the discussion, the board moved to dedicate the Town Report to two individuals.
 - Auditors Positions – ballot item
 - Discussion on the process to appoint rather than elect auditors as the Town finances are not currently being audited in the manner they should be. Further discussion on hiring a firm to conduct audits on a to be determined cycle. The board would like to see cost estimates.
 - *Donna Boumil motioned to include an article in the warning to grant the authority to the selectboard to appoint the positions of auditors citing pertinent V.S.A. statutes. Seconded by Elliot Knight. All were in favor and the motion carried.*

- **8:30pm – 9:30pm – Old Business**
 - ARPA Allocations
 - Discussion by the board on the remaining ARPA funds (~415k). Many projects discussed. Current guidance from IRS allows for the Town to roll all funds into the Towns General Fund for ease of reporting the funding of projects.
 - Russell Duchaine in favor of rolling remaining funds into General Fund, and deliberating more on how the money should be allocated at a future meeting.
 - Alburgh Rescue Inc. Ballot item – Second request for \$300,000 for FY2025
 - Alburgh Rescue Inc. Has requested a ballot be put forth to the voters requesting \$300,000 for operating expenses for FY25 to be raised by taxes.
 - The board is concerned that there is no fidelity on how the \$300,000 start up funds from last year was used, aside from payroll with the Chief earning a salary of \$80,000/yr. \$600,000.00 over two fiscal years is a very large amount of money. The per capita rate breakdown is double that of comparable towns, and almost \$100 per capita higher than Missisquoi

Valley Rescue's proposal to cover the Town of Alburgh 24/7 at the Paramedic level.

- Consider soliciting the public's opinion on moving towards a regionalized approach to EMS coverage in the future.
 -
 - GICSD funding request FY2025 - \$160,160
 - Discussion on the Sheriff's contract request was tabled to an upcoming budget meeting
-
- **9:30-9:40PM – Financial Issues / Updates and Warrants**
 - **Treasurers Report**
 - Warrants
 - The board reviewed the treasurer's report, and signed warrants
 - **8:30pm – Executive session placeholder - Center Bay Town Beach**
 - **There was no executive session**
 - Jim Hokenberg motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:42pm, seconded by Josie Henry, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

*These are draft minutes not slated for approval until a future meeting