

TOWN OF ALLENSTOWN
Budget Committee Meeting Minutes
Community Center – Whitten Street Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275
April 29, 2021

Call to Order

The Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of April 29, 2021 was called to order at 6:07 PM by Chair Boisvert.

Chair Boisvert called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

The following statement, authorizing the Selectboard to hold a virtual meeting and providing the guidelines for participation, was read for the record.

As Chair of the Allenstown Board of Selectmen, I, Melaine Boisvert, find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that the meeting being held is at the Allenstown Community Center, space is limited and we ask that you RSVP with Town Administrator at (603) 485-4276, ext. 112 to make sure that there is safe space for your attendance at the meeting as well on Zoom and Zoom conference call which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are providing public access to the meeting by telephone and with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means. We are utilizing a Zoom video conferencing. We will also be attempting to use Facebook Live, as long as bandwidth allows as a redundant video source for this electronic meeting. All members of the Budget Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platforms and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and if necessary, participate in this meeting by dialing the following phone number listed below. Note the local conference call due to location of meeting or by clicking on the website address links. The contact information is listed on the website. For Facebook Live you can tune into the Town of Allenstown Facebook and look for the live video there. If this gets shut off, you must tune in through Zoom or calling the phone line above providing notice of the necessary information for accessing this meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information and for accessing the meeting including how to access the meeting using Zoom, telephonically, and instructions have been provided on the website of the Town of Allenstown Budget Committee page posted with the agenda for the meeting. This notice is noted on the meeting agenda providing a mechanism to alert the public during the meeting if there are problems with access. If anyone has a problem, please call (207) 595-0310 or email at dgoodine@allenstownnh.gov. If the video begins to lag or there are rare audio issues, then please call the phone line to listen to the meeting, and adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. The meeting will only be adjourned if the phone number and the Zoom line fails to work. The meeting may be paused if the video link fail and a quorum of the Budget Committee is needed through the phone in method.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Chair Melaine Boisvert, Julie Keane, Carol Angowski, Matt Pitaro, Jeffrey Venegas, Mike Juranty, Scott Lessard

Excused: Bobbie LaFlame, Kris Raymond, and Deb Carney

Allenstown Staff: Derik Goodine, Town Administrator; Debbie Bender, Finance Director, Keith Klawes, Selectboard

Election

The last meeting officers were elected, including Jeffrey Venegas.

Chairman said the election for Secretary was tabled for from the last meeting which has always been Robin Richards. Since he is not present or on Zoom, it will be tabled for one more meeting.

Approval of March 25, 2021 Minutes

Chair Boisvert said we do not have minutes from last month so they will be approved next month.

She said the last Thursday of May, Mr. Goodine cannot make the meeting and she suggested June 3rd for the May meeting (as a one-time only) and then they will recess until September. This worked for everyone present.

Expense Reports for Town

The expenditures report is shown through the first quarter, March 31st. Ms. Angowski questions that in that March there was a vote, but the Fire Department, are those position(s) starting in July? Mr. Goodine said it will start as soon as the candidate is brought before the Selectboard. Ms. Angowski said that in the FD budget as it stands, it does have part-time position, didn't we vote for full time? Ms. Bender said this in the full-time line, the current budget is \$115,000 and last year was approximately \$70,000 ish, and they took money out of the part-time line and added it there. Chair Boisvert asked if there are potential candidates? Mr. Goodine said they had done some interviewing and he would call the Chief to check on where they were at in the process.

Chair Boisvert asks about Workman's Comp p. 2 of the budget, 40% remains, and is that a matter of timing? Ms. Bender responded yes.

Ms. Angowski asked who is our building inspector? Ms. Bender said that it's now Brian Arsenault, who works in Fire Department Building.

Ms. Keane doesn't have any questions.

Ms. Angowski asked if we had a Tax Collector and an Assistant Tax Collector? Ms. Bender responded that there is Tax Collector which is a split position with Town Clerk, a Deputy Tax Clerk and an assistant. There

are actually three positions and three people. Ms. Bender said the Assistant only works 10 hours a week, and is also learning the Town Clerk's duties.

Mr. Venegas asked for the Old Homes Day Fund- how will we utilize the money since it is already postponed? Mr. Venegas said it could maybe be used for a movie night or food truck day unless the money needs to be allocated somewhere else. Mr. Goodine said the money would normally go back into the general fund.

Revenue Report

The Revenue Report is presented by Chair Boisevert. Ms. Bender said that she has been watching the motor vehicle registration and it is coming in good and she is hoping that some of the Covid relief money will replace from what they are expected to miss from the meals and rooms. Mr. Goodine asked what we got from Building Permit checks. Ms. Bender said they received \$105,000 for Building Permits which was one check from Brady Sullivan. Ms. Bender said Optimus funds are not in there quite yet which is another \$80,000.

Mr. Venegas asked if the Covid relief packages stipulate what it needs to be used for? Mr. Goodine said they do not know yet but it could be for sewer expansion, to make up for revenue that has been lowered due to Covid, highway block grant fund, meals and lodging. Mr. Goodine said that the Town has until 2024 to expend these funds. Mr. Venegas asked if the money will that count as revenue? Ms. Bender said yes.

Mr. Lessard asked about property tax interest and whether it would go to revenue. Ms. Bender responded that if you are late paying your taxes, you still would pay interest. She said the property tax is not under their control and its determined by the Department of Revenue, so it's not reflected in the report. She said that all of the non-taxable sources of revenue get a very high view of what happens, and that is why they do not consider taxes on there. The 2021 Estimated Revenues chart is shown by Mr. Goodine reflecting the breakdown of property tax revenue. Ms. Bender said the interest piece would still count as revenue.

Chair Boisvert asked if the sewer liens, is that a revenue the Town takes in or the Sewer Department? Ms. Bender said the Sewer Department can issue liens when they have sewer liens due at the end of the year, the Town collects them. She said any interest on the bills or penalties come through the Town and when Ms. Pellisier liens a property, she can wrap the sewer fees into that lien.

Ms. Angowski would like to know what shared revenue represents, which is \$150,000. Ms. Bender said they used that for revenue from when the state gave them money. As to whether it's Covid related, Ms. Bender would need to get back to her on this but it is something that does not fall into the other categories.

Chair Boisvert asked about the franchise fees. Mr. Goodine said that's for cable TV, and 2.5% is tacked onto the bill as the franchise fee for cost of using our right-away. He said it's 2.5% of their gross revenue and it's only for cable TV.

Trust Funds

Chair Boisvert said there were no real changes for Trust Funds and everything that was allocated at Town Meeting was funded.

Expense and Revenue Reports for School

Ms. Raymond was not present at the meeting so the expenditures and revenue for the school were not discussed.

Chair Boisvert mentioned that she went to the school board meeting and the school has money coming in from Covid. Mr. Venegas asks if this money had the same criteria as the town Covid relief money? Mr. Klawes said the first two rounds had to be delegated with a certain period of time, but the last round had more time. Mr. Klawes said the money had to be related to Covid related items, such as tables, chairs, computers, air purifiers, desks. He said they are looking at a surplus of approximately \$1 million because of the money that has come in and money not being spent on items such as buses, etc. and they are trying to figure out what to do with this surplus. Mr. Klawes said they are being very cautious about following the guidelines.

Mr. Pitaro mentioned that special education might be important in terms of spending this extra money.

Chair Boisvert said the timing of this additional money when the town is looking to build a new school couldn't be better.

Mr. Goodine asked what is known about the building itself and state funding- Chair Boisvert said we won't know until July 1st at the earliest. Mr. Pitaro said we have to wait till the Governor passed and signed the new building budget. Chair Boisvert said last year the governor signed the budget in September but she hoped it was not going to be as late this year. Chair Boisvert said we would get 80% of \$60 million in year one. Mrs. Boisvert said once they fund you the \$19.5 million, they have to finish the funding. He said they looked into money to buy the land. Chair Boisvert said the sooner we can buy into the bond bank, the better off they are.

Mr. Klawes asked Mr. Pitaro where the budget stands right now? Mr. Pitaro responded that the house didn't vote, and it was sent over to the Senate. In terms of the school grant, he remembered when they were in House, that a point of pride was a slight increase in the building fund grant. Mr. Pitaro understood that no one wants to do what happened last years with it being signed so late. He notes that both chambers were very happy with the budget being less spending than it previously was and will do everything they can fiscally to keep it on track.

Chair Boisvert asked what his thoughts were on the Governor signing off when he is supposed to. Mr. Pitaro responded that he probably will sign off on time.

Mr. Goodine stated that the only problem with the \$100,000,000, the 20 poorest towns only gets 5% of that money. He said there was a proposal to put an amendment to the budget so no town got less, but that failed. He will be talking to Senator Reagan about getting that hold harmless clause included in the Senate Budget bill, so we can get the tax relief in Allenstown.

State of Town

Mr. Goodine doesn't have a lot beyond what they discussed at the last meeting.

Optimus is moving along and they are not backing out. China Mill is continuing on and they have their building permit and electrical fees.

He said the EDC was the "Rec Committee" for the last three years which was dealing with quality of life and quality of place issues. He said now they are looking at properties that can be developed in town, where and how far they are from water and sewer, do they have power and broadband so they can identify key properties in town to concentrate on for future economic development, quality jobs and property tax relief. Mr. Goodine said they have embarked on that exercise. He knew there were at least 6 properties but they have also identified a few others. He said they are working on this and they had Central NHRPC do a presentation on tax income and financing. Mr. Goodine said they will be doing the investment up front to encourage and attract up front and there are some on Route 28.

Mr. Goodine said there is a major piece of property that is perfect for commercial development and it's zoned business. So he has discussed with Planning Board and EDC about the creation of a new overlay district which gives flexibility of what can go in there. He said that the town is in a place where they are now ready to do this.

Chair Boisvert asked if it he was speaking about the property on Route 3 that abuts Chester Turnpike? He responded yes.

Mr. Goodine said that Allenstown doesn't have a lot of properties so we need the best bang for our buck because after the build out, there is no reversing if they go the wrong way. He said we need to be careful of what we do and attract some high tax businesses to provide some property tax relief.

There was discussion of a traffic circle or other solutions to keep traffic moving in Hooksett on 3A. Mr. Goodine says that Allenstown is a good, central location to avoid traffic and we are hungry for new development.

Mr. Pitaro exited the meeting at approximately 7:00 pm.

Old Business

Chair Boisvert said there is no other old business than we need to elect a secretary and approve minutes from last meeting.

New Business

- **Meeting Schedules**

All members were favor of meeting June 3, then recess for summer, and come back in September.

Chair Boisvert said there is no quorum after Mr. Pitaro exited the meeting.

Mr. Klawes made a motion to adjourn meeting at 7:12 pm

APPROVED ON 10-28-21 By Budget Committee

Vote: 7-0-2

Melaine Boivert, Aye

Julie Keane, Aye

Carol Angowski, Aye

Kris Raymond, Abstain

Mike Juranty, Aye

Jeffrey Venegas, Aye

Deb Carney, Abstain

Bobbie LaFlame, Aye

Keith Klawes, Aye

Sincerely,

 11-13-2021

Melaine Boivert
Chairwomen