

Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
Community Center
8 Whitten Street
Allentown, New Hampshire 03275
April 19, 2018

Call to Order

The April 19, 2018 Allentown Municipal Budget Committee Meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairman Keith Klawes.

Chairman Klawes called for the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence for the passing of former First Lady Barbara Bush.

Roll Call

Present on the Board: Debra Carney, Carol Angowski, David Coolidge, Tiffany Ranfos, Chad Pelissier, Jeffrey Venegas, Keith Klawes, Kris Raymond – School Board Representative, Ryan Carter - BOS representative

Town staff: Mike Stark, Town Administrator; Debbie Bender, Finance Director

Chair Klawes welcomed Ryan Carter as the new representative from the Board of Selectmen, replacing David Eaton.

Elect New Members

Chair Klawes stated that the Budget Committee is short two members. He asked that anyone with suggestions of individuals who might be willing to serve contact him or Mr. Stark.

Review of Minutes

On motion of Ms. Angowski, duly seconded by Ms. Carney, it was voted to approve the minutes of the March 22, 2018 meeting. Ms. Raymond and Mr. Carter abstained from voting because they were not in attendance at the meeting.

Review of Expenditure and Revenue Reports

- Town Year End 2017 and YTD
- School
- Sewer Year End 2017 and YTD

Ms. Bender reported that they would be able to close out 2017 very soon. They are waiting on a couple of items, and she should be totally up to date for the next Budget Committee meeting. She added that the person who was helping with this process has had some health issues. She said that there are no big surprises and there should be a small surplus of about \$7,000.

Ms. Ranfos asked about the line for Highway Contracted Supplies, which was discussed at the last meeting.

Mr. Stark responded that, as he had thought, this was for the purchase of items such as culverts and pipes.

Ms. Bender stated that they plan to make some budget adjustments within lines, in view of the fact that the default budget, rather than the proposed budget, was passed at the Town Meeting. In situations where they know a line will have extra and another will be short, they would like to make line adjustments so that the budget is more realistic. For example, the Fire Chief is a part time employee and the default budget assumes there is a full time Fire Chief. This is not the same thing as adjusting a budget because actual expenses are more or less than estimated. The latter types of adjustments are discouraged because of the need for transparency and because not adjusting throughout the year makes it easier to determine what the next year's budget should be.

Ms. Ranfos asked if the Town was actively looking to hire a full time Fire Chief.

Mr. Stark responded that there are no plans for that at the present time.

Ms. Carney asked if the Town was still pursuing the idea of a combined Fire Department with Pembroke. She said that she knows Pembroke didn't really want to consider that.

Mr. Stark said that Allenstown does have a Fire Chief; he is just part time.

Ms. Angowski noted that the salt budget was overspent, which is not surprising in light of the type of winter we had.

Ms. Bender said that the salt budget would not be adjusted because this is a result of a discrepancy between estimated and actual expenses.

Mr. Stark emphasized that the budget adjustments proposed are due to the passage of the default budget, not because of differences between budgeted and actual expenditures.

Mr. Pelissier said that as more salt is needed, less paving can be done.

Chair Klawes said that it is a good thing they received a State grant for road paving last year. He asked what is done to adjust to having the default budget rather than the proposed budget.

Mr. Stark responded that the default budget means services get cut. For example, within the Police Department, it might mean laying off a secretary.

Ms. Angowski asked about the Finance Contracted Services line, which is over by \$9,200.

Mr. Stark explained that this is for the MRI holdover until Ms. Bender started. This would not have been planned in the default budget. Adjustments must be made to other lines.

Chair Klawes asked if there were any questions or comments regarding revenue.

Ms. Angowski asked about the credit of \$419,000 in the Motor Vehicle Registration line.

Mr. Stark said that this is the amount the Town expects to collect by the end of the year.

Chair Klawes asked about the source of income for the Fire Department. The budgeted amount is \$1,000 and the actual amount of revenue is \$3,730.

Mr. Stark said that a fire truck was sold for \$3,000.

Ms. Angowski asked about Welfare Reimbursements, budgeted for \$1,000 and showing revenue of \$4,177.81.

Mr. Stark responded that revenue from that source is always a guess and is budgeted low. He said that people must be better off and are paying back at a higher rate. Apparently, Ms. Caruso, the Welfare Administrator, has taken in more money than expected.

Chair Klawes asked about the Police Department revenue.

Mr. Stark responded that Police Department revenue consists of payments for reports, parking tickets and dog fines. Regarding pistol permits, the number of purchases has declined, but due to reciprocity, people still get them when traveling to other states.

Chair Klawes asked Ms. Raymond to go over the School budget.

Ms. Raymond stated that they have changed their report because expenses are difficult to project. They are listing the budgeted amount, less the expenses that have come in year-to-date. They are not projecting through June 30, 2018. The balance is \$582,000 at this time. A deadline of May 1, 2018 has been set for purchase orders.

Chair Klawes commented that the report is now easier to read.

Ms. Ranfos asked about the ELL consultant.

Ms. Raymond responded that this is for English Language Learners, students for whom English is not their first language. They must hire a consultant to come to the schools and work with these students, and the number of these students has been increasing. She noted that most of this was at the elementary level.

Ms. Ranfos said she assumed that eventually these services would not be needed, as the students became proficient in English.

Ms. Raymond continued, discussing the revenue side of the budget. She said that revenue is difficult to gauge. They still need to collect \$985,000. Revenue comes in quarterly or every four months in large amounts. Most of the revenue to be collected is in Fund 001, coming from the State.

State of the Schools

Ms. Raymond began, talking about the great work of Detective Dawn Shea of the Allentown Police Department, who pursued a leadership project with Primex. Working with a September 1, 2017 deadline, she created an Emergency Operations Plan for the two elementary schools. Each plan was 200 pages long. Instituting the plan began with the Active Shooter exercise in August 2017. Detective Shea conducted emergency training of the staff and students at the two elementary schools. She conducted an off-site drill with the Armand Dupont School students, taking them to the Community Center where they and the Allentown Elementary students would shelter off-site in the case of an emergency requiring evacuation. Ms. Raymond said that Detective Shea had numbers affixed to the classroom windows, with this information provided to safety officials. Ms. Raymond said that a Homeland Security Inspection will be conducted over the next three months. This has not been done since 2014. Due

largely to the efforts of Detective Shea, Governor Sununu made grants to the Allenstown elementary schools from his \$19 million school safety grant. The Armand Dupont School received a grant of \$84,737, with an 80% reimbursement (\$67,790) from the State upon completion; Allenstown Elementary received \$159,000, with an 80% reimbursement in the amount of \$127,200. Ms. Raymond stated that this grant money will be used for security upgrades. RFP's have gone out and a firm will be selected at the May 14, 2018 School Board meeting. Ms. Raymond then talked about the SNHU partnership whereby M Ed. candidates will work as certified paraprofessionals in the Allenstown elementary schools, assisting classroom teachers with math literacy and special education. Manchester is running a pilot program, and the Allenstown partnership will begin in the 2019-2020 school year. Ms. Raymond continued, reporting on the Feasibility RFP for evaluation of the schools, the old buildings. She said that she would like to combine the two elementary schools. A study was last done in 2010. She explained that the feasibility study involves three steps: an assessment of community demographics and enrollment projections; an assessment of existing major building systems and components; educational space and capacity analysis and solutions. Five firms submitted RFP's and **Haridan** of Portsmouth was selected to complete the study. Ms. Raymond next announced that Mr. Peter Warburton has been selected to be the new Superintendent of Schools for SAU 53, replacing Mr. David Ryan, who has accepted a position with SAU 16. Mr. Warburton was the SAU 53 Superintendent from 2008 through 2011 and has been at Souhegan for the past seven years. Ms. Raymond said that Mr. Ryan did a phenomenal job during his year with SAU 53, pointing out that he initiated the partnership with SNHU. She said that an article in the Concord Monitor was slanderous and incorrect when it claimed that Mr. Ryan was trying to 'get out of Allenstown.' An op ed article set the record straight. Next, Ms. Raymond reported on the Blizzard Bag program instituted at ARD this year. Students at the school completed assignments at home on two snow days during the school year, reducing the number of days to be made up in June. This involved submitting a plan to the New Hampshire Department of Education.

Ms. Angowski expressed concern about the safety of students when sheltering at the Community Center.

Mr. Venegas said that it would be safer than staying in the school if there is an active shooter there.

Ms. Raymond announced that Allenstown Elementary School has been released from the list of focus schools, after being on the list for many years. The school far surpassed the requirements for being released. She said that this is great news, but the downside is that they will lose some funding. Ms. Raymond next announced that the elementary schools received a \$25,000 grant from the Children's Literacy Foundation for the purchase of books. She said that the schools now have incredible staffs and administrators, and they are very clean.

Chair Klawes said that the progress has been fabulous, with the schools improving by leaps and bounds.

Ms. Raymond referred to the huge cleanup done last year and said that she has asked the facilities personnel to prepare a list of tasks which need to be done and to post it on the website, hoping that people will volunteer for the various tasks. She would like to have a community day to complete the cleanup. She said that the students have been doing some cleanup as well.

State of the Town

Mr. Carter began his report, saying that interviews have been completed for the new Town Administrator. He said that Mr. Klawes sat in on these interviews. One candidate has received a conditional offer, pending a background check.

Mr. Stark said that the background data came in today and the BOS will be reviewing the report.

Mr. Carter said that the purchase of a new fire truck is near completion.

Mr. Stark added that delivery is scheduled for the end of June.

Mr. Carter stated that there were cost savings associated with the purchase of a new Police Department cruiser because they were able to retrofit the existing equipment. He said that the Highway Department's purchase of a one-ton Ford 550 truck puts them ahead of their CIP schedule.

Mr. Stark stated that the lease for the Highway one-ton truck will be presented to the BOS next Monday, April 23, 2018.

Mr. Carter said that the repair of the Town Hall stairs is progressing slowly but surely. He next announced the receipt of grant funding for the boat launch. The Town needs to match the grant funds and has three years to do so.

Chair Klawes asked if private funds could be used.

Mr. Stark responded that private funds or in-kind donations are usually allowed.

Chair Klawes asked for an estimate of the amount needed.

Mr. Carter said that the total cost is estimated at \$40,000; the grant amount is \$23,000.

Mr. Venegas asked who has the lead on this project and who has the estimated labor and materials costs.

Mr. Stark said that the biggest piece of the cost estimate is for engineering. He said that the Road Agent is the point of contact, and he is hopeful that the Parks & Recreation Committee will be involved once members are found to serve on the committee.

Mr. Venegas suggested that a committee could be formed to spearhead the project.

Mr. Pelissier noted that the Town previously lost a 100% grant for the boat launch.

Mr. Carter stated that there has been some interest expressed as a result of the passage at Town Meeting of the business tax exemption. He said that the Economic Development Committee was instrumental in the success of this initiative, adding that the EDC needs one more member. One developer is exploring a cold storage unit project. Another is looking at the Big Jim's property as a facility to process humus.

Ms. Angowski asked about the new Fire Department truck.

Mr. Stark said that it is a combination pumper, with a small pump and tank and rescue tools. It is a glorified pickup truck.

Old Business

There was no old business presented.

New Business

Chair Klawes announced that the next meeting is scheduled for May 17, 2018. He asked Mr. Stark why the Town operates on a calendar year instead of a fiscal year.

Mr. Stark said that the Town operated on a fiscal year several years ago. Either way, there are gains and losses. With a calendar year budget, there are two challenges. One is with the School Department because they operate on a fiscal year and the other is with the Town Meeting being in March. He added that switching is difficult; an 18-month budget must be created.

Mr. Coolidge asked if the State dictates when financial reports are due.

Mr. Stark responded that due dates for reports are dictated by whether a town is an SB2 town or uses the traditional town meeting format.

Mr. Pelissier said that he suggested at the State House that the Town Meeting be moved to November because it would save money and would yield a better turnout. May or June are also being considered, in light of the weather problems at the last two town meetings.

Ms. Raymond stated that the biggest challenge is SPED budgeting.

On motion of Ms. Raymond, duly seconded by Mr. Coolidge, it was voted to adjourn at 7:22 p.m.

Keith F Klawes

05/22/2018

KEITH KLAWES, CHAIRMAN

Signature Certificate



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Keith Klawes

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Audit

All parties have signed document. Signed copies sent to: Keith Klawes and Michael Stark.

Document signed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net) with drawn signature. - 64.222.202.101

Document viewed by Keith Klawes (chefkk@comcast.net). - 64.222.202.101

Document created by Michael Stark (mstark@allentownnh.gov). - 64.222.96.214



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