

Municipal Budget Committee Meeting
Community Center
8 Whitten Street
Allenstown, New Hampshire 03275
January 21, 2021

Call to Order

The Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee Meeting of January 21, 2021 was called to order at 6:11 pm by Chair Keith Klawes.

Chair Klawes read the following statement regarding authorization to hold the meeting electronically due to COVID:

As Chair of the Allenstown Municipal Budget Committee, I, Keith Klawes, 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 is being held at the Allenstown Community Center. Space is limited and we ask that non-members and people not presenting please RSVP with the Town Administrator at 603-485-4276 X112 to make sure there is a safe space for your attendance. You can join on Zoom Conference Call, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order, and in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are using Zoom Video Conference Call for this meeting. For Facebook Live, tune into the town's Facebook page and join the Live Video. All members of the Budget Committee have the ability to communicate contemporaneously this meeting through one of the platforms, and the public has access to listen and participate contemporaneously by dialing 646-558-8656. The meeting ID is 813 5826 7729 and the passcode is 012121.

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the town website's Budget Committee page, attached to the agenda for this meeting. If anybody has a problem, please call 207-595-0310 or email d.goodine@allenstownnh.gov.

If the video lags, please call the phone line to listen to the meeting. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, we will adjourn and reschedule. We will only adjourn if the Zoom conference platform, which is the official platform, fails to work. The meeting may be paused if the video links fail and a quorum of the Budget Committee is needed on the conference call. Please note that all votes taken during the meeting will be by roll call. The meeting will start by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states his/her presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law. We will also attempt to capture people remotely attending the meeting.

Chair Klawes called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Introductions

Present on the Committee: Keith Klawes, Chair; Bobbie Laflamme, Representative Matt Pitaro, Robin Richards, Secretary; Jeffrey Venegas, Michael Juranty, Debra Carney, Kris Raymond, School Board Representative; Maureen Higham, Select Board Representative; Carol Angowski, Jim Rodger

Excused: Tiffany Ranfos and Melaine Boisvert

Arrived at 6:40 pm: Julie Keane

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

Town Expense and Revenue Reports

Ms. Bender reported that 1.5% of the expense budget is left. Normally, she said, this would be of concern, but there are several revenue offsets for such items as COVID expenses and the SCBA for the Fire Department.

Ms. Angowski asked if the Town budget is in good shape.

Ms. Bender responded yes.

Ms. Raymond noted that revenue is \$640,000 over the projected amount.

Ms. Bender said that is correct, and attributed to such items as COVID reimbursements and a FEMA reimbursement for the SCBA. Also, Motor Vehicle revenue is \$100,000 over the budgeted amount, and the building permit for China Mill represents \$80,000 of unbudgeted revenue.

Ms. Raymond asked if people are registering new vehicles.

Ms. Bender responded yes.

Chair Klawes said that dealers lowered prices to encourage sales.

Ms. Bender said that, apparently, people could not do other things with their money, so they bought new vehicles

Capital Reserve Accounts

Chair Klawes asked about withdrawals from capital reserve funds.

Ms. Bender said she has been working to turn over to the Catholic church several small accounts in the Cemetery Trust Funds for people not buried in town-owned cemeteries.

School Expense and Revenue Reports

Ms. Raymond stated that she does not have a recent report.

Sewer Expense and Revenue Reports

Mr. Richards reported that the Sewer Department is on track.

Ms. Angowski asked if Casella hooked up to sewer.

Mr. Goodine responded that their discharge is stormwater, not sewer.

Minutes

Mr. Richards made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2020 meeting. Ms. Angowski seconded the motion.

Ms. Raymond said that the minutes are dated December 12, 2019.

Chair Klawes said he has corrected that error.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the minutes of the December 12, 2020 meeting.

Matt Pitaro	Aye
Carol Angowski	Aye
Bobbie Laflamme	Aye
Robin Richards	Aye
Mike Juranty	Aye
Deb Carney	Aye
Keith Klawes	Aye
Maureen Higham	Aye
Jeffrey Venegas	Aye
Kris Raymond	Aye
Jim Rodger	Aye

The motion carried (11-0).

Mr. Pitaro made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting. Mr. Richards seconded the motion.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote on the motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2020 meeting.

Matt Pitaro	Aye
Carol Angowski	Aye
Bobbie Laflamme	Aye
Robin Richards	Aye
Mike Juranty	Aye
Deb Carney	Aye
Keith Klawes	Aye
Maureen Higham	Aye
Jeffrey Venegas	Aye
Kris Raymond	Aye
Jim Rodger	Aye

The motion carried (11-0).

Openings

Chair Klawes stated that there are four openings on the Budget Committee for the March election. The terms of Carol Angowski, Tiffany Ranfos and Jeffrey Venegas are ending. Ms. Ranfos has said she will not be running for reelection. Chair Klawes said that he has declared for the Board of Selectmen and therefore will be resigning from the Budget Committee.

Ms. Raymond said that she and Jamie Moore are up for reelection to the School Board. She added that this is the last time she will be running.

Mr. Rodger said that there is a three-year position and a one-year position on the ASC.

Chair Klawes said that the Planning Board needs one alternate and the ZBA needs two alternates; he might be off that board as well, he said if he is elected to the BOS.

Chair Klawes said that the Town Clerk's office will be open from 3:00 to 5:00 pm on January 29th for the purpose of accepting filings for office.

Chair Klawes stated that there have been big, positive changes in Allenstown, as the boards and committees have worked together for the good of the town.

Ms. Raymond said she would like to get rid of SB2 because of the default budget requirement.

School Warrant Articles #1 and #2

Chair Klawes read the first article:

#1 Shall the Allenstown School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$32,499,560 for the purpose of purchasing 59 acres of land located at 1109 River Road, Allenstown, N.H. (currently identified on Allenstown Tax Map 410 Lot 12) in accord with the terms of the purchase and sale agreement entered into between the Allenstown School Board and Rehab Associates of New England, and for constructing and equipping a new school facility located at that site, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$12,999,824 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33) with the remaining \$19,499,736 to come from a State Building Aid grant, and to authorize the School Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the School Board to take any action or to pass any other vote relative thereto, and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of \$325,000 for the first year's interest payment on the bond. It is the intent of this article that the School Board's authorization to borrow up to \$12,999,824 shall be contingent upon the District being awarded a State building aid grant equivalent to at least \$19,499,736; if the District is not awarded school building aid in an amount of at least \$19,499,736, then this article shall be deemed null and void. (3/5 ballot vote required.)

School Board Recommends Approval

Budget Committee Recommends _____

Ms. Angowski made a motion to recommend School Warrant Article #1. Mr. Juranty seconded the motion.

Ms. Angowski said that two residents have been complaining to her about the \$13 million for the new school. She said she advised them to go to the Deliberative Session and participate in public input sessions. She suggested having someone who participated in the process speak at the Deliberative Session to say that this is the most cost-effective way to solve the problem with the school buildings.

Chair Klawes stated that Ms. Raymond has done an exceptional job at the many public hearings which have been held.

Ms. Raymond said that Amber Wheeler, the business administrator, met this week with the bond lawyers and the Municipal Bond Bank. In year one, she said, only interest would be paid, in the amount of \$325,000 and due February 15, 2022. The resultant \$1.09 impact on the tax rate is misleading, because the payment in year 2 (2023) would include principal and have a tax rate impact of \$2.77.

Chair Klawes asked if it would be possible to lock in the rate and not buy the bond until 2022.

Ms. Raymond responded that she did not think they could do that. The Budget Committee's vote, she said, is about recommending the article; the voters make the decision. Continuing, Ms. Raymond said that the Municipal Bond Bank did a schedule using 1.58% and recommended not going with that. They recommended 2.5%.

Mr. Pitaro asked what the payments would be beginning the second year, with principal included.

Ms. Raymond responded, saying that the principal amount would be \$672,500, plus 2.5% interest. She said that, when the town valuation goes up, there is less impact on the tax rate. These calculations are based on assessed valuation over the last five (5) years. She asked when China Mill's valuation would be added to the assessed valuation of the town.

Mr. Goodine said he didn't know for sure about the state level, but it would be part of the local calculation when complete.

Ms. Raymond noted that the school portion of the tax rate is low in the 'lake and mountain' towns.

Mr. Goodine said that school funding is 'wacky' because of that.

Ms. Raymond said that two bills will be introduced at the upcoming legislative session which would enhance school funding, with an additional amount of \$2,800 per student with free or reduced-cost lunch. She said the state collects property tax dollars from us and then gives it back. There have been efforts to change that by having the state collect the funds, put them in a pot, and distribute them via a formula, but the donor towns did not want that unless sales and income taxes are instituted.

Chair Klawes noted that the tax rate has been stable for about the last six (6) years.

Ms. Raymond said she would be sending mailers to all voters about the proposed new school.

Mr. Richards suggested sending information to the board presidents of the mobile home parks who could post the information on Facebook, which a lot of the residents follow.

Mr. Venegas said that it is important that all residents know that members of the community were on the study committees, which concluded that a new school is the most cost-effective remedy to the school building issue.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote on the motion to recommend School Article #1.

Matt Pitaro	Abstained
Carol Angowski	Aye
Bobbie Laflamme	Aye
Robin Richards	Aye
Mike Juranty	Aye
Deb Carney	Aye
Keith Klawes	Aye
Maureen Higham	Abstained
Jeffrey Venegas	Aye
Kris Raymond	Aye
Jim Rodger	Aye
Julie Keane	Aye

The motion carried (10-0), with two abstentions.

Chair Klawes read the second article:

#2 If and only if article 1 fails to pass, shall the Allenstown School District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$450,000 for the purchase of 59 acres of land located at 1109 River Road, Allenstown, N.H. (currently identified on Allenstown Tax Map 410 Lot 12), in accord with the terms of the purchase and sale agreement entered into between the Allenstown School Board and Rehab Associates of New England, and to authorize the issuance of not more than \$450,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33), and to authorize the School Board to issue, negotiate, sell and deliver such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon and the maturity and other terms thereof; and to authorize the School Board to take any action or to pass any other vote relative thereto, and further to raise and appropriate an additional sum of \$___ for the first year's interest payment on the bond. If Allenstown School District Article 1 passes, then this article shall not take effect and shall be deemed null and void. (3/5 ballot vote required.)

School Board Recommends Approval
Budget Committee Recommends _____

Ms. Raymond noted that Vice Chair Melaine Boisvert worked very hard to find suitable land for the proposed school building. She said that the impact on the tax rate of the land purchase would be \$0.03 in the second year and \$0.32 (1.25%) thereafter. For the five-year bond, the real impact would be less than one percent.

Mr. Richards made a motion to recommend School Warrant Article #2. Mr. Juranty seconded the motion.

Mr. Pitaro asked if property taxes would be paid on the land.

Mr. Goodine responded no; the School is tax-exempt.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote on the motion to recommend School Article #2.

Matt Pitaro	Abstained
Carol Angowski	Aye
Bobbie Laflamme	Aye
Robin Richards	Aye
Mike Juranty	Aye
Deb Carney	Aye
Keith Klawes	Aye
Maureen Higham	Abstained
Jeffrey Venegas	Aye
Kris Raymond	Aye
Jim Rodger	Aye
Julie Keane	Aye

The motion carried (10-0), with two abstentions.

Deliberative Session

Chair Klawes stated that the Deliberative Session would be held on January 30th beginning at 9:00 am.

Next Meeting

Chair Klawes announced February 18, 2021 as the date of the next Budget Committee meeting.

Adjournment

Mr. Pitaro made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 pm. Mr. Juranty seconded the motion.

Chair Klawes called for a roll call vote on the motion to adjourn.

Matt Pitaro	Aye
Carol Angowski	Aye
Bobbie Laflamme	Aye
Robin Richards	Aye
Mike Juranty	Aye
Deb Carney	Aye
Keith Klawes	Aye
Maureen Higham	Aye
Jeffrey Venegas	Aye

Kris Raymond Aye
Jim Rodger Aye
Julie Keane Aye
The motion carried (12-0), and the meeting was adjourned.

DRAFT

**SIGNATURE PAGE
MUNICIPAL BUDGET COMMITTEE
JANUARY 21, 2021**

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>SIGNATURE</u>
KEITH KLAWES, CHAIR		
MELAINE BOISVERT, VICE CHAIR		
ROBIN RICHARDS, SECRETARY		
CAROL ANGOWSKI		
TIFFANY RANFOS		
DEBRA CARNEY		
JIM RODGER		
JEFFREY VENEGAS		
MATT PITARO		
JULIE KEANE		
BOBBIE LAFLAMME		
MICHAEL JURANTY		
MAUREEN HIGHAM, SELECT BOARD REP		
KRIS RAYMOND, SCHOOL BOARD REP		