

## Minutes Alford Select Board and Finance Committee

April 12, 2021

Present: Select Board Charles Ketchen, Via Zoom: Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson

Finance Committee: Joan Rogers, Tim Ortwein, Peter Schoeffer, Carl Stewart

Others: Monty Green, TJ Horrigan, Jayne Smith, Alice Halsted, Julie Scott, Shirley Meuller, Jeff Blaugrund, Lucy Prashkar

Meeting called to order at 5:03pm

Minutes of March 22, 2021 Approved Unanimously

BOH update: Smith reports eligibility for all age groups will be opening within the next couple of weeks. The state's new registration system for mass vaccination sites will soon be available to Berkshire County; this will help to ease the frustration for getting appointments. Henden-Wilson asked Smith if she had any information regarding the SBRSD and the decisions that were made last week to close school and then rescind the decision two days later. Smith could not speak to that, as she was not personally consulted in the decisions. She has however, since sent a letter to the School Committee offering her assistance from the Public Health standpoint to guide them in the future. Ketchen asked why the numbers in Berkshire County are on the rise. Smith replied more variants are making their way here and people are getting complacent with mask and safety protocols since they have been vaccinated.

Highway update- Monty Green informed the Select Board he would be retiring in FY2022. He has not settled on a date yet. He is waiting on current proposed legislation for essential workers. Green did state he has been training Horrigan for the Superintendent duties so he will be ready to assume the position when needed. Green reported the flat roof membrane on the Town Hall has been leaking. He has been in touch with 2 roofing companies for estimates.

Alford Historic District: The Shared Streets Grant was approved by the State. The last piece before the work can begin is the sign off from the Conservation Commission. That meeting will be on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Aside from the Grant the AHD had hired the Greenagers to remove the trash and some invasive species behind the Town Garage at the end of the proposed trail. AHD will be using monies from their budget for this work.

Meuller would like AHD By-Law changes on this year's Annual Town Meeting warrant. It was explained to her the Select Board would do what they could but it is less than one month before the meeting and Joel Bard, Town Counsel will have to be consulted to see if this is possible at this late date.

Halstead informed the Board the AHD will be having an informational meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup> for the expansion of the District. After consulting with Jayne Smith, it was decided the meeting could be safely held outside with a Zoom meeting will be held if there is rain.

Halsted asked the Select Board if the AHD would be able to hold an event in the center of Town on Labor Day Weekend. She described the meeting as a low-key event. There would be a tent, tables, and chairs no food would be served but folks can bring a picnic lunch. This would be for Alford residents only. Jayne Smith would be consulted as to Covid safety protocols. Henden- Wilson is concerned that this not become a super spreader event for the Town. She also wanted it noted that if the Covid inspection rate is on the increase by September the event may have to be cancelled.

Halstead asked if the Greenagers could be hired to clean up the brush between the School House and the Church so the cemetery posts could be cleaned and repaired. Ketchen noted that the Church would have to be consulted since they are the owners of the land.

The AHD was asked if they had, a concern with the bush to the left of the entrance of the School House be removed so a handrail could be installed.

SBRSD Rep: Blaugrund reported the School Committee the FY2022 was passed with only a 0.1% increase and Alford would see an overall decrease of 3.3%. There was much discussion about the letter the School Committee sent to Regional School District Planning Board regarding the \$3000 requested for their work to continue. Blaugrund stated the School Committee felt that the individual towns should be funding this work not the two districts. Prashkar wanted clarification on how the School Committee felt “unjustly pressured” for the \$3000. Blaugrund stated that he did not draft this letter himself but he did approve it as a compromise approve the bridge funding. Henden-Wilson stated that the work done by this Regional Planning Board is essential to the future of our town and the children in this town. Ketchen stated the costs of Administrations need to be combined which would reduce the overall budgets of all the towns. Blaugrund stated he is not opposed to the work of the RSDPB and did apologize for the tone of the letter send to the RSDPB by SBRSD.

Ketchen asked how much COVID Grant money the school got and what it was used for.

FY2022 Town Meeting Warrant: The Finance committee met on April 7<sup>th</sup> and approved the budget as presented. They voted in favor of a 3% raise for town employees. Rogers noted the finance committee is in favor or changing the Town Clerk, Tax Collector and Treasurers positions form elected to appointed and continue to keep the salary amounts the same as have been in the past. The Town Clerk had asked for a significant increase for FY2022 and the finance committee ultimately settled on \$9600 for each of the 3 positions. The finance committee voted to approve all the warrant articles on the FY2022 Annual Town Meeting warrant.

Meeting adjourned 6:45 pm

Respectfully submitted  
Roxanne Germain