

Minutes Alford Select Board and Finance Committee - Approved

March 11, 2024

Present: Select Board – Charles Ketchen, Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, and Peter Puciloski (arrived at 6:20pm)

Present Finance Committee: Joan Rogers, Tim Ortwein, Carl Stewart and Peter Schoeffer via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

Minutes of February 12, 2024

Highway Report: No Report due to illness.

FY2025 Budget Review: Ms. Rogers reported the Finance Committee has approved the budget being presented to the Select Board. Ms. Rogers noted the budget includes a 5% salary increase which is about the standard of the surrounding town. Ms. Rogers noted the some of the major increases which include the Southern Berkshire Ambulance, Town Counsel expense, Tree Warden, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and IT Maintenance. Ms. Rogers noted she has not gotten the final figures for the Southern Berkshire Regional School District but expects an increase to be roughly 3%. Mr. Ortwein spoke on behalf of the Alford Link budget. There will be no major increase for FY2025. Mr. Ortwein noted Alford Link will have a new insurance provider, PEMIC, which will cover materials and labor on claims. He noted the previous provider only covered material no labor.

Ms. Rogers reported the Finance Committee is generally in favor of the new compact loader being requested by the Highway Department. She did say the Finance Committee has not discussed the funding of the new equipment. The Finance Committee will be meeting later in the month for that discussion.

Town of Monterey/Southern Berkshire Ambulance: The Town of Monterey has sent out a letter to the towns serviced by the SBA requesting a meeting with all the towns on April 17, 2024 at 6pm. At this meeting the Town of Monterey would like to discuss alternative methods of assessment by the SBA. Mr. Puciloski will attend that meeting.

Verizon Service: Ms. Germain reported she received a complaint by a resident in Alford regarding Verizon not servicing the copper wires in Alford. The Select Board is aware of the issue however, has no authority to require Verizon to do any repairs. It is suggested the resident call the Department of Public Utilities or Rep. Smitty Pignatelli's office.

Other Topics: Mr. James Hall reported he has received the cuts sheets from EDM Studios regarding the lighting for the ADA walkway. He will review them with TJ Horrigan. He noted he is still waiting on the title research documentation to send to Town Counsel.

Animal Inspector Appointment: Mr. Puciloski made a motion to appoint Mr. Thomas Horrigan as Animal Inspector for the Town of Alford. Ms. Henden-Wilson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Town Clerk: Ms. Henden-Wilson reported there were 113 in-person voters, 27 vote by mail and 1 Early voter for the March 5th Primary.

Ms. Henden-Wilson asked if there had been any more discussions with the Great Barrington Police Chief regarding a Mutual Aid Agreement. Mr. Puciloski stated he would follow up with the Great Barrington Town Manager.

Ms. Henden-Wilson asked what the status of the Short-Term Rental Registration is. Town Counsel has the information and we are waiting for a reply.

Adjourned at 6:45 pm

Respectfully submitted
Roxanne Germain