

ALG Minutes August 17, 2010

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Mary Ann Ashton, FinCom; Lauren R. Morton & Mike Gowing, BoS; John Petersen, SC; Steve Ledoux, John Murray, Steve Mills, Dan Aicardi , staff. Absent: Xuan Kong, SC, Bill Mullin, FinCom.

Audience: Steve Barrett, Finance director, Marie Altieri, school finance dept., Ruth Kohls, LWV; Becki, Beacon reporter, Clint Seward & Charles Kadlec.

The Minutes of March 24 were accepted with the suggestion that the whole of Xuan's suggestion be added to the minutes.

Steve Ledoux announced that the ALG may no longer add agenda items at the meeting because of the OML changes. So at the end of the printed agenda there may no longer be a line for "Other" Instead, agenda items must be generated at the close of the present meeting or by email request at least 48 hours prior to the posting of the agenda.

II. Review of ALG Charter and Ground Rules

Extra info: ALG Charter & Ground Rules (revised 6/09) 2007-2008

Bart: the ground rules have essentially been the same for the past seven-eight years

John Petersen suggested that the Town manager and Superintendent be allowed to bring along what ever staff member would be the most helpful & not be confined to the Assistant Town Manager & the Assistant Superintendent (there is not one)

Lauren suggested that a change in wording from plan to model

JP: I think it's a good idea to move away from a multi-year plan—ALG is tasked with projecting revenues---once that's done then we can build a model. I would like to see the revenue projection task split.

Mary Ann: What the ALG has done over the long time is a plan---and we have made agreements to go forward. It is important that what we do has the boards behind us. It has to be the best plan for the year and the years beyond our best effort. What we do is for Town Meeting consumption ---saying that the revenue is not captured in a model---it is more interactive than a plan.

John M: The ALG is a one-year plan and a multi-year model. The intention is to plan for this year and present what will happen in the out-years

Recommended changes:

Revenue projections

Recommending a one-year plan and building a multi-year model

John M: Take the ALG plan (words) out of the warrant & entitle it a “plan from the three boards”

Bart asked if there should be changes in the public participation relegated to the end of the meeting?

Mary Ann: We need to ask the Town manager to update the ALG website to include minutes and the review materials used at the meetings.

Bart: The link is not up to date---there are no recent minutes. Minutes will be put up after accepted but the information must be made public on request even if not accepted.

John M: there needs to be financial plan column with a “change from previous run” so it will be easier to see the changes on the spreadsheet.

III Budget and revenue updates

Steve L: Local aid has come in as predicted—there is a shortfall in excise

Steve B: For FY 10 excise is down \$81k; fees are up \$59k; interest is down \$110k; state aid to the town is down \$23k leaving a shortfall of \$155k

Steve M: FY 10 closeout is better than forecast we have returned \$225k to E&D [AB region] and \$205k from APS

Mary Ann asked for information on the money from the federal government—she wanted to know how it would flow---Title I ? The answer from Don Arcardi is that he does not know anything other than what he reads in the paper but does expect the governor to make a proposal this week.

IV Spreadsheet maintenance

Mary Ann reported that last year the spreadsheet was maintained by Marie Altieri in consultation with Steve Barrett and herself. She noted that the spreadsheet has “grown” and the format does need to be changed to recognize that additional tools now available to keep records. There needs to be cover sheet with management info in detail & in part they can use the numbers that are already being generated by the schools---and there needs to be a way to keep a history of the sheets & their changes [she already does this for her personal use]

Suggestion: Mary Ann, Marie & Steve prepare a draft of a possible spreadsheet format for next meeting and make it an agenda item.

There was discussion on who would be the “point person” for the maintenance and changes and there was agreement that it was better to have someone from staff rather than someone from a volunteer board.

******Proposal: point person would be from the Town staff—agreed**

******Proposal: look at the past decisions that supported the agreements---agreed**

There was discussion on the levels of analysis and how the Town does estimates of revenues such as fees (which includes more than building permits) excise tax revenue and interest

*****Proposal: decision page with assumptions used for building plan---agreed**

There was further discussion on who exactly would do the maintenance. It was agreed once again that the person should be a “professional” [staff]

*****Proposal: allow Steve Ledoux & Steve Mills to decide---with the idea that the final product would be a collaborative work---agreed**

V. Meeting Calendar

Extra info: a proposed schedule of meet dates for 2010-11

The discussion centered on the best dates---Wednesday for Bill Mullin, but not good for Steve Ledoux and moving the start time to 7 AM which Bart said he could not make

Bart proposed meeting at 7:15 rather than 7:30 and members would confer by email on their best days of the week. Meanwhile ALG will next meet on September 16 at 7:15

Task: Steve Ledoux and Steve Mills will produce the Master Calendar that will show all the meeting dates for the selectmen, finance committee and school committee &holidays. From that, the best days for the ALG meetings will be established when the committee meets again in September.

VI: Agenda

Because of the new OML, the agenda must be set & posted 48 hours prior to the meeting time. Members were encouraged to set out agenda items now, for the next meeting and any other items were to be emailed to the Town Manager to be sent out with the meeting packet

The Agenda will have the following items: Approval of minutes; Budget revenue update; ALG spreadsheet; task calendar---for when things need to be done to get ready for Town Meeting; ALG meeting schedule.

Additional items must be submitted by noon on September 13

VI Public input

Mr. Kadlec suggested that the wording on the Charter be changed because there was no staff for the Finance Committee.

Under spreadsheet he said it would be useful to have an early decision on who would present the spreadsheet at Town Meeting. He said that “people take it as official [document] and under the charter it is the FC’s job, so it would be nice to have the VC do the presentation.

He would like the committee to rethink the time for public input. He felt that the public has been relegated to second class citizens. He added that making comments while the issue was being discussed may be useful and that it does not take that much time.

Adjourned 8:35

Next Meeting September 16th—7:15 AM

Ann Chang