

ALG Minutes, December 13, 2018

Room 204, Acton Town Hall; 7:30 AM

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Katie Green & Joan Gardner, BoS; Paul Murphy & Diane Baum, SC; Jason Cole, FC; John Mangiaratti, Peter Light, Steve Barrett & Marie Altieri, staff. Absent: Roland Bourdon.

Audience: Mark Hald, Asst. Town Manager; Brian McMullen, Asst. Assessor & Asst. finance director; Dave Verdolino, Region's finance director; John Peterson, HIT (Health Insurance Trust) board & Charlie Kadlec

1. Approval of Nov. 19 Minutes

John asked that the minutes be changed to show a clear record that he was delegated to write the letter for the OML (Open Meeting Law)complaints.

John also asked that the 6/28/18; 9/27/18 and 10/25/18 minutes be amended to show the time and place of the meeting and to change "extra information" to documents.

It was agreed that these changes would be made and the minutes resubmitted

2. Discussion of response to OML violations

Katie: He did not file with in the 30 days; we have responded with updated minutes ; we do not consider working by consensus as a violation of the OML

Bart: When I use consensus here it's a total agreement—I'm not sure that should be translated into votes.

Katie: It's been alleged that what we do here binds the other boards but that's not what this group does. There are only two of the board members here; we go back to the BoS, for confirmation

Bart: The consensus is an agreement that you'll take it back to the whole boards for agreement

Diane: Shall we consider a brief mission statement?

Jason: We are a subset of our committees and not a quorum. The less formal we make it the better.

Katie: Shall we delegate the Town Manager to answer complaints 11-13?

Bart: Is there an agreement that we hand off the OML response to the Town Manager? There was no disagreement.

3. FY 19

John Mangiaratti & Peter Light

John: We have been working closely with the Town Departments to keep the spending where it should be. There are no issues.

Peter: We are on track; there are no changes; we are waiting for the info on the revenues

4. Review of Spreadsheet

Steve Barrett & Marie Altieri

Steve: First page has the tax levy & reserves. We can see the review of the metric chart that shows the changes from meeting to meeting. We have been busy doing the final numbers for the recap sheet. Our meeting with the DOR went fine. The tax rate was set by the BoS at \$19.37; SFT \$584k. Our new growth number was off which will flow through next year's levy; \$800k came in as \$655K. There is a change in the overlay from \$900K-\$700K; the change in the percentage for the schools budget us \$938K. We are pulling the budget numbers together and will have FY 20 ready for review next meeting.

Marie: We will present the budget on Thursday. The caveat is that there will be a one-year shift when we finalize the end of the regional agreement and have the first year of enrollment based divisions. There will be \$425K relief for Acton.

Our goal is to reduce the reliance on reserves; this plan has \$1.3m use but there is a \$700k deficit. The savings has come from the changes in HIT.

Bart: questions?

Steve explained the use of the overlay fund.

Bart: is now the time to talk about the \$700K?

Katie: we need to wait until we have more information on state aid and have had a chance to review the Town Manager's budget.

Jason: I have not been around for a long time but this is the best deficit I've seen we should wait for the state numbers.

Marie: the school committee needs to vote on a budget in mid-February. Perhaps we can half [the deficit] between the town and the school.

5. FinCom POV(Point of View)

Jason

We need to wait until Monday---after the Town manager's budget.

6. Preliminary Consensus on FY 20 Reserves

Steve: If you go by the big picture, we have the tax levy, state aid and local fees. All the numbers for FY 20 are estimates—we can use \$700K from overlay and new growth estimates may increase to \$750 from FY 19 \$655 .

Marie: Our biggest outside revenue source is Ch.70. We have put \$20 /student in the budget. It may go up to \$50---but it's better to be conservative. We have worked hard to tighten the revenues and do not expect there will be large turn-backs next year.

Bart: So shall we go with the numbers we have now? No one objected.

7. Capital planning

John: The capital plans will be part if the budget presentation on Monday and follow the selectmen's goals.

Peter: The school committee has reviewed the capital plans which will need \$10-\$15m but the SC has been able only to allot \$1m. So we need to step back and see what we can accomplish. We will be running plans on parallel paths; we will be bonding in the operating budget which will get us an increase of \$7-\$7.5m. We have \$250K for capital this year. We need to \$1.25m for FY 20 and more for ensuing years. The plan calls for a 2.5% annual increase in spending.

Jason: In presenting the bonding idea to other on the FC and got the personal sense that they agreed.

Marie: We have asked the town to put a placeholder on the warrant.

Katie: The warrant will open on Monday

Peter: MSBA (Mass School Building Assistance) has asked for more documentation. They are not familiar with the twin school concept; they want us to look for additional sites. The building committee meeting was postponed; July 10th is the date for the preferred schematics; we have been honing in on Gates as it seems to be favored by the community; there are wetlands problems at Conant; there will be an official vote Jan 23. We expect to have the costs, state percentages, and tax costs by August 28.

John: The town voted for a North Acton fire station but we have not selected a designer; perhaps we will have something in early 2019.

Jason: will we have the fire station as well as the schools?

John: That's a consideration.

Diane: We started on the capital plan in 2015. I'm really happy with the plan and we are headed in a good direction.

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Charlie: Do you intend to get back any of the appropriations from warrant articles that are completed?

SB: The accountant reviews all the past articles every year and those that are finished, we close out.

Charlie: An observation: the levy does not go up for the school capital projects. The money is made up by the town---taxpayers. The reserves should be used for a tax reduction.

Adjourned 8:35

Jason suggested that the next meeting be an evening one.

There was a discussion on the differences in the time and it was stated that there was an earlier agreement that there would be a switch between 7:30 AM and PM.

Bart: Jan 3 will be 7:30 **PM**; Feb 7 & 28 7:30 **AM**

Next meeting will be Jan 3 at 7:30 PM

Additional documents: Agenda; Recap sheet & Town of Acton Multi-year Financial model (aka spreadsheet)

Ann Chang