

ALG Minutes

July 28, 2008

Present: Lauren Rosenzweig, Paulina Knibbe, BoS; Steve Noone, Herman Kabakoff, FC; Jon Chinitz, Heather Harer, SC; Steve Ledoux, John Murray, Bill Ryan, Marie Altieri, Staff. Audience: Tess Summers, Pat Clifford, Steve Barrett, and Peter Ashton.

In the absence of Facilitator, Bart Wendell, Selectman Lauren Rosenzweig acted as Facilitator.

Agenda Items

1. Minutes OK

2. Special Town Meeting

There has been an agreement between the petitioners and the Selectmen to wait until the Department of Revenue certifies the NESWC numbers.

Steve Ledoux stated that he expected to send the numbers into the DOR by the middle of August.

There was discussion about the State of the Town meeting. There was general agreement that this meeting would not be necessary.

Bill asked that the dates for the STM be set so the auditorium could be booked. Herman suggested that the gym would also be necessary.

Tasks: Steve send in the info to the DOR for Certification

3. Joint board meeting for FY 10 Budget Planning

Discussion revolved around the date that this meeting would take place, coordination with the STM, the workload for the staff in preparation and if it is to be a 2020 meeting or if there will be an effort to get the public to attend.

Agreement: the joint board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 7th

Tasks: Board chairs are to inform members so they attend

A suitable venue is to be determined. (There was some discussion as to whether the meeting should start at 6:30 with dinner and have the actual meeting start at 7--- an agreement was not reached)

Steve L will work out the schedule for the meeting in concert with Bill

It was agreed that the STM will be held during the week of October 27th

Task: John Murray will contact the Town Moderator to see what day during that week the Moderator is available



Extra Information: the proposed agenda for the meeting distributed by Bunny Lawton

4. Spreadsheets

Spreadsheets showing a three-year timetable have been sent to the ALG members by Jon Chintz and corrected by Peter Ashton. The sheets show FY08 actual; certified FY09 (no changes) and estimates for FY 10 & 11.

Paulina noted that she was concerned that the sheets did not as yet show the revenue sharing portion. Her concern is the drop in the municipal share from 2007. John suggested that another sheet be added that will track the purchasing power under Prop. 2.5 “If we are capped at 2.5 and inflation is 5% we need to show that difference.”

There was interest in the additional sheet but also concern about predicting inflation in the out years.

Agreement: the spreadsheets will be “housed” at the schools. Steve Barrett will work with Marie on the maintenance

Additional information: the spreadsheets supplied by Jon Chintz and Peter Ashton

5. FY 10

Discussion: Bill is in the process of drafting the schedules for the schools

Steve Ledoux has moved up the budget process for this year. He is trying to get things done sooner and expects to have the three-year budget by mid-August

6. Point of View Documents

Discussion: Lauren asked the boards to poll their members for what they think are the most pressing issues and the things that they would like to see addressed in the budget process.

Marie said that the economic picture is volatile and it is difficult to make estimates as what should be emphasized. Herman suggested that the ALG does not know what the inflation rate will be in 2011. Lauren countered that she thought that it would be useful going forward to be working from the same assumptions.

Steve Noone noted that the union contracts were for three years so setting out a three-year plan was a habit that should be continued.

Extra information: Points of View papers

7. Comparable Comparisons

Discussion: In an effort for all the boards to use the same towns when speaking of comparable costs and spending, each board drew up their own criteria and thus their own lists.

Peter Ashton was asked to do an analysis of Municipal/ School revenue splits and develop a list of comparable towns to be used in analyses of spending and revenues. Ashton used a series of seven criteria: location; population; median personal income; equalized value per capita; size of operating budget; number of parcels; size of tax levy and education spending per capita.

This screen process resulted in the following: Concord; Westford; Winchester; Canton; Stow; Sudbury; Boxborough; Dedham; Hingham; Milton; Westborough and Wilmington.

The idea behind this exercise was to get a list that will be used by both the Town & Schools when presenting budgeting matters to the Town Meeting. The balance was to get towns that had similar services and also similar goals and criteria for the schools.

John Murray said that the towns of Stow and Boxborough did not provide the same level of services that Acton did. Stow, for example has a volunteer fire department. Steve Noone noted that from all the lists generated, all had the Towns of Concord and Sudbury. He suggested that the comparisons use only these two.

Marie suggested that 12 towns be used rather than the 10. It was suggested that Lexington is a good fit as far as the schools are concerned. That was dropped when people realized Lexington had a split tax rate.

Bill suggested adding Westwood and Winchester---and not using Wayland and Weston, towns that appeared on other lists, because they were too wealthy.

The final list was: Concord; Westford; Winchester; Canton; Sudbury; Dedham; Hingham; Milton; Westborough; Wilmington; Bedford & Westwood.

Tasks:

Peter will continue with his analyses. He will contact the listed town to see how they manage the municipal/school split. Other staff will help.

Bill & Steve Barrett will work on budget data.

Time:

The goal is to set the split in September

Extra Information:

Town Comparison sheets from Peter Ashton, Bill Ryan, & Bob Evans

Adjourned 9 AM

Next meeting August 25th