

ALG Minutes

June 15, 2009

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Mary Ann Ashton, Herman Kabakoff, FC; Sharon McManus, Xuan Kong, SC; Paulina Knibbe, Peter Berry, BoS; Steve Ledoux, John Murray. Bill Ryan, Marie Altieri, Staff Bill. New Superintendent Dr. Mills was also present.

Audience: Steve Barrett Town finance department, Steve Noone (FC) Tess Summers (Schools' finance department, intern Julie Kiraee, Bob Graham, Dick Callendrella, Clint Seward and Charlie Kadlec.

Under seven Other Steve Ledoux added Bond Rating

Charter and Rules

Bart said that in the past the newly organized ALG participants went over the ALG Charter and Rules at the outset of the new year. He distributed Charter and Ground from 2003 and followed since. (See attached)

Changes suggested:

Under quorum "One member and one staff person per board" add, there will be no substitutes

Herman started the discussion of the meaning of "consensus"

The Ground rules & Charter do not have a definition

Bart: the definition is everyone agrees to a consensus position, after all views are heard and there is an agreement to support the position before the individual boards

Herman: consensus is the same as unanimity –also the best possible solution

Paulina disagreed saying there was a difference between unanimity. Consensus means there is overwhelming support; unanimity means that the position is unanimous.

Bart felt there was no difference.

Mary Ann suggested that the reason they may be the same is that the positions have to go back to the individual boards where there they must be accepted.

Paulina: consensus is not unanimous agreement

Herman: we are working for the same goal—in the spirit of compromise we work to unanimity and everyone is equally unhappy.

Bart: the Ground Rules call for total agreement. Once the decision has been made the [ALG member] supports and advocates for that position before his board. Unless there is new information, then the discussion is reopened.

Minutes of March 9, 2009 were approved.

2. Special Town Meeting update S. Ledoux, P. Knibbe

The meeting is on June 23rd, the warrant has been posted & is in the mail. There was a move for an additional article---a citizen's petition asking the town to buy land on Windsor Ave using available funds. That will be on the warrant for the next Town meeting. The petitioners could force a special with enough signatures. There may be a need for a Fall Town Meeting.

3. FY 09 Revenues S. Ledoux, B. Ryan

Extra information from both the schools & Town

Steve

The additional FY09 cuts in state aid were \$170k. We have a shortfall of \$720k that comes from local revenues of \$550k; Motor vehicle excise \$340k; fees \$165k; interest income \$45k

There are two weeks left. The town froze \$1/2m and Steve said he thought the town was covered.

Bill: The schools have received the final Ch. 70 payments.

APS chapter 70 reductions \$550K; AB \$720. The projected turn backs for the region are \$450. K

The schools need to apply for stimulus funds to replace the shortfalls in the Ch. 70 funds

4. FY 10 S. Ledoux, B. Ryan

AB budget is on track given previous assumptions. Transportation costs are the same the circuit breaker is only 65%. The Governor's budget is close to school's voted revenues House is \$130k less; Senate is \$350-70 less

The final budget has yet to pass---wait & see what happens

The Feds gave money through the IDEA grants and the schools have filed for \$335k

APS the house bill has the increase through the sales tax---the final budget will be different. We can only hope that it is close.

Paulina questioned the increase in the Charter school costs---are there more students. Bill said that the state has changed the formula & they have a pretty good idea of the numbers going to the Charter school K

Steve: the FY 10 budget shows a shortfall. The Senate bill is \$5450 less than the governor's. The Town is hampered by the DOR's requirement that they can only budget for the FY 09 actuals in some categories unless the town can "prove" that their numbers are correct.

There were questions about the MVE monies---in the past they have come in greater and later. Steve Barrett said the big push comes in March and all those sums were accounted for.

Mr. Kadlec asked if the Town needed another meeting account for the reduction in excise and the lower appropriations Xo A

John M said that the town budget could be balanced on the expected lower assessment from the region & Federal allocated sums.

Mr. Kadlec: if the revenues predicted are less to get the balance we will need a STM to make the reductions.

John noted that there were the reserves & the state can make exceptions to the rules.

5. Policy meetings on Major Issues

P. Knibbe

Paulina proposed that there be policy-setting meetings on major fiscal issues. She intends to set aside an entire BoS meeting to this exercise and asked for the participation of the FC & SC.

The first of these meetings will be July 27 and the discussion will be on benefits in general & health insurance in particular

The plan is to have staff present descriptions of plans and constraints on changes. The goal is to lay the groundwork for a strategy for the future.

The meeting will be in the JrHS library

7. Other

Steve announced that the Town's Bond Rating was changed upwards to AAA. This will have a positive impact on short-term borrowing and the Town's efforts to refinance.

The reasons listed for the upgrade 1. good household income; 2 low unemployment rate 3. reserves 4. FC's 97% solution 5. the town did not "go hog wild on capital"

John M. said that this rating was a "Flag of Excellence" the ALG process. He said that approximately only 500 other communities across the US had their rating increased.

This is the last ALG meeting for Superintendent Bill Ryan. All wished him well in his retirement

Bill said that the ALG was a great board that does important work doing critical financial planning and reaching compromises. Eventually we all come into agreement.

Sharon asked that the meeting date be from Monday's because of the difficulty in getting information ready in time among other things.

It was agreed to change the days to Wednesdays and the time to 7:15

Task: produce a calendar for the next meeting with BoS, FC & SC meetings and holidays. General task

Adjourned 8:35

Ann Chang

The next meeting is
July 29th 7:15 –8:45