

Alburgh School Board
Alburgh Community Education Center
Regular Meeting- Monday January 20, 2025
Meeting Recording

Present In Person: Board Chair Whitney Maxham, Board Members Luke Richter, Cheryl Dunn and Heather Darby, GISU Superintendent Lisa Ruud, Alburgh Staff Member Mallory Ovitt, Alburgh American Legion representatives Phil Pearo, Frank Gonyea, and Jeff Houghton

Present on Google Meet: Principal Marlon Maylor, Board Vice Chair Jenn Fenn

Call to Order:

1. Call to Order- Meeting called to order at 6:06 PM by Whitney Maxham
2. Adjust the Agenda- No adjustments
3. Citizens and Staff to be Heard- None at this meeting
4. American Legion Discussion- Some members of the Legion are hoping to hold a living history event in the field next to the school on a weekend this fall (Thursday through Sunday), promoting the American Legion and history. It would be open to the public and the school, but there would be no vendors (other than perhaps a school fundraiser- PTO, 8th grade trip, etc.).
 - a. Building Use- The board is in support of this event. They will fill out the building use form once they have a date chosen and return it to the school.
5. Approval of Minutes- 1.6.25 approved

Reports:

6. Principal Report- Principal Maylor did not have a principal report to share but was available for questions. There were no questions.
7. GISU Meeting Update- a budget of \$8,944,368 was approved at the meeting. Some of the increase was at the business office. They discussed having a sheet created with every position/role in the GISU office, and explaining why a .5 increase in staff is necessary. Looking forward, there will be a discussion of becoming one district within GISU, as opposed to 3.

Board Business:

8. Busing Discussion- Whitney Maxham updated the community that we are still down to 1 bus in Alburgh due to a lack of drivers. Lisa Ruud will reach out to Mountain Transit to set up a meeting about the situation. When the busing contract was last up for negotiation, the other bid would have cost significantly more.
9. Payment of Bills- Luke Richter updated the board on bills from the 1/6/25 meeting. On 1/1 the GISU office transitioned to a new financial system and there have been some glitches in the approval processes. As the new system goes through troubleshooting, financials and updates will hopefully be available at the next meeting.
10. Budget Planning Process- Lisa Ruud gave an update on the budget. Since the last meeting there was benefit reconciliation done, the GISU assessment was finalized (\$553,373), and announced tuition for high schools and tech centers. Bottom line total budget number is \$8,035,323. CLA has improved as well.

- a. Budget Review- Lisa Ruud shared a presentation with the board reflecting discussion at the last meeting.
 - i. This is a level service budget with no personnel reduction and discretionary spending (books, supplies, professional development, etc) level funded or reduced, with no increase for inflation. It also includes a \$50K building improvement line (reduced from \$215K).
 - ii. The proposed FY26 budget is \$8,035,323 with is a 7.4% reduction from the FY25 budget. The major budget drivers are wages as negotiated and health care rates up 11.9%. This is offset by a lower special ed SU assessment, and building maintenance projects reduced from FY25.
 - iii. There is a revenue reduction of \$1,125,643
 - 1. There is not a completed audit yet. There will be an \$800,000 fund balance. Any surplus goes into a capital fund (approved by voters last year). However, if this fund balance were instead applied to the budget, it would improve the tax rate. The board reviewed the impact of including the fund balance.
 - 2. The board discussed the cottage project. This was budgeted for last year due to surplus money being available. It has not gone out to bid (business manager went on leave). The costs will now be significantly higher than were budgeted. The board discussed the need for the space, versus the longer-term financial sustainability of this project. This is not the year to go for expansion, this is the year for budget stabilization. Instead the board decided to add \$25,000 to building improvements, for unanticipated projects. That changes the budget to \$8,060,323
 - 3. Reviewed tax rate outlook. The preliminary FY26 budget has a 10% increase in per pupil spending and a property tax rate increase of \$.10. These numbers will be adjusted to reflect changes made tonight.
- b. Decide on date and time for information hearing- the meeting will be held Monday March 3, 2025. Whitney Maxham will follow up with the town clerk about the timing of the meeting. The school and town will share a zoom link.
- c. Signing the warning- the board reviewed the warning. Lisa Ruud will adjust the numbers reflecting changes made at the meeting tonight and send it to board members to sign.
 - i. Warning language to address use of surplus funds- last year, voters approved surplus funds being placed in a capital fund. The warning includes an article that allows the funds to be applied as revenue instead.
- d. Communication Plan
 - i. The board discussed areas of the budget that may be questioned at town meeting.
 - ii. The GISU website has been updated with budget information. GISU will disseminate budget and voting information (Islander, and potentially Front Porch Forum)

11. Other- None

Closure

12. Setting the Next Agenda- GISU Meeting Update, Bills, Informational Meeting Preparation,
13. Adjourn

Board Action:

- Cheryl Dunn moved to approve the minutes from 1/6/25 (2nd Whitney Maxham) 4- yes, Recused- Luke Richter, Motion Passed.
- Luke Richter moved to pay batch #16066 in the full amount of \$19,548.64 (2nd Whitney Maxham) Unan.
- Whitney Maxham moved to approve the proposed budget of \$8,060,323.00 (2nd Luke Richter) Unan.
- Whitney Maxham moved to enter executive session at 8:58 PM to discuss labor relation agreements with employees (2nd Luke Richter) Unan.
 - The board exited executive session at 9:27 P.M.
- Whitney Maxham moved to adjourn at 9:28 PM. (2nd Cheryl) Unan.

Respectfully Submitted,
Mallory Ovitt