

**TOWN OF ALTON  
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE  
DRAFT  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 20, 2009**

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair  
Karen Painter, Vice Chair  
Greg Fuller  
Richard MacDonald  
Elizabeth Dominick

Members Absent: Selectmen's Representative

School Board Present: Jeffrey St. Cyr, Chair  
Terri Noyes, Vice Chair & School Board Rep to the Budget Committee  
Lynda Goossens  
Maureen Smith  
Sandy Wyatt

Others Present: Kathy Holt, Superintendent  
Bonnie Jean Kuras, Principal  
Kathy O'Blenes, Business Manager  
Deb Brown, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent  
Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

J. St. Cyr requested to make an announcement.

K. Painter motioned to approve the agenda as amended and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. ANNOUNCEMENT BY SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR

J. St. Cyr announced that the Alton School Board meeting that had recessed at the Alton Central School earlier that same evening would now reconvene.

V. SCHOOL BUDGET/WARRANTS

T. Noyes reported that the board met tonight and made some cuts to the proposed FY 2010 budget. Fuel oil has been cut from \$5.25/gal to \$3.25/gal for a savings of \$112,000.00. She reported that the SAU budget operating budget, fuel oil was also cut by \$2,286.00 because fuel was reduced from \$5.25/gal to \$3.25/gal. She reported that the SAU office uses 1,143.00 gallons and that the school is factored at 56,000 gallons.

T. Noyes reported that 1% was deleted from the merit increase budget line item for account #2320, for a savings of \$16,367.00 in the salary account. She reported that they have also looked at the special Warrant article #7 and voted to put the article up to 1% of the budget. She stated that a total of \$130,652.00 was reduced from the budget, not including the change made to the special Warrant article #7.

S. Miller asked if there were other accounts that were cut. K. Holt reported that Professional Development was reviewed but it was decided by the board that no cuts should be made.

S. Miller read article #7 as presented. R. MacDonald asked if this Warrant article was used last year and T. Noyes responded that they did not have this last year but that it had been recommended by the budget committee last year. G. Fuller asked what the final amount of the bottom line of the budget would be. K. Holt stated they did not have the number because the reductions that the board had just decided on had not been factored into the budget yet. K. Holt stated that it was her understanding that they were present at tonight's meeting for input from the budget committee.

S. Miller motioned to table special Warrant article #7 until the end of the meeting and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

S. Miller asked to bring up Warrant article #5 again. The Warrant article is for \$200,000.00. S. Miller felt that the amount was too high and felt that it should be reduced to \$100,000.00. S. Miller motioned to reduce Warrant article #5 to \$100,000.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. There was discussion about the issues with the roof. E. Dominick asked how much would be used for the roof, ground, etc. T. Noyes noted that the green page of the packet that had been given to the committee would show all the different accounts that they had. She pointed out the various accounts that the school had in the past and noted that they had rolled it all together. The only thing that was added to the capital reserve was \$280,000.00 and that was spent last year. There was discussion about the various accounts and how the money could be used. S. Miller spoke about the window fund and stated that \$111,000.00 was raised and just set aside. T. Noyes stated that the money for the windows did not come from taxation but from interest money that came from PMHS. She noted that the money in the account for the bathroom had also come from interest money. S. Miller noted that there was \$300,000.00 sitting in an account for fire suppression that was "just sitting there". T. Noyes stated there was not enough money in the account to pay for the system and the installation and therefore the money was being held. She stated that if there were additions made to the school that they would have to take out the fire suppression system and that would be a waste of money. K. Holt stated they cannot put in a fire suppression system without putting in a ventilation system first. K. Holt noted that there was a directive for the school to not do any changes to the building, such as wiring, if it was not absolutely needed. K. Painter asked about making the Warrant article a general fund. K. Holt spoke about what would be needed to make all of the funds available and the special hearing that would be needed with a majority vote to make the changes. S. Miller suggested using the word "emergency" in the Warrant article as a possible alternative to the suggestion for making it \$100,000.00. He stated that there was an RSA that defined the use of the word "emergency". J. St.

Cyr spoke about other changes that have been recommended from an engineering group that will need to be addressed within the next two to three years. He spoke about the issues with the roof last winter and noted that it cost over \$280,000 for just a third of the roof. S. Miller called the motion to a vote. The motion failed with two yes votes and four no votes. (yes – SM, GF / no – KP, ED, TN)

R. MacDonald motioned to recommended the Warrant article #6 as presented and T. Noyes seconded the motion. The motion failed with three no votes and three yes votes. ( Yes - RM, TN, ED / No - SM, GF, KP / absent – SMc)

There was a brief break.

*[Recorder's Note: The Alton School Board had convened at the beginning of this meeting. Their motions will be shown in italic type so as not to be confused with the motions made by the Alton Budget Committee during this same meeting.]*

*SCHOOL BOARD VOTE: T. Noyes motioned for the Alton School Board to change Warrant article #6 to \$150,000.00 and M. Smith seconded the motion. The Alton School Board voted unanimously to approve changing Warrant article #6 to \$150,000.00. (TN, JS, MS, LG, SW)*

T. Noyes motioned to approve the Alton School Board's recommendation of \$150,000.00 for Warrant article #6 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

S. Miller asked the committee to review the general operating budget.

S. Miller motioned to reduce 2210 account, Tuition Reimbursement, by \$10,000.00. He stated that even though contractual obligations needed to be met, they did not need to be totally budgeted for. He spoke about the history of the account. T. Noyes asked about the procedural protocols used and noted that S. Miller had voted in the negative in the past. K. Painter stated she would move the motion and G. Fuller seconded the motion. T. Noyes spoke about the cuts that were made to the budget for this budget line item in the past and spoke about her concerns if this budget line item were to be overspent. The budget line item includes teachers and support staff tuition reimbursement. T. Noyes reported that \$93,000.00 would be what would be owed to the teachers if they paid out the whole thing and it was being funded at 50% this year. S. Miller called the vote. The motion passed with four yes votes and two no votes. (Yes – SM, GF, KP, RM / No – TN, ED)

S. Miller asked about the account for Food Services and asked if it was a “wash”. There was discussion about the management and reporting of the Food Services budget to the DRA.

S. Miller spoke about the funding for the Special Education account and noted that there was a Warrant article as well as a department budget in the general budget. K. Holt explained the requirement to fund the services that are required. She reported that they will be using some of the money in the special warrant article this year because of some unanticipated needs. S. Miller asked about the Special Ed Summer Program (Continual Education) and asked if that was a necessary program. T. Noyes responded that it was a necessary program and driven by students' individual education program.

S. Miller stated that he had trouble getting his hands around the budget because there was an increase of over 7% and there was a decrease in student enrollment. There was an open discussion about enrollment and the budgets for some of the area schools. K. Holt noted that

transportation was in the Alton budget and not in the PMHS budget because it was paid for through the Alton school district. She pointed out that the special education costs for PMHS students were in the Alton budget and would not show up in the PMHS budget. She spoke about the impact that negotiated contracts will have on a budget once the Warrant is passed because you will not see the impact when the operating budget is presented until the following year.

E. Dominick spoke about her concerns about the increase in the Technology budget and felt that there was not frugality shown in the budget. She stated that this was an area they could cut back on and have an improvement in the technology field. T. Noyes stated they were behind in getting the technology improvements online that they needed. B. Kuras stated that the town of Alton had been very generous in helping them get what they needed in the way of technology and that this year's request was not as large as the previous year's request. E. Dominick spoke about saving the requests for technology for another year and asked if some of the projects or plans could wait a year.

E. Dominick motioned to cut 570-380 Teachers' Computers with Monitors for reduced by \$13,800 and S. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five with one no vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM / No - TN / absent – SMC)

E. Dominick motioned to reduce the budget line item for Technology, Desktop Software by \$2,000.00 to \$1,000.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of three with two no votes. (SM, GF, KP, ED / no - RM, TN / absent – SMC)

E. Dominick motioned to reduce the budget line item for Technology, Flat-Screen Monitor, to \$1,000.00, which is five monitors and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five with one no vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM / No - TN / absent – SMC)

S. Miller spoke about the Business Services budget and felt that the salary budget line item should be level funded. S. Miller motioned to reduce the salary budget line item to \$53,560.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. S. Miller noted that the business administrator is not yet certified. J. St. Cyr noted that the 1% increase was removed from the budget earlier that night so that there will not be a one percent increase. He stated she was very qualified for her position as a business manager and was working on her certification as a business administrator. K. Holt stated that there were about eight to nine business manager positions in the state and there was a shortage of people qualified to fill the position. The motion failed with one yes vote, five no votes and one abstain. (No – TN, KP, ED, RM / Yes – SM / Abstain – GF / absent – SMC)

G. Fuller asked about the default budget for the school. T. Noyes reported that the default budget was only the budget that had been passed the previous year plus contractual obligations. K. Holt stated that it did not need to be voted on because it had already been passed.

T. Noyes motioned to recommend \$182,000.00 for fuel oil, a savings of \$112,000.00, and S. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMC)

T. Noyes motioned to reduce the budget line item for SAU salaries by \$16,367.00 and S. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMC)

T. Noyes motioned to reduce the budget line item for SAU Fuel to \$3,715.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

S. Miller reported that the new number for Warrant article #3 was \$13,216,515.00. The new total of the operating budget is \$8,021,409.00. R. MacDonald motioned to recommend Warrant article #3 at \$12,216,515.00 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of three with two no votes. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / No – GF, TN / absent – SMc)

S. Miller reviewed Warrant article #7, at one percent of the general fund, at \$80,214.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. G. Fuller stated that the number was the board's number and felt that the 1% was a lot of money. There was discussion about the percentage that could work for the contingency fund. A consensus of the committee felt that three-fourths of a percent or \$60,000.00 would be more appropriate.

*SCHOOL BOARD VOTE: T. Noyes motioned to remove the one percent verbiage of Warrant article #7 and replace it with \$60,000.00 as the final number. She read the Warrant into the minutes. S. Wyatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.*

K. Painter motioned to accept the revised Warrant article#7 at \$60,000.00 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. G. Fuller asked when the leftover money would be returned to the town and K. Holt responded that it would be at the end of the year. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

## VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Shelby Hicks asked if there were extra copies of the budget committee meetings available at the library. G. Fuller stated he could look into making copies to accommodate her request.

## VII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Painter motioned to adjourn and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, KP, ED, RM, TN / absent – SMc)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:37 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis  
Recorder