

**TOWN OF ALTON
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
APPROVED
MEETING MINUTES
October 27, 2009**

Members Present: Karen Painter, Chair
Greg Fuller, Vice Chair
Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
Lynda Goossens, School Board Representative
Steve Miller
Richard MacDonald
Marc DeCoff

Others Present: Russ Bailey, Town Administrator
Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Painter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The meeting minutes of October 20, 2009 was added to the meeting minutes. M. DeCoff requested to add "Conflict of Interest – Fire Department" under New Business. G. Fuller motioned to approve the agenda as amended and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (KP, GF, SM, MD, RM, LC / absent – LG)

V. OLD BUSINESS

The report from the school board representative (AARA Grant, Fund 5 process) and the report from the selectmen's representative (computer specifications), were tabled for a future meeting. There was a brief discussion of the Fund 5 account at PMHS.

The meeting minutes of October 20, 2009 was reviewed. A typographical error was noted on page three. S. Miller motioned to approve the amended meeting minutes of October 20, 2009 and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five with two abstaining. (KP, GF, SM, MD, RM / abstain – LC, LG)

VI. NEW BUSINESS

M. DeCoff stated that he is on the Fire Department and asked if anyone felt he should not vote on the Fire Department's budget. L. Carr felt that he was "opening up a can of worms".

ASSESSING

Tom Sargent, Town Assessor, presented the proposed budget for Assessing (4193) for 2010. The selectmen recommended budget for 2010 is \$154,615.00 and the department head's proposed budget was \$191,315. The budget for 2009 is \$155,534. He spoke about his concerns about budget cuts and freezes that have affected his budget in the past few years. He noted that the Selectmen had reduced a proposed budget line item for a digital map that he had requested.

The Committee reviewed the budget line-by-line. There will be one new full-time position added to the budget so there will be three people in the office (the assessor, one full-time, and one part-time.) He spoke about the justification for the full-time position, such as a full assessment due in 2010 and new state standards being set. There was discussion about the scope of work, dues and fees, and training.

There was discussion about Computer Expense. G. Fuller asked for specifications and costs of the two new computers that were purchased for the department. T. Sargent reported there are a total of four computers in his department – two of them are new and two of them are older machines. Legal Expenses, Copier Costs, and Office Supplies were briefly discussed. T. Sargent spoke about the justification for the folding machine for mailings, as several other departments have mailings during the year and the machine will save having a printer doing it.

T. Sargent spoke about the assessing process and schedule. He discussed the state standards that need to be met. He reported on the new digital orthophotography map and spoke about the benefits that it would have for the town. It was felt that the digital map should be in a warrant article, as it was about \$3,600 over three years. There was discussion about how the map could be approved for funding.

TOWN CLERK

Lisa Noyes, Town Clerk, presented the proposed budget for the Town Clerk (4132) for 2010. One of the goals for the Town Clerk is to train a part-time person and to implement "e-Reg" which is an online registration program.

The Committee reviewed the budget line-by-line. L. Noyes reported on the changes to registrations, vital records, and licenses. There will be a part-time person trained to help with coverage in case someone is sick or to help during elections. The Overtime budget line item was discussed. The estimated revenue for the Town Clerk's office for 2009 is \$987,000, which is about a two percent decrease from the previous year. R. Bailey noted that there are more registrations because they can now register heavier vehicles, process vanity plates, etc. L. Noyes spoke about the increase to the software expenses (BMSI – ClerkWorks), which includes the changes that the state is making to the registration process

ELECTIONS

Lisa Noyes, Town Clerk, presented the proposed budget for Elections (4140) for 2010. She reported there are three elections this year (March, September, and November, 2010). She reported that the Supervisors of the Checklist met twice a month in 2009 but they will be meeting once a month in the next year. She noted that there was not an increase in their wages but that there were three elections, which will also affect

the rate of the Town Moderator. There was discussion about the Telephone budget line item and the justification for it.

FIRE

Chief Scott Williams and Mary Jane Driscoli, Alton Fire Department, presented the proposed budget for 2010. He presented the objectives of the department and the justification for the requested budget. He reviewed a list of budget savings that have been recognized, such as changes to phone lines, a printer/fax machine, and heating changes, as well as other items. He reviewed utility cost trends. He spoke about other items of interest, such as the FIRE Act Grant that was applied for and the Capital Improvement Plans. He spoke about the vehicles and some of the issues with the older trucks. He discussed the buildings and noted that the East Alton and West Alton stations both needed their roves replaced.

The Committee reviewed the budget line-by-line. There was discussion about the work needed to upgrade the boat and some of the repairs that have been done to the boat. Chief Williams spoke about the work done to the Fire Department building on Route 140. He spoke about pagers that need to be replaced because of changes to the bandwidth that the FCC is requiring but will find out how many pagers need to be replaced and will report back to the Committee.

COMMITTEE'S DECISIONS

ASSESSING:

There was discussion about the justification for the requested full-time position.

G. Fuller motioned to decrease budget line item 4193-010 (Full-time) to zero and 4193-050 (Part-time) to \$37,525. R. MacDonald seconded the motion. R. Bailey stated that staff was told to keep their budgets in line and felt that what the Committee was telling them was that they were "wasting their time". There was discussion about the requested budget. The motion failed by a vote of two to five. (No – KP, LC, SM, RM, LG / Yes – GF, MD)

S. Miller motioned to approve \$151,616 for Accessing and L. Goossens seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five to two. (Yes – KP, LC, SM, RM, LG / No – GF, MD)

TOWN CLERK:

There was discussion about the justification for the requested part-time person who would be transferring from the Planning Department. R. Bailey noted that it was specialized work and special training and certification was required.

S. Miller motioned to reduce budget line 4132-020 (Overtime) to \$1 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. R. Bailey noted that overtime was for the elections, as the Town Clerk was required to be at the elections to oversee it. S. Miller withdrew his motion.

M. DeCoff motioned to approve the Selectmen's recommendations for Town Clerk at \$90,705 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five to two. (Yes – KP, LG, LC, RM, MD / No – GF, SM)

ELECTIONS

G. Fuller motioned to approve Elections (4140) at \$11,554 and L. Goossens seconded the motion. There was discussion about the justification for telephone. G. Fuller withdrew his motion and L. Goossens withdrew her second.

S. Miller motioned to reduce the line for Telephone from \$540 to \$1. There was no second.

S. Miller motioned to reduce the line for Telephone from \$540 to \$300. There was no second.

L. Goossens motioned to approve Elections (4140) at \$11,554 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six to one. (Yes - LG, LC, KP, GF, MD, RM / No – SM)

FIRE

S. Miller spoke about the importance of the upgrades needed to the boat. S. Miller motioned to increase budget line item 4220-207 to \$28,900 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. There was discussion about the upgrades needed to the boat and why this would or would not be a Capital Improvement item. The motion failed by a vote of three yes votes, three no votes, and one abstain. (Yes – LG, RM, SM / No – GF, LC, KP / Abstain – MD)

R. MacDonald motioned to approve the selectmen's recommended budget for Fire (4220) at \$316,374 and L. Goossens seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of three yes votes, three no votes, and one abstain. (LG, RM, SM / No – LC, KP, GF / Abstain – MD)

S. Miller motioned to increase budget line item 4220-202 by \$28,900 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four to three, with one abstaining. (LG, RM, LC, SM / No – KP, GF / Abstain – MD)

K. Painter motioned to reduce the budget line item for Antique Equipment by \$1,000.00. There was no second.

L. Goossens motioned to approve the selectmen's recommended budget for Fire (4220) at \$316,374 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four yes votes, two no votes, and one abstain. (Yes - LG, RM, SM, LC / No – KP, GF / Abstain – MD)

VII. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

R. MacDonald motioned to adjourn and L. Goossens seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder