

**TOWN OF ALTON  
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE**

---

**(approved 1/13/09)  
MEETING MINUTES  
January 8, 2009**

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair  
Karen Painter, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Dominick  
Greg Fuller  
Richard MacDonald  
Jeffrey St. Cyr, School Board Representative  
Steve McMahon, Selectmen's Representative

Others Present: Russ Bailey, Town Administrator

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:41 PM.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

S. McMahon entered the meeting at approximately 6:47 PM.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

J. St. Cyr added "Update of the PMHS FY 2010 Budget" to the agenda. S. Miller added the approval of the December 30, 2008 to the agenda.

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

V. MEETING SCHEDULE

The next public hearing will be on January 15, 2009 for the school budget. S. Miller reported that there might be a need for the hearing dates posted on January 13 and 14, as needed.

There was discussion about the posting of the public hearings. R. MacDonald motioned to have a notice in the local paper for the public hearing and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five with one abstaining. (SM, KP, RM, JS, ED / absent – SMc / abstain - GF)

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input

## VII. JMA BUDGET REPORT

J. St Cyr reported that the PMHS JMA Board met on Tuesday to review the recommendation of the JMA Budget Committee. It was recommended that \$34,996.00 should be cut from the budget and the Board approved the bottom line of the budget. J. St. Cyr noted that some of the cuts would be taken from other places in the budget and that the Finance Committee was reviewing that. There was discussion about where some of the cuts were recommended.

## VIII. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

J. St. Cyr noted that page 3 of 12, second to the last paragraph, should be \$5,000.00. G. Fuller noted that he had voted "no" on page 4 of 12, first paragraph. It was noted that the Warrant articles all had 2008 dates in them.

[Recorder's Note: the dates of the Warrant article are an exact copy of what was given to the Alton Budget Committee, which R. Bailey had noted at the time of the meeting would be changed.]

J. St. Cyr motioned to approve the amended meeting minutes of December 30, 2008 and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motioned passed by a vote of five with one abstaining and one absent. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF / absent – SMc / abstain - ED)

[Steve McMahon arrived at the meeting.]

## IX. OLD BUSINESS

Scott Williams, Alton Fire Chief, spoke about the amount for the SUV for the control vehicle for the fire department. He reported that the total amount for a fully equipped vehicle with lights, decals, radios, etc. would cost \$35,607. He reported that the SUV was a Ford Expedition and that he had also received a quote for a Ford Explorer that was \$2,000 less but there would be a trade off with space that would be needed. S. Miller asked if a smaller SUV would be considered such as a GMC Jimmy. S. Williams stated that the bid for a GMC Jimmy was about \$10,000 more for a base vehicle. He stated that the last vehicle lasted for ten years and that they hoped to get ten years out of the new vehicle.

R. MacDonald motioned to recommend \$36,000.00 for the fire department control vehicle and K. Painter seconded the motion. This will be presented to the voters in Warrant article #23. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

S. Miller noted that there was an error in the meeting minutes where the Building Code Official's budget was approved in October. He reported that the wrong number was motioned on and approved, which was the department head's budget of \$90,201.00. S. Miller motioned to approve the Selectmen's recommendation for Code Official/Building Inspector (4192) of \$83,478.00 and S. McMahon seconded the motion. R. Bailey noted that the part-time secretary's budget line item had been adjusted per the request of the Budget Committee. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

R. Bailey reported on the sidewalk snow removal machine and stated that the Board of Selectmen had received a bid of over \$62,000.00 for the machine. He reported the Selectmen decided not to had the warrant article on the ballot because they felt it was too much money to ask for this year.

R. Bailey spoke about the Warrant article for the Bond issue and reported that they would not be going over \$1,999,999.00 but that they did not have a final number at this time. S. Miller spoke about the Bond issue and asked the Committee if they would take a straw poll on the issue.

S. Miller motioned to support the Bond issue as presented at \$1,999,000.00, as written in the draft of the warrant article, and S. McMahan seconded the motion. G. Fuller asked if the Selectmen had voted on this yet and stated that he would like to see the final wording on this before he voted on it. R. Bailey noted some of the possible changes that could be in the article. The motion passed by unanimous vote. G. Fuller asked if this was the approval of the wording. S. Miller withdrew his motion.

S. Miller motioned to recommend a bond issue for an amount up to \$1,999,999.00 for the needs of the town and S. McMachon seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

Chief Smith, Alton Police Department, spoke about the SUV that the department is requesting. He reported that a Crown Victoria was about \$31,556 and a Ford Expedition was about \$34,112. He reported on the gas mileage that the two vehicles got and noted it was not a big difference. He spoke about the benefits of having the larger SUV for hauling equipment and for safety. The old vehicle would be used as an administrative vehicle or as an unmarked car. R. Bailey noted that the new vehicle was presented and approved as a replacement vehicle.

R. MacDonald motioned to approve Warrant article #13, for the vehicle for the police department at \$34,500.00 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

S. Miller motioned to approve Warrant article #15 for the purchase and installation of a generator at the Town Hall, for \$15,000.00 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. There was a discussion about the cost of the generation and where it would be located. The motion passed by a vote of six with one abstaining. (SM, KP, JS, GF, SMc, ED / abstain - RM)

R. Bailey spoke about the benefit account in 2008 and reported that about \$15,000 had been spent in 2008. There was no motion.

R. Bailey noted a change for the Highway Department budget of about -\$9,926.00. He noted that there was a delay on the fuel numbers and that this budget had not been changed accordingly. He reviewed the differences in the Selectmen's recommendations and the Budget Committee's recommendations.

G. Fuller motioned to approve the Selectmen's recommendation for Vehicle Fuel (214) at \$87,055.00 and Building Fuel (304) at \$3,010.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

S. Miller motioned to approve the Selectmen's recommendation for Snow Removal (166) at \$28,000.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six with one abstaining. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED / abstain - SMc)

G. Fuller motioned to approve the Budget Committee's recommendation for Full-Time Clerk, Highway Department, (010) at \$30,285.00 and S. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six with one "no" vote and one abstaining. (Yes - SM, KP, RM, ED, GF / No - SMC / abstain - JS)

S. Miller motioned to recommend \$1,059,704.00 for the Highway Department budget for FY 2009 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six with one abstaining. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMC, ED / abstain - SMC)

There was a brief break.

S. Miller requested to have a second hearing on January 13, 2009 and to have a 'snow date' for the snow date of the public hearing of the school's budget as January 16, 2009.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

S. Miller reported that the Budget Committee's recommendation for the 2009 FY budget was \$6,142,531.00, not including the increase just made in the meeting of the Highway Department.

Loring Carr, Alton Resident, asked for a review of the totals presented. He asked about the use of the contingency fund and what it could be used for. R. Bailey gave some example of how the money would be used for unanticipated utility expenses.

### **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$2,071  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

### **TOWN CLERK**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$84,194  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

### **TAX COLLECTOR**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$66,353  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

### **ELECTION & REGISTRATION**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$8,195  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

### **LEGAL**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$84,452  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**BENEFITS**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$1,131,984  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$1,226,003

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$132,993  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$132,793

**CODE OFFICIAL/BUILDING INSPECTOR**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$83,478  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: \$90,201

**ASSESSING DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$155,534  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$155,184  
Department Head's Request: \$155,534

**PARKS & REC – GROUNDS & MAINTENANCE**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$209,703  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$207,744  
Department Head's Request: \$207,744

Loring Carr asked for clarification in the difference in numbers of the Selectmen's recommendation, and the Budget Committee's recommendation. There was discussion about the numbers that were originally presented in the budget and the changes that were made, including some of the buying strategies that are used. R. Bailey spoke about the retail cost of fuel vs. rack plus price. The price of approximately \$2.80/gal for gasoline was used for the budget. L. Carr requested that the Committee estimate a fixed price by the number of gallons used each year by this department. There was an open discussion about the budget process and how the projected budget amounts were reached.

**CEMETERY**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$95,711  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$96,910

**INSURANCE**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$157,168  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**PUBLIC CHANNEL PEG**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$12,732  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$12,422

**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$1,000,897  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$999,997  
Department Head's Request: \$1,060,525

L. Carr asked about the increase in Contract Services. R. Bailey explained that an attorney was hired to prosecute and to appear in court, which was an actual cost savings to the Department.

**FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$315,690  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$320,730  
Department Head's Request: \$323,621

**EMERGENCY MANGEMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$3,516  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation:  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$1,059,704  
Department Head's Request: \$1,129,426

L. Carr asked about the budget line item for Gravel. There was discussion about the lack of FEMA money that came in that had been expected.

**STREET LIGHTS**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$29,516  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**SOLID WASTE OPERATIONS**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$473,157  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$493,148

**HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD WASTE PROGRAM**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$21,433  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**MUNICIPAL WATER/HYDRANTS**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$0  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$4,170

S. Miller noted that this budget has been moved into the Fire Department's budget.

**WATER DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$305,776  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$305,967  
Department Head's Request: same as above

**ANIMAL CONTROL**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$30,979  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$22,373  
Department Head's Request: \$30,979

S. Miller spoke about the Budget Committee's recommendation that a three-quarter time officer not being needed at this time.

**WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$111,571  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$106,371

L. Carr asked about the increase for the Senior Center. R. Bailey noted that the Director's hours were being extended.

**RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$80,246  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: \$80,007  
Department Head's Request: \$81,618

S. Miller noted the cut made in electricity because the basketball court and ice rink not being used.

**LIBRARY**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$124,181  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**GILMAN MUSEUM**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$12,684  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**PATRIOTIC PURPOSES**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$24,500  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same  
Department Head's Request: same

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Selectmen's Recommendation: \$10,322  
Budget Committee's Recommendation: same as above  
Department Head's Request: \$3,598

**The Budget Committee recommends \$6,150,377 for the FY 2009 budget.**

## WARRANT ARTICLES

S. Miller read all of the Warrant articles that had been presented to the Committee for approval. There were public comments on Article 24 and 30 only:

### **ARTICLE 24:**

L. Carr felt that this Warrant article should be cut back to about \$500,000.00 and noted that it is a difficult economic time. R. Bailey stated that there would be more paid in the next year if this was cut back because the roads needed to be maintained

J. St. Cyr spoke about Youth Services Bureau and reported that he had spoken with the service. He reported that there were forty-four referrals made in Belknap County last year. He reported that eight referrals were made and two enrollments were made. He noted that youths are often court ordered to participate in the organization and that the local police department have to follow up with the referrals and participation in the program. He noted that the numbers he had found were different than what was presented by S. Miller at the previous meeting. S. Miller noted that it was still only two enrollments that were made. There was an open discussion about the objective of the program and other programs that are being used in the area.

L. Carr commented on court referrals and asked if there were any costs incurred by the youth's family for the service. S. Miller noted that there were charged based on if the family could pay, otherwise the program was funded via special warrant articles by the towns.

### **ARTICLE 30:**

S. MacMahon spoke in favor of the Warrant article. R. Bailey reported that the Default Budget for FY2009, approved by the Alton Board of Selectmen, was \$6,043,629.

R. Bailey reported that the Current Year (Year To Date) Revenues were \$20,806,769.93

## X. PUBLIC INPUT

L. Carr asked for clarification on the default budget and the amount reduced on the Town Assessor's Budget.

William Curtain reported that the Water Department paid back the money that was owed to the town.

## XI. ADJOURNMENT

S. McMahon motioned to adjourn and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, RM, JS, GF, SMc, ED)

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis  
Recorder