

**ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
**Minutes**  
**January 11, 2021**  
*(Approved – January 25, 2021)*

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Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:00 PM and V. MacDonald led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

Reuben Wentworth, Chairman  
Virgil MacDonald, Vice Chairman  
Philip V. Wittmann, Selectman  
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman  
Bob Holt, Selectman  
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator

R. Wentworth announced the following:

Until Further Notice: To keep our members and staff safe, and to comply with RSA 91-A, the State of Emergency, and Governor’s Orders, restrictions on public gatherings, The Town of Alton is moving from “in-person” meetings to “remote audio participation meetings”. To remotely attend the meeting (audio only) visit our website: [www.alton.nh.gov](http://www.alton.nh.gov) for telephone access and remote access instructions listed under News and Announcements on the home page or telephone the Selectmen’s Office 603-875-2113 or 603-875-0229 between 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM for the Dial-in Code and Meeting ID for each Selectmen’s Meeting.

**Agenda Approval**

R. Wentworth requested that the agenda be amended by adding #3 under Old Business, School Street/Church Street.

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

**Emergency Management Update** by R. Heath, Director

R. Heath, Emergency Management Director gave an overview of spikes in COVID cases over the holiday periods which has not come full circle yet. The numbers have been looked at for both Alton and Barnstead due to the sharing of the High School. Discussions took place with the Superintendent for the return of in person attendance and they feel comfortable with doing such. Today a memorandum circulated from the Attorney General’s Office regarding the enforcement of requiring masks in public places. The significance of this is the guidance of wearing masks in public places. Signage should be posted at places of business regarding this matter and they should be working with the proper authorities to develop a plan for potential issues that may arise. These steps have been taken and are being enforced at the Town Hall. Remote options are being done on an individual basis. V. MacDonald questioned employees wearing masks as he has received complaints regarding this; this will be reiterated to the employees. B. Holt asked how this would be enforced within a private business; R. Heath responded that it could be handled the same way as it is being handled at the Town Hall with the person who does not comply could be charged with a criminal trespass violation. It would be recommended that the authorities be contacted. There has not been much defiance to this matter. Chances are the mask mandate will be extended. The vaccine is forthcoming with debates on people taking or not taking this. P. LaRochelle asked about ice fishing and other activities in the Bay area; will there be porta potties placed in the Bay area. R. Wentworth suggested the possibility of opening the restrooms during the weekend hours; this topic will be brought to the EM Team.

On another note, R. Heath brought forward that there have been a lot of discussions regarding the 2% reduction to the Budget. He urged the Board especially on an Emergency Management standpoint with all of the unknowns moving forward that the Town possibly will be heading to a Default Budget because neither the Selectmen or the Budget Committee are supporting the Operating Budget. He informed the Board that he will be speaking to this same issue at the Budget Committee Public Hearing and asked the Board to consider taking another vote on the Operating Budget as it originally stood. He noted spending had been shut down at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year, things have been put off in order to get through the Pandemic, never expecting to be

going into the better part of 2021 with all of these unknowns. If we go to a Default Budget not only will there be problems with getting through the Pandemic with the Emergency Management side of things; there will be serious moral issues to deal with amongst the employees. This has been a tough year! Chances are that if the Operating Budget goes on the ballot not being supported, historically it will not be approved. He asked for reconsideration from the Board on taking another vote on this matter. B. Holt noted that he believes that the Budget Committee voted to accept this; they will vote on approval after the Public Hearing. L. Dionne stated that they have the right to change their recommendations after the Public Hearing based on the Public Input they receive. The 2-2 vote results in a failed vote. R. Wentworth informed the Board the only way to change the vote on the Operating Budget would be for one of the three members that voted against would have to make a motion to reconsider.

V. MacDonald made a motion to reconsider the Board of Selectmen's vote on reducing the Operating Budget by \$200,000, no second. Motion FAILED.

R. Wentworth asked P. LaRochelle if he would consider reducing the budget by \$200,000 so when it goes to the people, it would be a majority of the vote of the Selectmen so the employees would not take a chance of losing their COLA and merit; P. LaRochelle responded "yes". The Town employees have dedicated themselves all year long with their services. R. Wentworth will concede to the reduction of the \$200,000 because he does not want to see the employees lose their increases. They have worked hard all year and deserve their raises.

R. Wentworth made a motion to reconsider voting on the Budget by reducing the overall Operating Budget by \$200,000 and P. LaRochelle seconded.

Further Discussion: P. Wittmann asked for clarification on the percentage; clarified as the 2%. This reduction would mean no new Highway Department Driver, Benefits and uniforms out of that line, no other Full-Time Fire Personnel added to the payroll and the rest will need to come from the list previously provided and the cuts will come from the Selectmen not the departments. There should be no new positions for this year. Discussions on the various department's cuts transpired.

The motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

R. Wentworth noted he will go to the Budget Committee representing the Selectmen informing them that they have all approved the 2% (\$209,454) reduction to the overall Operating Budget. The Town Administrator was asked to be sure that the amount is correct for the Budget meeting. P. Wittmann voiced he hopes that the Board will be visiting the benefits package in January; potentially this will be next week.

### Announcements

None

### Submission of Public Comments - Questions - Concerns

None

### Appointments

None

### New Business

#### 1. Sale of State Owned Property - Map 15 Lot 59 & 59-2

This is for property located at the East Alton General Store; part of that property is located outside the NH Route 28A right-of way that is a portion of a larger parcel that was acquired by the State. They are looking to sell and by law need to offer to sell it to the Town.

R. Wentworth made a motion to send a letter the NH DOT informing them that the Town is not interested in purchasing the property identified as Map 15 Lot 59 and 59-2 and V. MacDonald seconded.

B. Holt, yes  
V. MacDonald, yes

P. LaRochelle, yes  
R. Wentworth, yes

P. Wittmann, yes

**Old Business:**

1. Warrant Articles - Assignments for Deliberative

L. Dionne informed the Board that this is in preparation for the Deliberative Session. The following assignments were decided upon:

**Article A: Benefit Pay Expendable Trust Fund**

Move: Reuben Wentworth  
Second: Virgil MacDonald  
Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article B: Town Operating Budget**

This is being passed onto the Budget Committee as it is their Budget.

**Article C: Water Works Operating Budget**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Rossiter Holt  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article D: Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Phil Wittmann  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Phil Wittmann

**Article E: Grounds and Maintenance Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Reuben Wentworth  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article F: Highway Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article G: Highway Road Construction Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Phil Wittmann  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article H: Bridge Construction Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Reuben Wentworth  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article I: Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Phil Wittmann  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Phil Wittmann

**Article J: Rock and Asphalt Crushing Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Reuben Wentworth  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article K: Highway Sand Shed Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Rossiter Holt  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article L: Highway Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Reuben Wentworth  
Second: Virgil MacDonald  
Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article M: IT Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Phil Wittmann  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Phil Wittmann

**Article N: Alton Bay Community Center Property Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Rossiter Holt  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article O: Mount Major Community Center Property Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Phil Wittmann  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article P: Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Virgil MacDonald  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochell

**Article Q: Police Detail Revolving Fund**

Move: Reuben Wentworth  
Second: Virgil MacDonald  
Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article R: Traffic Safety Devices**

Move: Reuben Wentworth  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article S: Police Department Radios**

Move: Paul LaRochelle  
Second: Phil Wittmann  
Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article T: 2021 Emergency Management Related Expenses**

Move: Virgil MacDonald  
Second: Phil Wittmann  
Speak to it: Virgil MacDonald

**Article U: Milfoil Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Rossiter Holt  
Second: Paul LaRochelle  
Speak to it: Rossiter Holt

**Article V: Recycling Revolving Fund Change of Purpose**

Move: Reuben Wentworth  
Second: Virgil MacDonald  
Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article W: Town Hall Building Improvements Capital Reserve Fund**

Move: Phil Wittmann

Second: Reuben Wentworth

Speak to it: Phil Wittmann

**Article X: Water Main Expense Capital Reserve Fund Interest**

Move: Reuben Wentworth

Second: Rossiter Holt

Speak to it: Reuben Wentworth

**Article Y: Shibley's at the Pier Lease Renewal**

Move: Virgil MacDonald

Second: Phil Wittmann

Speak to it: Paul LaRochelle

**Article Z: Alton Community Services Nonprofit**

Move: Phil Wittmann

Second: Virgil MacDonald

**Article AA: American Red Cross Nonprofit**

Move: Paul LaRochelle

Second: Phil Wittmann

**Article BB: CAP Nonprofit**

Move: Virgil MacDonald

Second: Rossiter Holt

**Article CC: Caregivers of Southern Carroll County & Vicinity Nonprofit**

Move: Virgil MacDonald

Second: Reuben Wentworth

**Article DD: CASA Nonprofit**

Move: Reuben Wentworth

Second: Virgil MacDonald

**Article EE: Central NH VNA & Hospice Nonprofit**

Move: Rossiter Holt

Second: Paul LaRochelle

**Article FF: Lakes Region Mental Health Nonprofit**

Move: Reuben Wentworth

Second: Virgil MacDonald

Speak: Reuben Wentworth (remove himself as Selectman)

**Article GG: L.I.F.E. Ministries Nonprofit**

Move: Phil Wittmann

Second: Paul LaRochelle

**Article HH: New Beginnings Nonprofit**

Move: Virgil MacDonald

Second: Reuben Wentworth

**Article II: Waypoint Nonprofit**

Move: Virgil MacDonald

Second: Phil Wittmann

At this time, V. MacDonald questioned **Article W** usage of the funds. Noted: **Article JJ** is a petition article.

2. Employee Personnel Policy - Draft

A draft in four (4) sections of the Employee Personnel Policy was provided to the Board to bring home and review for future discussions. R. Wentworth would like to have these discussions broken into the different sections over the course of four (4) meetings. The Board requested that it be in a larger print and suggested which sections should be discussed together. The first meeting will be Worker's Compensation Policy and Drug and Alcohol. Second will be Town Grievance, Discipline, Complaint and Appeal. In addition, R. Wentworth mentioned that the Departments should be involved.

3. School Street/Church Street

On Wednesday, the Engineering bids for School Street/Church Street are due. Before the awarding of the bid is done, K. Roberts is asking if the Town Engineers that serve the Planning and Zoning Boards be consulted as long as they did not bid on the job be allowed to go over the bids with them to be sure we are getting the best options for the Town. The Board is in agreement to allow this to happen. K. Roberts remotely joined the meeting stating that he would prefer that this take place in order to avoid missing something.

R. Wentworth made a motion to allow K. Roberts, Highway Manager to review the bids for Church Street/School Street with the Town Engineers as long as they did not participate in the bid process and P. LaRochelle seconded.

Further Discussion: K. Roberts noted that the money will come out of Road Reconstruction to pay the Engineers.

The motion on the table was called:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

Selectmen Reports

B. Holt mentioned the Milfoil Committee who recently discovered that the monies can only be expended for Milfoil treatments. He has been speaking with the Chairman. They are interested in changing the purpose of the Warrant Article to be able to address other invasive aquatic species. This would be brought before the Board later in the year. Discussion ensued if this should or should not be done and it should be very specific. All avenues should be investigated or a separate Warrant Article should be written specific to the Beach to avoid any issues that would be associated so that you don't take any chance of losing State Funding with Grants that are specific to Milfoil. This will be discussed later in the year.

P. LaRochelle met with the Master Plan Committee which is getting ready to write the RFP and begin forming a Committee. The RFP will come before the Board.

P. Wittmann attended the Master Plan Committee meeting to familiarize himself as the Alternate.

V. MacDonald had nothing to report.

R. Wentworth will be meeting with the Budget Committee on Wednesday night and will hopefully be bringing a presentation to them with figures for the 2% reduction.

Town Administrator Report by L. Dionne

Merrymeeting River - Tree, Jones Field

An email was provided to the Board regarding a tree that has allegedly fallen from Jones Field into the Merrymeeting River. A resident is asking for the Town to remove the tree. L. Dionne will check with DES to see if a permit is needed to remove the tree especially if the tree root base is on the land on Town property. P. LaRochelle informed the Board that this issue has come up in the past on a private piece of property and it was not allowed. L. Dionne to consult with K. Roberts as well.

Petition Warrant Article - Master Plan

An email was provided to the Board from Attorney Sessler in reference to a submitted Petition Warrant Article that was received regarding the Master Plan. L. Dionne is asking for permission from the Board to include what is being recommended by the Town Attorney, a statement at the end of the Article, "that the Board is not in support of this Article because it is contrary to the procedures set out in state law RSA 675:6 and it will therefore have no binding effect if adopted". The Board is in support as long as it can legally be added.

Monday, January 18, 2021

L. Dionne asked the Board if they wanted to cancel or skip the Selectmen's meeting on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> due to it being a State and Federal Holiday. The only available date is Wednesday, January 20<sup>th</sup>. The Board was in agreement to cancel this meeting.

2019 Audit

The 2019 Audit was provided to the Board a couple of weeks ago. L. Dionne asked the Board to review and compile any questions they have to provide to the Auditors in preparation of them attending a remote meeting in the future.

Approval of Minutes

December 28, 2020 - Regular

P. Wittmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting, December 28, 2020 as presented and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

December 28, 2020 - Non-Public

L. Dionne informed the Board that these minutes were previously released.

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the minutes of the Non-Public Meeting, December 28, 2020 as presented and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

January 4, 2021 - Regular

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting, January 4, 2021 as presented and R. Wentworth seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

January 4, 2021 - Non-Public

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the minutes of the Non-Public Meeting, January 4, 2021 as presented divulging none and V. MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

Consent Agenda Approval

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented January 11, 2021 and P. Wittmann seconded.

Discussion: V. MacDonald questioned Item #1 inquiring if he had already been brought over to that position; this would be effective upon BOS approval.

The motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes	P. LaRochelle, yes	P. Wittmann, yes
V. MacDonald, yes	R. Wentworth, yes	

1. **Highway Department:**  
Change of position: Matthew Peetz, Truck Driver to Assistant Mechanic, \$17.78/hr to \$19.25/hr., effective 1/12/21.
2. **Police Department:**  
Police Prosecutor Annual Contract Renewal.
3. **Water Bandstand Committee:**  
Appointment to Committee: Thomas Lee, Exp-03/31/21.

**Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments** (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)

None

**Non-Public Session:**

V. MacDonald moved at 7:20pm to enter into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3,II,b. R. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes	V. MacDonald - yes	P. LaRochelle - yes
R. Wentworth - yes	R. Holt - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously</u>

R. Wentworth moved at 7:50pm to exit nonpublic session. V. MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes	V. MacDonald - yes	P. LaRochelle - yes
R. Wentworth - yes	R. Holt - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously</u>

R. Wentworth moved to "not divulge" the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board and render the proposed action of the board ineffective. P. Wittmann seconded. Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes	V. MacDonald - yes	P. LaRochelle - yes
R. Wentworth - yes	R. Holt - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously</u>

**Adjournment**

P. Wittmann moved at 7:52pm to adjourn. V. MacDonald seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

*Mary K. Jarvis*

Mary K. Jarvis  
Recording Secretary