

**TOWN OF ALTON  
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE  
MARCH 19, 2009  
APPROVED  
MEETING MINUTES**

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

Members Absent: School Board Representative

Others Present: Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:37PM.

II. TAPING OF MEETINGS

S. Miller motioned to begin taping meetings at the next meeting and M. DeCoff seconded the meeting. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE

IV. AGENDA

S. Miller spoke about the default budget and asked if there was any protocols for the committee in light of the default budget.

G. Fuller asked to add something to the agenda about the default budget. There were no other changes to the agenda. The agenda was accepted by consensus.

V. COMMITTEE REORGANIZATION

S. Miller thanked Elizabeth Dominick for her years of service to the Budget Committee.

S. Miller welcomed Marc DeCoff to his position on the Budget Committee and asked him to speak about himself. M. DeCoff briefly spoke about his background and personal life.

G. Fuller motioned to recommend Karen Painter for the position of Chair and L. Carr seconded the motion. G. Fuller spoke about his reasons for why he felt K. Painter would be a good choice

for the position. K. Painter stated she felt she could not accept the position due to work obligations and felt she would miss many meetings.

K. Painter motioned to recommend Greg Fuller for the position of Chair and L. Carr seconded the motion. K. Painter spoke about her reasons for why she felt that G. Fuller would be a good choice for the position. G. Fuller stated he felt he could not accept the position because he missed several meetings last year.

M. DeCoff motioned to recommend Steve Miller for the position of Chair. There was no second.

There was discussion about the role and expectations of the Chair. K. Painter stated she would accept the nomination for Chair. G. Fuller stated he accepted the nomination for Chair, as well.

S. Miller called the vote for K. Painter for Chair and the motion passed by a vote of four with one "no" vote. (Yes – LC, MD, GF, SM / No – KP)

L. Carr motioned to nominate Greg Fuller as the Vice Chair and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (Yes – LC, MD, KP, SM / abstain – GF)

G. Fuller motioned to nominate M. DeCoff as a budget committee representative to the JMA and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by a favorable vote. (Yes – LC, GF, SM, KP / abstain – MD)

S. Miller motioned to nominate R. MacDonald as a budget committee representative to the JMA, after he has been sworn in, and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by a favorable vote. (Yes – LC, GF, SM, KP, MD)

M. DeCoff motioned to nominate S. Miller as a budget committee representative to the JMA and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by a favorable vote. (Yes – LC, GF, KP, MD / abstain – SM)

## VI. DEFAULT BUDGET DISCUSSION

G. Fuller spoke about the default budget and reported that the Town Administrator had always put raises (non-contractual) in the default budget. He spoke about a Warrant article that Milton, NH is putting before voters asking them to vote to approve to have the town's budget committee to do the default budget for the town and the school. There was discussion about the default budget. S. Miller asked the Chair to contact the Town Attorney to ask what the exact contractual items were (legal obligations) were in the budget. After discussion it was agreed that the committee would ask for the line item detail of the default budget before requesting additional information. K. Painter asked if the committee could have a copy of the Town Employees' manual so they could review the town's contractual obligations to its employees. L Carr will obtain copies for the committee. The committee discussed the possibility of putting together a petition warrant article to have the default budget drafted by the budget committee. K. Painter stated she would contact Russ Bailey to ask for the line item detail of the default budget.

The committee reviewed and discussed NH RSA 40-13: IX (a) and (b):

*IX. (a) "Operating budget" as used in this subdivision means "budget," as defined in RSA 32:3, III, exclusive of "special warrant articles," as defined in RSA 32:3, VI, and exclusive of other appropriations voted separately.*

*(b) "Default budget" as used in this subdivision means the amount of the same appropriations as contained in the operating budget authorized for the previous year, reduced and increased, as the case may be, by debt service, contracts, and other obligations previously incurred or mandated by law, and reduced by one-time expenditures contained in the operating budget. For the purposes of this paragraph, one-time expenditures shall be appropriations not likely to recur in the succeeding budget, as determined by the governing body, unless the provisions of RSA 40:14-b are adopted, of the local political subdivision.*

It was the consensus of the committee that this will be discussed more at the next meeting.

S. Miller spoke about some concerns that have been brought to his attention about legal fees that the town is paying. He discussed the difference of legal fees vs. a retainer. He reported that these citizen have submitted requests for information to Russ Bailey under the Right To Know Law. He felt that the committee should ask R. Bailey for a copy of the town attorney's contract and to ask how the billing was done, including the retainers, and any double-billing issues that were done, and for three months worth of bills to review. There was discussion about the terms of the contract.

#### VII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

#### VIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

The Committee scheduled meetings for the following dates: April 16, May 21, June 18, and September 17. There will be no meetings in July and August. All meetings will start at 6:30 PM and will be held at the Town Hall.

#### IX. ADJOURNMENT

K. Painter motioned to adjourn and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 7:33PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis  
Recorder