

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes

May 17, 2021

(Approved - June 7, 2021)

---

Chairman V. MacDonald convened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

V. MacDonald announced the following:

Until Further Notice: To attend the meeting remotely via telephone or computer, visit [www.alton.nh.gov](http://www.alton.nh.gov) for detailed instructions on the day of the meeting. The public is not allowed in the meeting room. Because a Public Hearing is a statutory requirement for such acceptance, we have an offsite venue available for audio and visual participation. This is available only if you cannot connect from home by telephone or computer and are willing to come out. The location for in person attendance is the Gilman Museum, 123 Main Street, Alton, NH. The capacity is no more than nine people. If it exceeds more than nine people, the meeting will immediately be adjourned. A mask is required. Social distancing is required. Your temperature will be taken at the door to determine if you may enter the Gilman Museum. If you have a question, call the Selectmen's Office at 603-875-2113 or 603-875-0229.

V. MacDonald led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

Virgil MacDonald, Chairman  
Paul LaRochelle, Vice Chairman  
Reuben Wentworth, Selectman  
Bob Holt, Selectman  
Brock Mitchell, Selectman  
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator  
Laura Parker, Finance Director

Agenda Approval

B. Holt stated that he would like to add under Old Business, Fire Well Bid for the Fire Department. R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

Announcements

- Town Offices will be closed on Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup> in observance of Memorial Day.

Submission of Public Comments - Questions - Concerns

- R. Loring Carr

*Alton Board of Selectmen: Public Input; May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

*Has the Town Administrator made the Board aware of my April 14<sup>th</sup>, Right to Know Request and its possible ramifications?*

*Did she also provide the Board with the irrelevant written response given to me (3 weeks+ later) on May 6<sup>th</sup> which did not answer my question?*

*Please note\* that in my request I never used the word "creation".*

*R. Loring Carr*

*Alton Resident  
5/10/21*

V. MacDonald asked if his questions were answered. L. Dionne stated that they were. We responded to his Right To Know Request as allowed under the law. There were packets given out at the last meeting which included this particular issue. It shows the chronology of the documents submitted. B. Holt stated that the concern he has is the last issue he feels wasn't addressed properly. R. Carr called B. Holt with his concerns. B. Holt thinks we should be able to see all of the information on a Capital Reserve including when it was created and for what purpose. R. Wentworth stated that he finds it quite strange that Mr. Carr would ask this question after he sat here for a good nine years and had the same Warrant Article at every Town Meeting. B.

Holt feels that it has been answered. He stated that the two big issues where the Town was wrong was Shibley's dock. The Town didn't know who owned it. Never did find out. Well we did after I investigated it. P. LaRochelle stated that it was actually the attorney. B. Holt stated that he did it with all the homework that he did. He went and got all the deeds. The other issue was the Deliberative Session. B. Holt feels he was 100% right in that. He got the information from the Municipal Association, it spelled it right out in black and white. But here we go again. Why couldn't it have been answered. L. Dionne stated that 91-A:4 does not require the municipalities to conduct the research. That is the way the law is read. It requires the requestor to do their own research but the Town directs them to the proper place where he or she may obtain that research. That is what we did here but took it a step further and provided him the original creation of the fund. It wasn't even called a Capital Reserve fund back in those days. B. Holt stated that he doesn't argue that. He as a Selectman shouldn't have to investigate it. Our management team should investigate it.

B. Holt made a motion to get an answer to this question on this Capital Reserve Fund Warrant Article, is it legal as it is written as a Fire piece of equipment versus a Fire Truck if that was the original and R. Wentworth seconded. Roll call vote:

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

V. MacDonald read if you want your comments or your submissions on the agenda, they need to be received Wednesday noon time before the Monday meeting.

**Public Hearing - 6:10 PM**

**6:12 pm - Old Wolfeboro Road from Main Street to Route 28**

V. MacDonald opened the public hearing on Old Wolfeboro Road. He

V. MacDonald stated that this is to post it as "No Thru Trucking". R. Wentworth stated that if there are deliveries on that road it would be one thing. V. MacDonald opened it up to Public Comment.

The Gilman Museum is opened to the Public.

D. Hussey approached the mic. He asked what the reasoning for doing this is. R. Wentworth stated that they shouldn't have tractor trailers coming down that hill just to take a shortcut so they don't have to go around the traffic circle. It is a very sharp corner. That road is very congested now. D. Hussey stated why don't you just say no to 18 wheelers. He feels that there is no sense in shutting it down. R. Wentworth stated that there is a lot of sense in shutting it down for safety. D. Hussey stated that it can be shut down for 18 wheelers but not for dump trucks. The ones that are going to lose are the end users.

T. MacDonald approached the mic. He asked if the Selectmen created this problem themselves by making that turn instead of keeping that road straight. The Town made that choice and they made it a dangerous corner. Now you expect the truckers to have a problem with it because of your stupidity. R. Wentworth stated that he did not create that problem. The Town of Alton did. Whether it was right or wrong they did it. They must have had good reasons. A half a mile is not going to hurt anyone. T. MacDonald asked if the Town loses federal funding when you change a road to the classes. R. Wentworth stated that as far as he has been told they do not. B. Mitchell stated that they do pay a fuel tax. A tax like when they get their Highway Block Grant. Some of that Highway Block Grant money comes from fuel tax that truck drivers pay. He has a hard time going along with shutting a road down. R. Wentworth stated that they are not shutting it down. Just shutting it down to thru traffic. T. MacDonald asked if that would be under the category of prejudice towards trucking. Basically you are doing a serial type of vehicles on the roads. This is totally wrong. R. Wentworth stated that it is more of a safety reason for him. P. LaRochelle stated that it is a difficult road for 18 wheelers to come down. T. MacDonald asked if they do this road what other road are they doing to do. It starts at one you give an inch you take a mile. How many more roads are you going to do next year. R. Wentworth stated that the three roads they are talking about tonight had the 6-ton road limit on them all along except up to five or eight years ago a group of Selectmen pushed it through that they took all the limits off. Which was unfortunate because once that happened we saw the deterioration of the roads. T. MacDonald stated that if they wanted to make the roads safe spend the money and do them right.

L. Carr approached the mic. He is objecting to the public in the museum instead up at the Town Hall. They are watching a little television and trying to hear what they are saying. L. Carr asked if they have talked to a Highway Safety Engineer before they made these decisions. V. MacDonald stated they have not. L. Carr stated that these are just seat of the pants arbitrary I think this is what we ought to do. V. MacDonald stated that they have received quite a bit of complaints on it and they are looking into it. That is why they are holding the public hearing to see how the public feels about it. L. Carr stated that a lot of people are concerned about arbitrary decision making. It hurts people's way of living. He is surprised at this. R. Wentworth stated that it was not by the seat of the pants. The three roads they are talking about tonight had a six-ton road limit on them for as long as he can remember until leg shakers in town decided they ought to change it. He thinks they changed it just for the good old boys. This is from observation over the years.

D. Hussey approached the mic again. He stated that any trucker in his right mind would agree that Bay Hill Road is too dangerous to go down. He stated that if you shut a road down to commercial vehicles you have to then declassify it down to a Class VI. That means no more maintenance can be done on that road. That came right from New Hampshire DOT. D. Hussey stated that they are being racist to the truck drivers. Town roads are not to be walked on.

B. Mitchell asked if there is any documentation saying that trucks are damaging the roads. R. Wentworth stated this was never about damaging the roads. He read a passage from "A Hard Road to Travel".

F. Carr joined the meeting on the phone. She had difficulty maintaining a proper connection. She stated that Alton has a lot of shortcuts. She asked if there is a procedure that people can go to the Town and address shortcut roads and have them restricted.

V. MacDonald opened up the Public Hearing for Bay Hill Road at 6:25 pm.

P. LaRochelle stated that he would like to address D. Hussey, T. MacDonald, and L. Carr. We are in no way talking about anything about racism or anything that is discriminating against truck drivers. We need our truck drivers; we need our deliveries. This is a compromise that they are looking for. This is something that we want to discuss with the general public. We have issues we have concerns as taxpayers on these roads that they had complaints from. This is why we are doing the public hearing to get input and come up with a decent reasonable compromise for everyone to get through this. We are here tonight to talk it through and talk it out.

T. MacDonald approached the mic again. He asked to see the dates that Stockbridge Corner was year round on six-tons. He also requests another meeting when the State has dropped all the bull about masks.

R. Wentworth stated that the Board needs to provide T. MacDonald that information not him. V. MacDonald stated that T. MacDonald needs to put in a Right to Know Request.

S. Williams approached the mic. He stated that truckers probably have a better safety record than any regular driver because their job is trucking. He agrees with an 18 wheeler but a straight truck can make the corner. He heard a Selectman say that all of the roads are done to Town Spec. and that is emphatically wrong. Be careful of what you are saying.

D. Hussey approached the mic again. Since 1990 we have been putting \$500,000.00 towards road reconstruction and maintenance. That puts us pretty close to ¾ of a million dollars a year in revenue for the roads.

V. MacDonald opened up the Stockbridge Corner Public Hearing at 6:54 pm.

L. Carr approached the mic again. He stated that he recalls two letters that were read aloud from individuals that lived on that road. That's what started this whole arbitrary shutting down roads issue. He asked what the Planning Board allows for the slope of a driveway. This is arbitrary. There is nothing worse than an arbitrary government. This is arbitrary.

B. Holt asked if anybody out there for this Public Hearing that is in favor of this road closures.

R. Wentworth stated that this is not a road closure. It is weight limits.

B. Holt stated that we are shutting down the roads to thru traffic over 6 tons.

T. MacDonald approached the mic again. He stated that there are 7 people here against it. The people have shown up here with their opinion.

D. Hussey approached the mic again. He wants to clarify when we do pay a tax to Alton. There is money that goes to the State and money that goes to the Town.

F. Carr rejoined the meeting by phone. She wanted to voice her concern about that last road. She is very concerned about Stockbridge Corner Road being restricted to any kind of vehicle. She hopes the Selectmen think about this a little more and have more data as far as restricting any kind of vehicle going down those longer shortcut roads.

V. MacDonald closes the all three Public Hearings at 7:03 pm.

B. Holt made a motion that this is tabled until our next meeting. P. LaRochelle stated that he likes the input. That is why he asked for it publicly to make a compromise. Some of these roads are obviously worse than others. He has a very big concern with Bay Hill. It is a 20% slope. The signs were taken down so now all there is is a 6 ton limit. B. Holt doesn't believe Bay Hill Road was an issue here tonight. The issue is the other two roads. The public is not interested in doing this. P. LaRochelle stated that we did not get input as to what they would like to do. They are against shutting down the road. We are not shutting down the road we are putting a weight limit on it. B. Mitchell stated that he would like to table this until this meeting can be held in this room and we can have both sides in here.

B. Mitchell made a motion to move the meeting until there is in-person attendance during a Public Hearing and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

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

**Emergency Management Update**

R. Heath approached the table. He stated that we had survived this pandemic pretty much unscathed for a little while when it came to employees. Later in March, we had an outbreak within Town Hall that forced us to close down. We had several people that had to quarantine but also people that were sick and tested positive. Shortly after that outbreak, there was an outbreak within the Police Department. We had to quarantine some individuals, some individuals were positive and we had to assess that. Things are going in a positive direction again. Since then we have been having our weekly meetings. Our plan moving forward is a couple of things. One is to re-open Town Hall or the Town buildings, meetings, things like that. Our plan is having everything opening back up on June 1. The other concern about the re-opening is with a hard fast re-opening is that we would lose the Greeter position. We are going to lift the mask mandate. Make them recommended but not mandatory. Keep the Greeter there to basically organize traffic in and out of the building to the right department. To prevent any unnecessary lingering and going between the offices and keep people from the second floor during the day. Our plan is to do that until July 1. EMT recommendation for the fireworks on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July is we cancel. With the intent to do the Old Home Week fireworks. The reasoning for that is mainly the fact that a lot of the surrounding communities have cancelled theirs. That would make us the one community in the area that is going to have anything. We do not have the resources to control that big of a crowd. On a normal year it takes the entire Police Department staff and the Fire Department staff to be able to man that crowd. B. Holt asked what the percentage of people in New Hampshire that have been vaccinated. R. Heath stated he did not know. B. Holt stated that his issue is the cleaning procedure. We never had a high end cleaning procedure before. He doesn't understand why a massive cleaning needs to be done if people come in that have been vaccinated. R. Heath stated that it would not be a massive cleaning. It would be flat surfaces, door knobs, things like that. It just being more diligent. He gave a run-down of the procedures for the June 1 opening. They are going to continue to offer Zoom on meetings. That is to cater to the entire community. There are still a large number of people who do not want to enter public buildings.

B. Mitchell made a motion to go with the Police Chief's recommendations for opening. P. LaRochelle asked if he feels comfortable with Old Home Week being much more manageable. P. LaRochelle seconded. B. Holt asked if there needs to be a motion.

R. Wentworth made a motion to suspend the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks display for 2021 per EMT recommendations and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

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

**Appointments**

**Old Business**

1. EMT - Jesus Valley Road Hiking/Parking Issues

R. Heath remained at the table. One of the biggest concerns for EMT was dealing with the parking and congestion issues surrounding outdoor hiking. It has always been a huge pastime but even more so during the pandemic. One of the issues was Jesus Valley Road. We had asked the Board for No Parking signs by the trail head. That was somewhat successful. Since then what has happened the private landowner at the end of the road has closed down their property completely. They have had a lot of issues, called the Police Department. In order to get to Mount Major they need to access that landowner's property. The only way that the EMT can think of to address this and prevent it from being an every weekend occasion during the warm weather is to put a Mount Major Trail Access Closed sign at the end of the road. In the interim to see how it would work is we put the message board at the end of the road and they didn't have any calls. The landowner has no intent to open their property back up. The recommendation is to permanently put a sign up.

V. MacDonald made a motion to allow the Chief to put a sign at the end of Jesus Valley Road stating that the trail head is closed and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes                      P. LaRochelle, yes                      B. Mitchell, yes  
V. MacDonald, yes              R. Wentworth, abstain

2. Police Department - Proposal for Portable and Mobile Radios

R. Heath remained at the table. He stated that some of their radios are unsupported now with Motorola. They do not make parts or support the software anymore. The Warrant Article was approved at Town Meeting and he is asking to make the purchase. He provided a quote from Motorola. Motorola is part of the State bid process. This is State bid pricing. R. Wentworth asked if the installation was free. R. Heath stated that it is included. B. Holt asked who the vendor was.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the Chief to purchase the portable and mobile radios for the sum of \$74,977.50 and B. Mitchell seconded. Roll call vote:

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

3. Police Department - Purchase of Traffic Safety Devices

R. Heath remained at the table. This was a Warrant Article that was approved. He explained what these devices do. The location that has been chosen is the Back Bay bridge. P. LaRochelle asked how we got from a couple to eleven or twelve different devices. He doesn't recall going through every specific place where they were going to be. R. Heath stated that the warrant article listed twelve. This is for discussion. The locations will be crosswalk at Pop's Clam Shell, the crosswalk at Alton Bay Conference Center, the crosswalk at the bath houses. They all have crosswalk signs but not the push button ones. We are replacing signs that are there with the new signs. Buzzy Corner has the crosswalk that goes diagonally. DOT will have the final say. The crosswalk in front of Irwin Marine is too close to the corner. Parker Marine crosswalk was too close to the business. R. Heath suggested tabling this issue.

B. Mitchell motions to approve the purchase for \$95,765.00 and V. MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote:

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

4. Suncook Valley Solar, 356 Suncook Valley Road (Rt. 28), appointment request

L. Dionne stated that this company came before the Board previously. It is for a PILOT agreement on Mr. Hussey's property. The PILOT has been reviewed by legal counsel. It is okay to sign. P. LaRochelle asked if anything has changed. L. Dionne stated that it hasn't. A. Funk remotely joined the meeting.

V. MacDonald made a motion to approve the Blue Planet Funding, LLC PILOT contract and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

R. Wentworth stated that he doesn't like these companies coming into towns and getting with some of these big landowners and they are getting special taxing. He doesn't agree with it. They are making revenue off of it. L. Dionne stated that the PILOT agreement is for taxation of the equipment only. The property owner still has to pay taxes on the land. Once that solar array is put in that land comes out of current use. The property owner will be taxed at regular taxation. R. Wentworth voiced his concerns. A. Funk stated that the purpose of the PILOT is make it the same over a period of time. He explained the process of the agreement.

**New Business**

1. Fire Well Bid

B. Holt stated that he was wondering if there were any received bids. L. Dionne stated that she did not know. B. Holt stated that he is concerned with the bid specs. He is not sure how anyone can bid on this with these specs. He called someone from Capital Well and was informed how it should have been done.

2. Highway Department - Proclamation - National Public Works Week

R. Wentworth made a motion to sign the proclamation for National Public Works Week and B. Mitchell seconded. Roll call vote:

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

3. Highway Department - Recommendation - Congressional Directed Grants

S. Kinmond joined the meeting through Zoom. L. Dionne explained how she brought to the Board previously about possible Federal Funding to be voted on. There is a proposal in the binders from the Public Works Director. She asked if the board was in agreement for the Department Heads to apply for the grants. It is the consensus of the Board to move forward with the grants.

4. Water Department - Recommendation - Congressional Directed Grants

Discussed under #3 above.

**Selectmen Reports**

- B. Holt had nothing to report.
- R. Wentworth had nothing to report.
- B. Mitchell had nothing to report.
- P. LaRochelle had nothing to report.

V. MacDonald had nothing to report.

**Town Administrator Report**

L. Dionne asked the Board's permission is the Chairman of the Conservation Commission could come to the table to discuss the two properties on Route 11 that were discussed at the previous meeting. D. Rhodes approached the table. He stated that the purchase of the two properties would be to conserve the property and build kayak and canoe access for the public. At this point the seller denied the offer and it's off the table at this point.

L. Dionne asked the Board for approval to allow our Public Works Director to be in attendance to speak as well as B. Jones in reference to High Point Drive. S. Kinmond rejoined the meeting through Zoom. He stated that he went and looked at High Point Drive last week. He has been in contact with B. Jones prior to and also K. Roberts had taken him up there. The crack sealing crew were there and following all of the best management practices relative to the crack sealing. The mailboxes have been put in and installed for each residential driveway. The Board feels all of the conditions have been met.

L. Dionne asked to allow the Public Works Director and the Parks & Rec Director to speak in regards to a vehicle purchase for the Grounds & Maintenance Department. There is a document at their seats. There was some urgency to this. R. Wentworth asked if the recommendation is to go with McFarland Ford. S. Kinmond explained why he is going with this model of truck. R. Wentworth stated that this is an awful lot of truck for the staff that we have down there. B. Holt asked about the money end of it. S. Kinmond stated that this is a truck that is under the specifications that were set forth in the bid proposal that was put together. We are receiving all of the discounts. Discussion ensued about what type of truck that would be needed. K. Troendle stated that this truck was sent out to bid and it was sent to five vendors. Only one bid came in. P. LaRochelle doesn't feel that a dump body is needed. B. Holt feels if you go out and order the truck you will get a better deal than that. B. Mitchell doesn't agree with buying a gas truck.

B. Mitchell made a motion to allow the Public Works Director and the Parks & Rec Director to negotiate a lower price and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes                      P. LaRochelle, yes                      B. Mitchell, yes  
V. MacDonald, no              R. Wentworth, no

L. Dionne stated that the next item has to do with the Franchise Agreement representative. It is the consensus of the Board to have the Town Administrator be the representative.

L. Dionne stated that there is a Special Counsel Conflict of Interest waiver and Representation Agreement that will be put into the Reading File which has been reviewed by our legal counsel.

L. Dionne stated the last item has to do with annual training for Selectmen. She has checked with Attorney Sessler to see if he would be available before a regular meeting maybe at 4:30 or 4:45. He needs about an hour. She asked the Board if they would be okay with that possibly in the next few weeks. R. Wentworth stated that Tuesday through Friday would be good for him.

**Approval of Minutes**

May 3, 2021 - Regular

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting, May 3, 2021 as presented and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

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

May 3, 2021 - Non Public

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the minutes of the Non-Public Meeting, May 3, 2021 as presented releasing all and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

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

**Consent Agenda Approval**

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted on May 17, 2021 and B. Mitchell seconded. Roll call vote:

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

1. Water Department

Pay Increase - New License Obtained - Thomas Decowski - T1 Certification - \$20.66 to \$21.16 per hour  
Pay Increase - New License Obtained - Dominic Viscariello - T1 Certification - \$18.71 to \$19.21 per hour

2. Old Home Week Committee

Appointment Request - Phil Wittmann - 1 Year Term expires 3/31/2022

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

None

Non-Public Session

R. Wentworth moved at 8:47pm to enter into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3,II,b (hiring). V. MacDonald seconded. Roll call vote:

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

V. MacDonald moved at 9:05pm to exit nonpublic session. P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

V. MacDonald 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 or render the proposed action of the board ineffective. R. Wentworth seconded. Roll call vote:

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

Adjournment

R. Wentworth moved at 9:07pm to adjourn. P. LaRochelle seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy L. Bailey  
Recording Secretary