

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
July 19, 2021
(Approved - August 2, 2021)

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

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, Excused
Brock Mitchell, Selectman
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator
Laura Parker, Finance Manager

Agenda Approval

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the agenda and P. LaRochelle seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Announcements

- The Public Participation Policy applies to all Selectmen meetings. A copy of it is on the back of each agenda, posted in this meeting room, and on our website.

Public Input I (limited to 3 minutes per person on agenda items only)

K. Roberts approached the table. He sees that the Town Policy is on the agenda. As stated in several Town Meetings the Town Policy is a contract with the employees of the Town of Alton. If all the employees have not reviewed this new policy prior to approval do you think that is fair. Is there any monetary changes within the contract that you don't know about that haven't been discussed with the employees. Are you costing the employees any type of compensation. This has not been out far enough to be reviewed by all the employees. He has talked to a few and they have never seen it. Department Heads need to take it down to their employees and discuss it and come back with suggestions to the Board. If there are any compensation changes then it should be grandfathered. It is a contract and the employees that have been here for a long time have certain rights or obligations. It should be looked at and be discussed by the Board. There are changes to the policy that didn't go to the employees. Is it legal. Is it a legal binding contract with the employees that sign for it. Is it being completely reviewed by all the employees.

Appointments

None

New Business

None

Old Business

1. Personnel Policy Review

R. Wentworth stated that he believes that this is just a review of the Policy and the recommendations. His understanding is that this is not a binding contract with employees because it is not a union ratified contract it is a Personnel Policy. R. Wentworth went over his thoughts on the health insurance. B. Mitchell stated that the more we start taking away from our employees the more we are going to start losing the employees. V. MacDonald stated that insurances are a different meeting. R. Wentworth asked that a new line item be put in the benefits budget that is the employee's deductibles so that we know what the true cost is. L. Parker highlighted some of the changes suggested in the Personnel Policy. It is the consensus of the Board to send it to employees. L. Parker stated that she can send it to Legal as well.

2. Discipline and Complaint Policy

L. Parker stated that this is the policy originally adopted on March 8th. Page 4 in red was just an addition. It includes procedure for complaints against the Town Administrator. It is based on Legal Counsel recommendation.

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the amended section of the Complaint Procedure regarding the Town Administrator as presented and P. LaRochelle seconded with all in favor of the motion.

3. Min Max Chart - Increase Discussion

L. Dionne stated that she would like this brought up again for the Board to reconsider adding a percentage to the Minimum/ Maximum Chart. This is to keep up with inflation. This is for 2022.

V. MacDonald made a motion to add 1.5% maximum and B. Mitchell seconded. B. Mitchell stated that it is getting harder and harder to hire people. The vote was called with all in favor of the motion.

4. Church and School Street Road Reconstruction - Status Update

S. Kinmond and C. Mitchell approached the table. C. Mitchell went over the progress of the project. She covered some of the issues that have arose. V. MacDonald feels that if our own Water Department is doing as much as they are we should be back charging the company. There is no reason that we should be babysitting them. P. LaRochelle asked C. Mitchell if she feels like she can't leave them to do the job on their own. C. Mitchell stated absolutely. There have been several leaks. S. Kinmond stated that on Wednesday afternoon at 4:00 pm they will be meeting with the contractor and the engineers in order to discuss the schedule and what was just gone over with the Board. S. Kinmond extends an invitation to the Board and Town Administrator if they would like to attend. C. Mitchell did want to remind the Board that the Water side is getting the heavier burden on this project by going with this company. P. LaRochelle asked how they are responding to their mistakes. C. Mitchell stated that every situation is different at first they called every day. Moving forward to today a phone call was received they ripped a corp out and walked away and went to lunch. The intersection of Pine Street was left open. There are a list of issues to discuss with them. There was a drainage situation that occurred that was not on the plan. It added several hundreds if not thousands of gallons of water included with the downpours that happened and flooded a residential basement and caused damage. V. MacDonald asked if it was drainage or sloping. S. Kinmond stated that it is because of drainage. The Town should work with the property owner and make it right. R. Wentworth stated that a running tally should be done for all of the costs incurred by Town staff and submit it to Legal and the insurance company to see if you can recoup some of the money back. He was disappointed when he went down on Sunday as to the state of how the roads were left. I would never recommend them again. B. Mitchell feels the Town needs to do something for the residents with the flooded basement. P. LaRochelle asked if it was evaluated to see if something like ServPro should be called in to do immediate clean up. S. Kinmond and L. Dionne are going to look at the situation and see what needs to be done. S. Kinmond stated that it needs to be done professionally and it needs to be done under the insurance side of things. L. Dionne stated that there are three insurances involved; the Town, the Homeowner, and the Contractor. V. MacDonald wanted to know if we are sending someone in before it starts molding. Discussion ensued as to how to handle this situation. B. Mitchell stated that we should talk to the homeowner before we start inviting people into his house. Arthur and Tammy Cornelissen approached the table. A. Cornelissen stated that he notified his insurance company today and they say they are not getting involved with it. It is not the homeowner's issue. It's the Town's or the Contractor's issue. The issue going on right now is the basement is still flooded with water. It is full of silt and dirt. He just found out that they did a new engineering between the time of the site walk and being put out to bid. He was never notified of that and had no idea. When he arrived home from work on Friday night all the rock that was put in and all the plants that were there are gone. T. Cornelissen stated that she is very upset. A very sentimental rose bush and flagstone was dug up and thrown away. Several remedies were discussed to fix the destroyed embankment. B. Mitchell asked if there was anything that could be done to rectify the situation. T. Cornelissen stated that she would like her rose bush back. B. Mitchell asked if it was okay if they call someone to go in and take care of the flooded basement. A. Cornelissen stated that it would be okay.

V. MacDonald made a motion to send ServPro in to get it cleaned up before mold starts and stabilize the bank and P. LaRochelle seconded with all in favor of the motion.

5. Water Works - Truck Leasing

S. Kinmond presented a memo for the financing of the Water Works Truck Leasing. He has spoken to Grappone Ford. His recommendation is for the Board to utilize the Municipal Capital Finance out of Allentown, PA. The first payment would not have to come up until next year.

V. MacDonald made a motion to allow S. Kinmond to set up with Municipal Capital Finance from Allentown, PA for the \$40,000.00 for the four-year financing of the Water truck and R. Wentworth seconded with all in favor of the motion.

R. Wentworth made a motion to rescind our majority vote last week of the \$8,061.50 from the Capital Reserve Fund for the Water Department and B. Mitchell seconded with all in favor of the motion.

R. Wentworth rescinds his previous motion and B. Mitchell rescinds his second.

R. Wentworth made a motion to withdraw last week's motion to take \$8,061.50 from the Water CRF and authorize the same amount to be taken from the Water Works Operating Budget 9-4331902 and P. LaRochelle seconded. V. MacDonald feels that it should come from the Parks & Rec Department. The vote was called with 4 affirmative and 1 opposed (VM).

Public Input II (limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)

R. Heath approached the table. There was a Department Head meeting where the Personnel Manual was talked about. The Health Insurance is going to come up at a later meeting but the one thing that the Board needs to understand and look back on is the progression of events leading up to here. You need to go back at least 10 years. He understands that the employees are not being asked to pay a high contribution on insurance but they already lost a 2% Merit check that they got every year. Then the method of pay from the step and wage increase to the high max/min. The Board also opted to not pay COLA this year. If they get hit on the other side with a Health Insurance increase it is going to wash that right out. This is one of the highest CPI indexes in the last 20 years and that is what we base our COLA off of. He just wanted to give the Board some things to consider. There was also talk about the paragraph with the 40 hour pay for 20 year veterans. There are only three of us now. It was originally established because Department Heads couldn't take much time off so in lieu of that is where the 40-hour check came in for hourly employees and salaried employees. It was in substitution for that weeks' vacation.

K. Roberts approached the table. He asked what the change order is that was approved by the Board. He said it was not in the discussion. There was not supposed to be any digging of the embankment. He was part of the negotiation team that sat down with the Town Administrator at that time and discussed this weeks' vacation that was paid after January 1st. It should be grandfathered for the people who are still existing. What is the actual cost of the deductible to the Town. How many people actually max out the deductible.

Candy DeRoche approached the table. She is very thankful that the Board is taking this very seriously and having a meeting with this company. As homeowner's on that street, we have seen some pretty horrific things. The road is being left wide open. We constantly have people come down the street that don't live on the street. The dust that is being created is unbelievable.

Brenda Piscatello stated that this company has done a poor job so far. It is very concerning what they are going to do when they have to widen and put the sidewalks in. Everyone is very concerned with how far over because what took place over at the Cornelissen house that wasn't on the original plans that we saw. Now the concern is how far over are you really going to be going into everyone's yard to put the sidewalks in. How many parking spots are going up in front of the vet's office. Why are they getting four parking spots that the tax payers have to pay for. Why is that a thing. Where are the rest of the parking spots going in front of the school and why is the crosswalk being moved. Those are all things that have come to our attention that have changed that weren't on the original plan when we saw it in the walk through. She would like to see what the plan is right now. None of us are aware of these changes that have taken place.

R. Wentworth stated that the plans are available at the Town office's. The plans were available at the last hearing that we had. Nothing from that point has changed. He was not aware of that change order at the intersection of Pine Street and School Street.

Bob Varney approached the table. If you have to work that close to something and put a coffer dam panel you can dig all you want. They still have a lot more work to do. These guys don't seem to know how to fix their problems when they run into them.

L. Carr approached the table. He would suggest instead of meeting with this contractor down at the Town Shed it should be held in the Meeting Room at Town Hall. More of a formal meeting. You could have a secretary take minutes at this meeting. You could have a deficit list.

Kathleen Nyegard approached the table. She is here to support the whole neighborhood. Safety all around that area is a big concern. The Road Closure signs are confusing.

Selectmen Reports

R. Wentworth has nothing to report.

B. Mitchell has nothing to report.

P. LaRochelle has nothing to report.

V. MacDonald has nothing to report.

Town Administrator Report

None

Approval of Minutes

None

Consent Agenda Approval

None

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

None

Non-Public Session

None

Adjournment

R. Wentworth moved at 8:20pm to adjourn. B. Mitchell seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy L. Bailey
Recording Secretary