

**TOWN OF ALTON
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE
MEETING MINUTES
October 20, 2009
(approved 10/27/09)**

Members Present: Karen Painter, Chair
Greg Fuller, Vice Chair
Steve Miller
Marc DeCoff
Richard MacDonald

Others Present: Russ Bailey, Town Administrator
Members of the Public

Members Absent: Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative
School Board Representative

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Painter called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative, and a representative from the School Board were absent. It was noted that there was a meeting going on at the school at the same time.

II. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

III. AGENDA

S. Miller requested to speak about the default budget, to report his conversation with the Board of Selectmen, and budget responsibility. He requested to have R. Bailey speak about the expenditure of funds to social services groups. G. Fuller requested to speak about the taping of the Committee's meetings. K. Painter requested to table items to be discussed with the School Board Representative and with the Selectmen Representative for a future meeting.

S. Miller motioned to approve the amended agenda and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

IV. MEETING MINUTES

The Committee reviewed and discussed meeting minutes of October 15, 2009. G. Fuller stated that on page three, first paragraph, he noted that he had asked several times, if what the Selectmen had done was legal and S. Miller had confirmed that it was legal. K. Painter requested that the following clarification be

added to the meeting minutes: *It is legal for the Board of Selectmen to transfer money between line items. Therefore, they have the ability to vote themselves a raise. However, there is a question from the Local Government Center if this is a violation of the conflict of interest ordinance and this pending an attorney's opinion.* She asked if there were any more changes to the minutes and there were no comments. M. DeCoff motioned to approve the minutes of October 15, 2009 as amended and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motioned passed by a vote of four to one. (Yes – KP, SM, MD, RM / No – GF)

V. NEW BUSINESS

JMA BUDGET

S. Miller reported on a conversation he had with Paul Landry, Barnstead Budget Committee Chair, and reported that Mr. Landry agreed that the JMA Budget Committee should be an RSA 34 committee. He reported that they are working on a joint petition warrant article that will be brought before the budget committees for review and approval. This will be a future agenda item for November 3, 2009.

EXPENDITURES TO SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

R. Bailey reported on the expenditures to the various social service organizations and noted there were three that they would be following up with about their billing. S. Miller spoke about the request process of the organizations.

DEFAULT BUDGET

S. Miller stated that there was no question that the default budget belonged to the Budget Committee but whereas Alton was an SB-2 town, that it belonged to the Board of Selectmen. He asked the Committee if they wished to have a petition warrant article to make the default budget the Budget Committee's. This will be a future agenda item.

VI. BUDGET REVIEW

WATER DEPARTMENT

There will be a new full-time person. The budget is three-percent less than the previous year's budget. There is a lease for an excavator. The committee reviewed the budget line-by-line. There are only step increases factored into the budget and no COLAs. There was discussion about telephone, new equipment, and vehicle expenses.

SOLID WASTE

The Committee reviewed and discussed the Solid Waste budget. There was discussion about the trash compactors, retirement funds, recycling costs, energy and fuel costs. Scott Simonds presented the proposed budget for Solid Waste (4324). There was a line-by-line review of the proposed budget for 2010. The proposed budget from the Department Head was \$473,555.00 and the Selectmen's budget was \$472,556.00. The budget for 2009 was \$473,157.00. There was discussion about the cost of Transportation and it was felt that the cost would go up.

WELFARE

Russ Bailey presented the proposed budget for Welfare (4442). He reported on the decrease in interest rates and some of the areas of the budget that have seen decreases. The proposed budget from the Department Head and the Selectmen was \$81,316.00. The budget for 2009 was \$106,316.00. There was brief discussion about the salaries for the Welfare Officer and the Senior Center Coordinator.

PATRIOTIC

Russ Bailey presented the proposed budget for Patriotic (4583). The proposed budget is \$24,500.00 for the Selectmen's recommendation and the Department Head's recommendation. This is level funded from 2009.

STREET LIGHTS

Russ Bailey presented the proposed budget for Street Lights (4316). The proposed budget is \$29,516.00 and this is also the Selectmen's recommendation. This is level funded from 2009. There was discussion about the cost of the lights, as they cost approximately \$20.00/light/month.

K. Painter asked if the Committee wanted to make their recommendations at the end of the meeting or at another time. It was the consensus of the Committee that they would make their recommendations at the end of the meeting.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

Solid Waste (4324):

G. Fuller asked if there should be step increases this year and noted that there was a COLA but not a step increase. There was discussion about the merits of step increases and COLAs. R. Bailey stated that the Committee should consider the situation at the school and felt there would be a union with the town employees, just like there is in a school. K. Painter spoke about her experience working in a system with a step/track system and noted that things were thrown out of sync when there were changes. S. Miller stated that his problem with the COLAs was only with the Selectmen but not with all of the increases that the employees received. There was discussion about the different views of the Committee members.

S. Miller spoke about budget line items Demo Transportation and Waste Transportation. He felt that there should be increases to these budget line items. R. Bailey noted that there would be a three percent increase.

S. Miller motioned to change Chipping 4324-411 from \$8,000.00 to \$2,500.00 and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one no vote. (No – GF)

G. Fuller motioned to change Chipping 4324-411 from \$2,500.00 to \$2,300.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (Abstain – SM)

WATER DEPARTMENT (4331)

There was discussion about the NexTel phones.

R. Bailey reminded the Committee that Health Insurance and Dental had not been added yet.

S. Miller asked for the projected expense for 2009 for Office Supplies (4331-131).

The Committee recommends the Selectmen's budget at \$292,243.00.

PATRIOTIC PURPOSES (4583)

S. Miller motioned to accept the Selectmen's budget for \$24,500.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. G. Fuller stated he would like to see the fireworks cuts. G. Fuller motioned to cut the budget line for Fireworks by \$5,000.00 and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of two to three. (Yes – GF, MD / No – SM, KP, RM) The vote was called on the original motion and passed by three to two. (No – GF, MD / Yes – SM, KP, RM)

STREETLIGHTS

This item was tabled pending more information.

VII. BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY

S. Miller read a part of RSA 32:5 VII and noted that it is the Budget Committee's budget that should be posted with the Warrant prior to the deliberative session. He stated the first session was run by the Board of Selectmen as if it was there budget. He spoke about the standards of the first session, such as the presentation of warrant articles. He asked the Committee if this RSA stated the meeting was the Budget Committee's. R. Bailey stated he had the wrong statute, as there is an RSA stating that the Selectmen were the ones who scheduled the town meeting and ran it. He stated that the budget statute was being applied to the town meeting, but that was not correct according to the statute for town meetings. He spoke about the setting up of the town meetings, elections, and schedule by the selectmen. The selectmen also post the warrant and budget when the meeting was posted.

VIII. TAPING OF MEETINGS

G. Fuller asked if all the meetings were going to be videotaped. There was discussion of the videotaping of meetings. It was noted that there was no taping tonight because the meeting was held in the Heidke Room.

IX. PUBLIC INPUT

S. Miller asked if the Budget Committee could ask for information from something that was discussed in a non-public session of the Selectmen if it was financial-related. R. Bailey stated that if there was a decision made that the minutes would be documented in the financials, so they would know it.

X. ADJOURN

G. Fuller motioned to adjourn and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (KP, SM, GF, MC, RM) The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder