

**TOWN OF ALTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING
October 22, 2025 at 6:00 PM
Alton Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Elizabeth Varney, Committee Chair
Greg Fuller, Committee Vice-Chair
Priscilla Terry, Committee Member
Hal Shurtleff, Committee Member
Jill Houser, Committee Member
Drew Carter, Selectmen's Representative
Christi Wood, School Board Representative

OTHERS PRESENT

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator
Laura Parker, Finance Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Varney called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

MOTION: To approve the agenda as presented. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Fuller followed up on his inquiry regarding whether there were any encumbrances from last year. Mr. Heath answered there were none.

NEW BUSINESS

Review of 2026 Budgets

Account - Assessing

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget and explained the cost of the 2026 revaluation will be in a separate warrant article.

Mr. Shurtleff asked how often the tax maps need to be updated. Mr. Heath responded they are continuously updated, however due to the recent increase in subdivisions requires a more detailed update. Mr. Carter questioned whether the Planning Department could recoup some of the map update fees. Mr. Heath replied there are no impact fees at this time. Planning may look at the impact in the future.

Mr. Fuller questioned whether there is enough money in the postage line since it is already

overspent this year and there will be increased mailings due to the revaluation. Mr. Heath answered the cost of mailings associated with the revaluation will be included in the special warrant article. The department head is not anticipating as many routine mailings next year due to it being a revaluation year with less pickups.

**MOTION: To approve the Assessing budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$176,386.
Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

Account – Audio/Visual

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded. He explained this line is for maintenance of the current equipment and there are not any major purchases or upgrades planned for 2026.

Ms. Terry stated the year to date amount spent is \$469.90 and questioned whether \$2,000 was necessary. Mr. Heath responded that the whole amount may not be needed, however it is a good idea to plan for repairs and maintenance of the equipment.

There was discussion regarding bottom line budgeting and the fund balance. Mr. Heath stated the current fund balance is around \$5.1 million.

**MOTION: To approve the Audio/Visual budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$2,000.
Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed unanimously.**

Account – Budget Committee

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded.

**MOTION: To approve the Budget Committee budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$3,201.
Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Houser. Motion passed unanimously.**

Account – Conservation

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. He explained there was a slight increase in wages and decrease in overtime.

Mr. Fuller asked what the proposed wage increase was going to be and questioned if the Town had considered giving the same COLA increase as social security.

Ms. Varney explained that this year the Town has opted to go with a 4% merit increase and no COLA increase in this proposed budget.

Mr. Heath spoke to the current staffing shortage and difficulty filling positions.

Ms. Varney questioned lake monitoring amount of \$3,500 since the amount spent year to date is \$250. Mr. Heath answered there are anticipated costs not yet paid out this year. Ms. Wood asked the same question regarding contracted services. Mr. Carter responded that there was an invasive species mitigation done recently that has not been paid yet.

Ms. Wood requested an updated budget report once these costs have been paid to get a clearer understanding of their need. She suggested if there was extra money in a couple lines it may be enough to cover the increase in wages and result in a level funded budget for this department. She proposed to approve the budget for now and if new information arises to revisit, if needed.

MOTION: To approve the Conservation budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$24,060. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Emergency Management

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded.

MOTION: To approve the Emergency Management budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$11,003. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Mr. Carter. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Gilman Museum

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget.

MOTION: To approve the Gilman Museum budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$8,444. Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Household Hazardous Waste (HHW)

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded. He explained that prior program which was a joint effort with Wolfeboro has dissolved. The Town has transitioned to the Lakes Region Program offered by the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

MOTION: To approve the Household Hazardous Waste budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$27,568.. Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Interest Short Term

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded.

MOTION: To approve the Interest Short Term budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$1. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Patriotic Purposes

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget noting the Old Home Week fireworks have been eliminated due to cost.

There was discussion regarding the options available to offset costs such as private donors or volunteers.

MOTION: To approve the Patriotic Purposes budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$23,690. Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed 6-0 (Ms. Houser abstained).

Account – Street Lights

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget which is level funded.

MOTION: To approve the Street Lights budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$33,500.

Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.

Account – Welfare

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. He explained the need for general assistance has increased.

MOTION: To approve the Welfare budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$35,158. Motion

by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Houser. Motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes needing approval:

October 30, 2024

November 20, 2024

December 4, 2024

September 10, 2025

Ms. Wood stated one correction needed is that she was the School Board Representative for all of 2024, not Carol Locke.

MOTION: To approve the 2024 minutes as corrected to the best of his recollection. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Varney. Motion passed 5-0 (Ms. Houser and Mr. Shurtleff abstained).

Ms. Varney shared there was an issue with the recording of the September 10, 2025 meeting. The video was frozen and the secretary only had audio to use, which made deciphering who was speaking difficult.

MOTION: To approve the September 10, 2025 meeting minutes as presented. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Fuller asked if the Town received the \$750,000 from FEMA and what was done with it. Mr. Heath responded we have received it and it is currently in the fund balance. The intent is to use it to offset taxes if the budget passes.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carol Long

Carol Long, Budget Committee Secretary