

**Budget Committee  
Town of Alton  
Tuesday, October 25, 2011  
Minutes Approved November 1, 2011**

**1. Call to order 6:15 pm**

**2: Roll Call:**

Marc DeCoff – Chair  
Steve Miller - Vice Chair  
Virgil MacDonald - Member  
Barbara Howard - Member  
Loring Carr – Selectmen’s Representative

Other attendees  
Russ Bailey, Town Administrator  
Bill Curtin, Water Department  
John Conboy, Water Department  
Robert Tilton, Water Department  
Ruth Arsenault, Library Trustee  
Holly Brown, Librarian  
Linda Hess, Library  
Kenneth Roberts, Highway Agent

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

**4. Approval of Agenda**

Add school item to New Business from S. Miller

**Motion to approve S. Miller, Second Marc DeCoff**

**5. Approval of Agenda**

S. Miller would like to see statement by T. Noyes, that S. Miller made contrary statement challenging her discussion

Minutes tabled at this time

**6. Old Business**

None

**7. New Business**

All meetings will begin at 6:00pm, with department reviews beginning at 6:20 pm

S. Miller – School issue. Statement/request. S. Miller attended school board meeting yesterday and reviewed the previous minutes and watched them on tape. The school board approved approximately \$8,000 expenditure on security system. One of the charges of the Budget Committee is to make sure that money is expended properly, in accordance with RSA and any policies that are out there, in this case for second most recent time, the school board took an \$8,000 item and did not put it out to bid, their policy states that any item \$5,000 or more must go out to bid. This is far and above the bar they set themselves. They violated their own policy, 4 people were present. Krista Agiropolis, Jeff St. Cyr, Terry Noyes and Lynda Goossens. The vote was 2 to 2 to not even vote whether or not to even appropriate the amount but to just go ahead and do it. That was one issue, the other issue is that it is a capital item, paying for a capital item out of operating budget, using it out of end of the year funds. They are in a default budget. So instead of using funds for what has already been approved by Budget Committee, whether microscopes, text books or supplies, they took end of years funds to buy a security system, The type of security system is a passive security system which means that it is just cameras, TV screen in assistant principals office, when and if he is there. There is no one monitoring it 24/7, or 100% during school hours. It does tape, effectively tells you evidence of what happens in the past and it is not a preventative measure. The issue is not with the security system. If it was in the operating budget S. Miller stated he would have voted for it, and if it is in the operating budget next year he again would probably vote for it. but S. Miller takes significant issue with the school board ignoring their own policy regularly, so now it is the rule and not the exception the school board decides when an item should in fact go out to bid. S. Miller believes they were wrong and because it is a capital item and, not an operating expense. There should be a remedy.

V. MacDonald. surplus should go back to the people anyway not their little slush fund to spend how they see.

S. Miller Suggested remedies,

1. Get opinion from Jim Sessler, our attorney.
2. If the Budget Committee was to agree to, send strong letter that we feel that the school board is breaking their own rules and own policies and making a serious mistake in expending money without putting it out to bid and not using money for what is already approved by the Budget Committee.
3. A combination of both.

S. Miller believes these are the only remedies available and does not have an interest in taking legal remedies, but wants the school board to stop and wants them to either follow their own policy or change their own policy. The school board financially is just running off the rails.

M. DeCoff questioned if it passed. Passed confirmed by S. Miller and B. Howard. Motion to put it out to bid did not pass 2 to 2, so T. Noyes previously stated we already appropriated the money and we do not have to do anything.

B. Howard noted, two members challenged the policy and Kathy Holt said that it was a system and not a one item and if it were a one item then it would have to go out to bid. There was an incident last year at the school.

B. Howard was in favor of the system but did not understand fully at the time everything S. Miller just explained. B. Howard doesn't approve of school board breaking policy and making rules up as they go.

It was noted that when PMHS wanted to purchase cameras, it was a warrant article 2 or 3 years ago, because it was a capital item, a capital item is split 50/50 but the fact is it is not an operational expense.

V. MacDonald– Must be a way to follow their policies and the town's policies. Change their rules to fit what they are doing

**S. Miller, Make a motion that the Chairman requests a ruling from Jim Sessler, on whether or not it is legal to ignore your own policy. If it is legal, then we can ignore the policy.**

**B. Howard Seconds**

Discussion: B. Howard it is written in the teachers contract that any unencumbered funds will be returned to the taxpayers.

School Board came in front of Budget Committee with significant budget, but because of the default budget there were significant cuts including the pre-kindergarten, they decided to buy a security system out of end of year funds instead.

**Motion to get legal opinion from attorney, in favor, B. Howard Yes, S. Miller, Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, L. Carr abstained.**

**Motion Passed: 3 - 1**

## **Water Department - 4331**

Budget items reviewed line by line

### **Line Item 001 - Water Commissioners Pay**

Discussion regarding Water Commission increasing from 3 members to 5 members. Water Commissioners requested 7674, BOS cut to 4683. 5 commissioners can split the cost. Felt it was more beneficial for 5 people to look over budget, less work, etc. The library asked for it last year and the board felt it would be beneficial for the Water Dept as well. The increase to 5 commissioners was passed at the deliberative session. Two people will be running this March.

**S. Miller requests Motion for 4331-001 to raise that number to 7764, because there are an additional 2 commissioners. Does not believe that because there are 2 commissioners being added 3 should be cut.**

**V. MacDonald Seconds.**

Question: J. Conboy asked what the motion was. M. DeCoff explained that the motion was for the acceptance of the department head of 7674 (Should this be 7764) and it was seconded.

**Discussion: If the number is multiplied on to the 3% that was given. So you will have to add 3% added on top of that. The rest of the elected officials did not get the 3% last year. S. Miller there would not be 3% on top for the 2 new people. Multiplying .the 3% to which V MacDonald stated which nobody else in the town got, multiply by another 3% B. Curtin stated last year we did not get 3%, it was only a 1.6%.**

**Vote: S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard, No, M. DeCoff, No, L. Carr, No**  
**Motion Fails 3 - 2**

### **Line Item 005, Superintendent's Salary**

**Motion by V. MacDonald to accept the selectmen's recommendation of line item 0005 of 45204.**

Discussion, S. Miller will vote for, because water commission has the ability to adjust the number anyway legally. S. Miller

**Vote M. DeCoff, Yes, S. Miller, Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard, Yes, L. Carr, Yes**  
**All in Favor**  
**Motion Passed: 5-0**

**Line 016 - Part Time Wages Labor**

Water Dept increased from 3500 to 10,000 was increased due to D. Quindley's retirement need for extra manpower. Part time help is a flagger and someone who is driving the truck. The reservoir is scheduled to be cleaned this coming spring. Will have to bring in someone with qualifications to clean it out.

**S. Miller made motion we lower Line Item 4331016 to 3500.00 V. MacDonald seconds**

**Discussion: B. Howard thinks its fair, V. Macdonald you have only used 752. Even 2,000 is a lot if you have only used less than 1000 this whole time.**

**Call for a vote, M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, Virgil MacDonald Yes, B. Howard, Yes, L. Carr No**

**Motion Passed: 4-0**

**175 – Telephone**

The superintendent has a cell phone. 150.00 per month is for 3 buildings, including monitors for alarms. Town cell phone is 40.00 a month stipend

**Motion by S. Miller to drop Item No. 175 to 2760. B. Howard seconds.**

**Vote M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald No, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Abstain**

**Motion Passed 3 –1, Abstained - 1**

**214 - Vehicle Fuel**

At a meeting held a month ago and came up with gasoline at 3.80/gallon and diesel at 3.99/gallon. There has been a change and gas and diesel price has been locked in, it was a state bid at 3.26 ½ for diesel and is 3.57 gallon for gasoline. 261 x 327 for diesel, 901 x 3.57 for gas

3800 for fuel, B. Curtin expects to go over on usage. B. Curtin is requesting 4,000 based on town figures and additional usage.

**Motion made by S. Miller to increase item 4331214 to bring it to 4,000, second by V. MacDonald**

**Vote: M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Abstain**

**Motion Passed: 4 –0, Abstained - 1**

**Item 299 – Levey Park Lease**

500. approved last year and went back into fund.

**Motion made by S. Miller to reduce line 4331299 by 500.00 Second V. MacDonald**

**Vote M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Abstain  
Motion passed 4-0, Abstained - 1**

**Item 304 - Propane**

2.19 town price locked in BOS recommends 2500.

Propane price is locked in for 4 months Discussion on costs.

**Motion made by S. Miller to reduce 4331304 to 2000.**

Discussion regarding how much was used.

**S. Miller takes back motion**

**Water Department review complete**

**Planning - 4191**

S. Miller statement: under heading of transparency I am a member of the Zoning board and do not receive any remuneration I don't feel that there is a conflict of interest and if anyone does I will recuse myself.

Budget items reviewed line by line

**5 Minute Recess Called**

**Meeting called back to order**

**015 Part Time Wages**

Under budgeted for 2011 did not have enough time for the part time secretary so number I put together Identifies needs for next year. With the action the selectmen have take, will not need for next year, reduced to 5,330. Can't hire contractually, need to hire as employees. Regular part time position was eliminated. Part time secretary covers ZBA meeting, zoning committee. Last year nothing was budgeted.

**Motion by V. MacDonald to change line 015 to 5,330. S. Miller Seconds**

**M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Abstain  
Motion Passed 4 – 0, Abstained - 1**

**Planning review complete**

### **Library - 4550**

Budget Items reviewed line by line

#### **135 – Books / AV Materials**

Library books and materials 1,168, reduced in order to try and keep bottom line

**V. Macdonald makes motion to change line item 135 back to 10,000. S. Miller seconds**

**Vote M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. Macdonald Yes B. Howard Yes, L. Carr – No  
Motion Passed 4 – 1**

**Library review complete**

**10 Minutes Recess called**

**Meeting called back to order**

### **Highway – 4312**

**Motion - All in favor of bottom line of 1,026,161, M. DeCoff No, S. Miller No, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard No, L. Carr Yes  
Motion Failed 3 -2**

#### **599 - Wetlands Upkeep of existing services**

Use of wetlands people under road reconstruction anything that has to do with the wetlands, it is better than being fined. Cost per hour is a lot cheaper. Delineation of the wetlands. Have not spent any money this year. Drainage issue on Spring Street. Each visit costs travel, plus 50.00 an hour. Need to use a wetland scientist, need to pull permit. When you use a wetland scientist that knows their business you don't get denied.

**Motion to reduce it to \$1500. because it has been over budgeted for the past few years.  
B. Howard seconds.**

**Motion M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald No, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr No**  
**Motion Passed 3 – 2**

**Bottom Line reduced to 1,024,661.00**

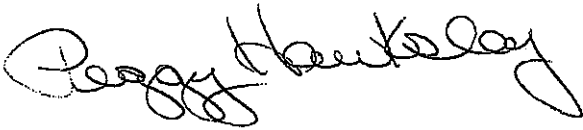
**Highway review complete**

**8. Public Input**  
No public input seen or heard.

**9. Adjournment**  
Approximately 10:07 PM

**Motion to Adjourn M. DeCoff, Second L. Carr- All approved**

Respectfully submitted,  
Peggy Hawksley

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Hawksley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.