

**TOWN OF ALTON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING  
October 29, 2025 at 6:00 PM  
Alton Town Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Elizabeth Varney, Committee 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  
Todd MacDougall, Police Chief  
Kellie Troendle, Parks & Recreation Director

**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**

Ms. Parker provided answers to questions regarding Conservation Commission expenditures to date, specifically lake monitoring and contract services. The lake monitoring bill from UNH for water sampling will not come until the end of the year. With the completion of the Alton Bay Watershed Management Plan, testing four tributaries to Alton Bay will be added next year, increasing the total sample sites from eleven to fifteen. The contract services line sees most expenses in November and December for items such as invasive plant control, repairs and maintenance of the Lakeshore Rail Trails and mowing of the field at Gilman Pond.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Review of 2026 Budgets

*Account - Administration*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget and explained the increases are all payroll related.

Mr. Shurtleff questioned the frequency of the Selectmen salary. Mr. Heath answered monthly, with the total being what is reflected in the justification.

Ms. Houser asked how the benefit buyout worked. Mr. Heath explained the policy.

**MOTION: To approve the Administration budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$465,946. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Building Department*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, explaining that the part-time inspector approved in a warrant article last year has now been absorbed into the operating budget. Benefit buyout has been reduced due to the employees in that department not having a lot of tenure.

Ms. Terry asked what was reflected in lab fees. Mr. Heath explained that it is utilized under the Health Officer function such as mold or water testing.

Ms. Terry questioned what was reflected in boat expense. Mr. Heath answered it is to get out to the islands for inspections or to investigate complaints.

**MOTION: To approve the Building Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$152,127. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Legal*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, explaining the only increase is in the prosecution line due to the change to body cameras and how the evidence is processed. The prosecutor has given a five-year fixed contract to offset the increase.

Mr. Shurtleff asked if there was an increase in the prosecution success rate with the new body cameras and how long footage had to be retained. Chief MacDougall responded the cameras are fairly new so there is no data yet on the impact they have on prosecution, however the footage is always useful evidence. A misdemeanor case requires approximately one year retention versus a felony which requires at least seven years retention of body camera footage. Mr. Carter added that the surrounding towns that have implemented body cameras are all seeing an increase in their prosecution costs.

**MOTION: To approve the Legal budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$145,418. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Houser. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Parks & Recreation Department*

Ms. Troendle gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. She explained the two increases are wages and benefit buyout. The decreases are in office supplies, uniforms, postage and new equipment. Part-time wages is not being utilized due to not hiring lifeguards. The lines that have been underspent this year was done intentionally to cover the budget over the default appropriation. Even though those things were needed, they have worked hard to do more with less. Also, the Old Home Week Committee did not meet this year so those funds were not

spent. She utilized the Clough-Morrell Trust to cover the cost of two concerts.

Ms. Wood thanked Ms. Troendle for all she has done with the little she is given. She stated it is greatly appreciated by the children and the community.

**MOTION: To approve the Parks & Recreation Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$141,204. Motion by Ms. Houser. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Planning Department*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget and explained some of the increases are all payroll related. The to the part-time line is due to the length of zoning and planning meetings going from an average of 1.5 hours to 4 hours, which causes the transcriber to spend more time on the minutes. There have been some big legal cases this year that are still in process, which are costly as well.

**MOTION: To approve the Planning Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$157,510. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Police Department*

Chief MacDougall gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. He reviewed each line that increased or decreased and explained the reason for each change.

Ms. Houser asked for an explanation of holiday pay buyout. Mr. Heath explained how holiday staffing and buyout work for both Police & Fire Department.

Mr. Shurtleff asked how many employees work at the Police Department. Chief MacDougall answered we have 13 full-time officers and are allotted 8 part-time officers, however we currently only have 5.

**MOTION: To approve the Police Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$1,586,715. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Carter. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Town Clerk/Tax Collector*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, explaining that the part-time assistant approved in a warrant article last year has now been absorbed into the operating budget.

**MOTION: To approve the Town Clerk Tax Collector budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$213,843. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Elections/Registrations*

Mr. Heath requested the opinion of the Board to see if they are in favor of the new poll pads prior to the Board of Selectmen vote.

Ms. Varney – No.

Ms. Houser – Would like input from the Town Clerk prior to a vote.

Ms. Terry – No, noting not all technology is beneficial.

*Account – Water*

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

Mr. Carter noted that the end users fund this department 100% with no tax burden.

Ms. Wood questioned line 601 Main Expense being overspent. Mr. Heath explained that was due to the two breaks, especially the recent break in the line at Levy Park.

**MOTION: To approve the Water Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$600,916. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Carter. Motion passed unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

October 22, 2025

**MOTION: To approve the October 22, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed unanimously.**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Heath recommended the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting be cancelled since the Board of Selectmen won't be meeting beforehand to approve more budgets for Budget Committee review. A new meeting date of Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> was set.

Ms. Houser asked when the Department of Revenue would be providing the highway and school funds. Mr. Heath responded that information should be available within the next couple weeks.

Mr. Carter asked if anyone was working on strategies to educate the public regarding the budget. Mr. Heath discussed the possibility of a podcast and a voter guide. Several members of the budget committee offered to assist with a mass mailing of a potential voter guide.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:23 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Carol Long*

Carol Long, Budget Committee Secretary