

TOWN OF ALTON

**ADVANCED COPY SUBJECT TO THE APPROVAL OF THE
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

**ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
(Approved 11/08/07)**

October 30, 2007

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair
Elizabeth Dominick
Gregory Fuller
Richard MacDonald
Karen Painter
Jeffrey St. Cyr, Alton School Board Representative
Peter Bolster, Alton Selectmen Representative

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

P. Bolster was absent at the time of Roll Call but arrived at approximately 6:35 PM.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Committee reviewed the agenda. G. Fuller requested to add something to the agenda that he wished to discuss. G. Fuller motioned to accept the agenda as amended and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

**IV. HOUSEKEEPING
a. SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENT**

J. St. Cyr motioned to accept the revised schedule presented by S. Miller for the Budget Review and P. Bolster seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five, with two no votes. (SM, ED, RM, JS, PB / no – KP, GF)

P. Bolster motioned to approve the minutes of October 25, 2007 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

S. Miller announced the Committee had been invited to an Open House at the Harold S. Gilman Museum on Main Street to welcome the new town planner, Sharon Penney and the new police chief, Phillip Smith. The event will be held on November 14, 2007 from 4:30-6:30 PM.

V. OLD BUSINESS
a. WATER

S. Miller motion to reduce Water Uninsured Exp (4331-279) by \$100, making the final requested Water (4331) budget for FY 2008. The motion passed by a vote of six with one no. (SM, ED, KP, GF, JS, PB / no - RM)

R. MacDonald asked if the prior Committee members had returned their DRA books. S. Miller asked K. Argiropolis to check with the previous members and to email them to return their books to R. Bailey so that members of the current Committee could have their copies.

G. Fuller asked if K. Argiropolis if she went by a different name because there was an article in The Laconia Daily Sun stating that a "Kristin Simone" had reported the Alton Budget Committee had given positive feedback about the Alton Central School Building & Grounds Committee asking for their feedback about the Committee's plan to present either a new school building or to renovate the current building. K. Argiropolis clarified that she had made a statement about positive feedback received about the Committee's work but that the name was incorrectly credited. She noted that she had made the comment with P. Bolster in the room and had been very careful about what she had said so as not to take the Committee's feedback from the previous meeting out of context. She asked P. Bolster to confirm her statement. P. Bolster confirmed that her input was appropriate at the meeting. K. Argiropolis stated she was the Chair of the PR Sub-Committee for the ACS Building & Grounds Committee but she was very careful about how she represented the comments of the Alton Budget Committee. K. Painter asked for the error in the article in The Laconia Daily Sun to be noted in the meeting minutes.

A letter concerning the use of the emergency funds to the DRA was sent around by R. Bailey for the Committee members to sign.

TAX COLLECTOR (4331)

Anne Kroeger presented the Tax Collector's requested budget for FY 200 at \$63,484.00. The Committee reviewed the requested budget. K. Painter asked why some of the requested budgets they had reviewed last week had listed retirement, FICA and other accounts but this one did not. R. Bailed explained that the Water Department, for example, had its own funding.

G. Fuller asked about the Computer expense (4133-162; \$2,000). A. Kroeger responded it was for software upgrades/support or other problems that might come up. The computer technician gets paid about \$35.00 per hour. BMI gets paid about \$1,700 for support/upgrades.

G. Fuller thanked A. Kroeger for level funding the line item for Telephone (4331-175; \$750.00). He spoke about some of the increases that other departments have submitted for their requested budget and felt she had done a good job in budgeting for Telephone.

P. Bolster motioned to approve the requested budget for the Tax Collector (4331) for FY 2008 at \$63,484.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

POLICE DEPARTMENT (4210)

Chief Smith and Captain Heath presented the requested budget for the Police Department (4210). The Committee reviewed the budget.

Chief Smith stated he had come in on the tail end of the budget season and pretty much accepted what was in the budget. He stated that next year he would probably be more aggressive with the budget process.

Captain Heath stated that there were some drastic differences in the expenditures over the last year because there were some changes in the expenditures over the year. He stated it wasn't an accurate depiction of what was going on. He reminded the Committee that the department had not been operating with a Chief for most of the year.

S. Miller asked what the advertised salary range was for the Chief's position (Chief Salary 4210-005; \$80,340). R. Bailey responded that it was \$65,000 to \$75,000 but the amount in the requested budget was a little more than the range and this was also his increase for 2008. S. Miller asked if a car or mileage had been considered at all. R. Bailey stated that those were not in the budget.

G. Fuller asked for an explanation of the requested budget for F/T Cops (4210-011; \$470,351). Chief Smith spoke about coverage issues for patrolmen. Captain Heath reminded the Committee they had lost a lieutenant recently and this also covered their filling that position. Chief Smith spoke about the benefits of having a supervisor on during the different shifts. There was discussion about having a patrol supervisor accessible.

G. Fuller asked why there was a step increase from Step One to Step Three and why there was a pay differential from \$1.00 to \$1.50. R. Bailey stated the increase was approved by the Selectmen and was done to keep up with marketplace standards. The increase in step was because the Selectmen had felt that the Sergeant had done a good job and deserved the jump in step. S. Miller stated it looked like it was only about a 2.5% increase on the line. P. Bolster spoke about the service that the Sergeant (Captain Heath) had done when there was not a Chief available. Chief Smith stated that it was not common to have someone on the inside that could fill in the way the Captain Heath had been able to fill in.

S. Miller asked if there was going to be a contribution from the PMHS JMA School Board for the School Resource Officer (4210-012; \$47,445). P. Bolster reported this has been discussed with the ACS Board Chair, Terri Noyes, about this issue. He spoke about some of the justification for the Selectmen's request for a donation for the Officer's services. He spoke about the jurisdiction of the School Resource Officer in Alton and

about his being under direct report to the Chief. There was discussion about the role of the SRO at the schools. Chief Smith stated that he was planning on looking at the impact the Barnstead students had on the SRO before he planned on asking for a contribution from Barnstead for the SRO. He spoke about some of the benefits of having the SRO being paid for by the town.

S. Miller asked about how much time the SRO spent with the Barnstead students. Chief Smith reported he had checked into this and found that it was the Barnstead underclassmen, which he had spent the most time with right now. He spoke about some of the trends they see at times with certain classes that have more issues than others. He stated they were going to be keeping record of the issues to track trends and to evaluate the need.

There was a discussion about the P/T Cops (4210-016; \$24,497). Chief Smith spoke about the benefits of having part-time officers vs. paying over time to officers. He spoke about some of the situations where the unit would need flexibility for coverage, such as when there was a fair at Alton Bay.

S. Miller asked about the justification for the increase for Office Staff Over Time (4210-020; \$2,154.00). Captain Heath spoke about the role of the office staff and some of the situations where they have to work over-time. There was discussion about some of the past justifications for increases in the budget line item. K. Painter asked about coverage during vacation time. Chief Smith stated he was checking into having some part time help in the future for this and it was something he was looking into.

G. Fuller spoke about his concerns about this budget line item being sufficient because the actual in 2006 was only \$95.00 less than what was being requested in the FY 2008. Captain Heath spoke about the budget being relative to many other things and noted there would be a request for a private legal council, which would alleviate some of the paralegal duties that the executive assistant was now performing.

S. Miller reported the Police Department's budget had come in at about a 3% increase from the previous year.

There was a discussion about Private Detail Wages (4210-025; \$33,840.00). The Committee spoke about some of the upcoming projects where private detail might be needed.

G. Fuller confirmed that Benefit Buyout (4210-029; \$4,862.00) was per the policy set by the town and R. Bailey stated it was.

S. Miller asked about Employee Development (4210-109; \$2,000). Chief Smith stated this was for a program or class that he wanted Captain Heath to attend.

Chief Smith spoke about Association Dues (4210-111; \$200). The Selectmen had recommended \$300 for this budget line item. He spoke about the benefits of the ICAP program.

There was a discussion about Ammunition/Firearms Training (4210-114; \$5,575.00). Captain Heath spoke about the planning for the supplies and training.

S. Miller spoke about the budget line item for Grant Funding (4210-115; \$1.00) and some of the possibilities for obtaining grant money. Chief Smith assured S. Miller he had experience with writing for grants. There was discussion about grants that may be available from Homeland Securities because of Alton Bay having an airport in the winter when the bay was frozen.

G. Fuller asked about what IMC was (Computer; 4210-162; \$10,095.00). Captain Heath explained this was the system they used and this covered the cost of licenses. E. Dominick asked what the hardware upgrade for \$1,200 was for and R. Bailey stated he couldn't go into detail but this was an overlap from the previous budget year.

K. Painter asked if the town had a computer replacement policy. R. Bailey stated the cycle was about three years. He stated they had just gotten rid of their last MacDurgin computer. He spoke about the technical specifications that are needed for different departments so the various could run the software they needed. E. Dominick asked about the tech support fee of \$4,795.00. Captain Heath stated it was not just for the software support but it was for other outside support.

R. MacDonald asked if the Prosecutor would be from Belknap County (Contractual Services; 4210; \$27,640.00). Captain Heath stated this was for an outside prosecutor. Chief Smith stated this would be an attorney who would prosecute DUIs and other cases. This is not a retainer amount but there could be an hourly rate or a retainer. S. Miller spoke about his concerns if there was an extraordinary circumstance that could maximize the budget. Chief Smith spoke about the benefits of having a prosecutor onboard to handle violations and misdemeanors. He stated he had done this in Salem, NH and it had worked well.

S. Miller asked for the approximate numbers of cases each year. Captain Heath stated there were about 120 cases. He reported there had been about 130 protective custody arrests, which are not prosecuted, in about two years. There are about 160 cases that go to trial in about two rates. S. Miller asked what the increase was for cases from year to year. Chief Smith asked what the annual population rate was for each year and noted it would be relative. R. Bailey noted that there were increases in cases in the summer.

G. Fuller asked if the Police had consolidated their Nextel phones (Telephone; 4210-175; \$11,940.00). Captain Heath noted that a phone had been freed up and the contract rates had gone down.

Captain Heath noted that Rental Equipment (4210-193; \$200.00) had been taken out of the wrong budget line item in the past. The previous budgeted amount was \$1.00.

There was a discussion about the New Equipment (4210-201; \$6,000.00). The new equipment is for monitoring awareness radar, which is one of the stand-alone speed reporting boards that are often set up on the roadside. G. Fuller noted this could be put in a warrant article, as he thought warrant articles should be for items \$5,000.00 or more. He stated he was going to look into having this as a warrant article.

Vehicle Maintenance (4210-207; \$19,078.00) was reviewed by the Committee. G. Fuller spoke about his concerns about this being enough for what might be needed. Captain Heath spoke about some of the repairs they were anticipating. He spoke about issues with a cruiser motor that needed repaid that he expected would be a big expense.

G. Fuller asked how fuel was expensed to the Police Department. (Gasoline; 4210-214; \$18,907.00) R. Bailey stated they got fuel from the Highway Department. He stated there was no bid for gas right now but there would be a bid coming up. They pay about \$2.40/gal right now.

G. Fuller asked if the Police would consider getting a service dog through the NH Working Dog Organization he worked with and felt they could reduce the budget line items to \$1.00. (K-9 General; 4210-258; \$1,450.00) G. Fuller spoke about the benefits of the program and having a police dog. R. Bailey noted that the Selectmen wanted to start the K-9 program again.

G. Fuller felt that the K-9 Medical (4210-259; \$1,500.00) might not be sufficient. He spoke about some of the medical issues a dog could have.

There was a discussion about the budget line item for Water (4210-305; \$1,580). This is for bottled water, not for the utility service of water.

S. Miller asked if a Radio was requested each year (4210-440; \$1,450). Captain Heath explained that a radio was not budgeted for each year. E. Dominick asked why the budget line item had been overspent this year. Captain Heath explained it was for a radio for a motorcycle that had not been on the budget but the Selectmen had voted in. He noted this was a one-time expense.

R. MacDonald spoke about Building Expense (4210-309; \$5,917). Captain Heath noted this was for garage door opener motors. He stated the motors were old and rather than being replaced, they had always been repaired.

There was discussion about Hep-B Inoculation (Infectious Disease Control; 4210-450; \$360.00). K. Painter spoke about the protocols for Hep-B and the after-inoculation testing. She stated she could provide them with more information about the protocols.

Motorcycle Lease (4210-499; \$3,300.00) was discussed. The radio that is in the motorcycle could be taken out when the lease was done.

ANIMAL CONTROL (4414)

Captain Heath reported there is an Animal Control Officer now who lives in town and is paid by the hour. (ACO Wage; 4414-009; \$11,323.68). The total requested budget is \$14,925.00. There was no discussion about the budget.

SOLID WASTE CENTER (4324)

Scott Simonds presented the requested budget for the Highway Department.

S. Miller asked if Benefit Buyout was for anyone in particular. S. Simonds stated that he might use some of it.

S. Simonds confirmed that Reference Materials (4324-134; \$125) was for a trade magazine subscription.

There was a discussion about the budget line item for Telephone (4324-175; \$1,260). The requested amount includes landline and cell. This was level funded from the previous year.

S. Miller asked about the Uniforms-Safety (4324-206; \$1,472) budget line item. Uniforms are sent out to be cleaned because of the waste that the workers handle. There was a discussion about some of the uniform features and gloves.

R. Bailey spoke about the Electricity (4324-303; \$5,250) and stated he had spoken with a representative from NH Electric Co-Op and found there wouldn't be an increase of any significance.

S. Simonds noted that Recyclables (4324-404; \$300) was new because it was now mandated that thermostats are recycled because of the mercury in them.

There was a discussion about the cost of a dump sticker. S. Miller asked about what harm would be done if the cost of the stickers was increased. R. MacDonald spoke about the history of the cost of the stickers. R. Bailey spoke about the benefits of funding the Solid Waste in the budget vs. through fees.

There was discussion about the changes in some of the disposal costs based on how the economy was doing. Disposal of Electronics (4324-410; \$10,085) has increased because in 2008 television broadcast will become digital and it is anticipated that many residents will upgrade their televisions.

There were no questions about Solid Waste.

HAZARDOUS WASTE (4326)

R. Bailey spoke about the success of the Hazardous Waste program. The budgeted amount for 2007 was \$9,000. The department requested \$11,000 for FY 2008 but the Selectmen felt it should be funded at \$15,000 because of the response.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT (4191)

Sharon Penney presented the requested budget for FY 2008 for the Planning Department. She noted that the entire department had been turned over this year, as all three positions had been vacated. She stated they had done as well as possible to get near the mark of the budget.

There was discussion about the Town Planner Salary (4191-002; \$58,000). The new planner is at Step 3 and is eligible for Step 5 in April 2008. The Committee discussed the Planning Assistant and Part-Time Fiscal Secretary positions.

R. Bailey spoke about the Planning Meetings & Conferences (4191-110; \$1,200.00) and noted that Sharon had to attend two conferences as part of her job. This is necessary for her position.

S. Penney spoke about Planning Dues & Fees (4191-111; \$250.00) and noted this was for the RSA books for the planning and zoning.

GILMAN MUSEUM (4575)

The Committee reviewed the requested budget for the Gilman Museum for FY 2008. R. Bailey spoke about the Consultant and Contract services he had in the budget. He noted that he and Pat Fuller were really in charge of the museum. There was a discussion about the history of the collection. R. Bailey spoke about the use of the museum building by other groups for various functions.

ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
VOTES ON REQUESTED BUDGETS

SOLID WASTE (4324)

G. Fuller motioned to accept the requested budget for FY 2008 for Solid Waste at \$482,504 and P. Bolster seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six, with one absent. (SM, ED, KP, GF, JS, PB / absent - RM) [Recorder's Note: R. MacDonald had briefly stepped out of the meeting room at the time the motion was called to vote.]

HOUSEHOLD WASTE (4326)

G. Fuller motioned to accept the requested budget for FY 2008 for Hazardous Waste Day, as amended by the Selectmen, at \$15,000 and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

PLANNING (4191)

S. Miller motioned to accept the requested budget for FY 2008 for Planning at \$130,000.00 and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

GILMAN MUSEUM (4550)

S. Miller motioned to accept the requested budget for FY 2008 for Gilman Museum at \$14,501 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

POLICE (4210)

G. Fuller motioned to add funding to the budget line item for K-9 General (4210-258) for \$1,450.00 and K-9 Medical (4210-259) for \$1,500, and K. Painter seconded the motion. P. Bolster noted this would need to be added and presented to the Selectmen's budget. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

VI. OTHER BUSINESS

R. Bailey spoke about the new General Fund for Public Channel (LRPA-TV) that will fully fund the Public Channel fees. The budgeted amount is for \$12,422. He explained that if they did not do this then they would have to have a public hearing each year.

VII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, November 1, 2007 at 6:30 PM.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

K. Painter motioned to adjourn and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, ED, KP, RM, GF, JS, PB)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recorder, Public Minutes