

**Alton Budget Committee
Town of Alton
November 1, 2011
Minutes Approved 11/8/2011**

1. Call to order 6:00pm

2. Roll Call

M. DeCoff, Chair
S. Miller, Vice Chair
V. MacDonald, Member
B. Howard, Member
L. Carr, Selectmen's Representative

Other Attendees
R. Bailey, Town Administrator
T. Sargent, Assessing
Scott Williams, Fire Chief
Lisa Noyes, Town Clerk
Marybee Longabaugh, Elections

3. Pledge of Allegiance

4. Approval of Minutes

Minutes October 25, 2011, S. Miller motion to approve minutes as amended. Page 3, 2nd paragraph, to include the word "had previously" before the word "stated". B.

Howard seconds, all in favor.

Minutes October 27, 2011, V. MacDonald motion to approve minutes as amended.

Remove Animal Control from Page 3. M. DeCoff seconds, all in favor.

5. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve S. Miller, M. DeCoff seconds, all in favor.

Vote: V. Miller, M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr, Yes

6. Old Business

M. DeCoff provide handout regarding legal opinion and will be discussed next week.

7. New Business

Assessing, Fire Department, Town Clerk, Elections, budget reviews. Application review and vote.

Review of applicant for open Budget Committee Seat

Discussion: if person is willing serve on board, and volunteer his time, he should have the chance.

V. MacDonald Motion to hire applicant, M. DeCoff second/

Vote: S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Yes

Assessing – 4193

Budget items reviewed line by line

Discussion:

B. Howard initiated discussion regarding how the town does assessing on an ongoing annual basis when the state doesn't require it except once every 5 years. If subcontracted out every fifth year to have the town-assessed town would save money.

T. Sargent responded it would cost 3-4 people to do the whole town in one year. He has spoken to other towns and we are paying 16.00/parcel and others are between 28.00-35.00 parcel.

Discussion regarding neighboring towns of Tuftonboro and Wolfeboro and that they subcontract. With Wolfeboro paying 50,000 and Tuftonboro paying 17,000. The other issue is, that it is Barbara's understanding that the model for assessing is based on 5 years and you have to get it in place and then you have to let it work in order to get it working and functioning properly. Otherwise numbers can get skewed. The whole town is not being done at once, 800 homes a year are being done.

T. Sargent stated that amount was per year, that's 200,000. It costs them more to defend it at the BLTA. They give 50,000 to take care of building permits and abatements, that does not include the analysis. T. Sargent does the analysis for the town and that could be anywhere from 35,000 – 48,000 a year.

B. Howard asked if there were any other issues this year to have extra evaluations?

The town had to get an outside contractor this past year and that was a requirement by the Department of Revenue because there was not enough time to complete everything that was asked to be done.

B. Howard noted that we used to do it every 5 years, now we have a full time secretary, a person who does drive by's, and now we are doing it every year.

T. Sargent stated with the 5-year plan we need to bring in 3-4 data collectors to do it all at once, that's 1 year. One person could not do the entire town in one year. Wolfeboro and Tuftonboro bring in 4-5 people and pay roughly 28.00-35.00 per parcel. They don't measure and list every building, that 50,000 is do to building permits, abatements and does not include going to BTLA, the state or courts. I called Moultonboro they have a contract for every year for 130,000 and a full time assessor.

Visited about 600 of 800 properties so far this year. This year alone minus adjustments, items that were removed from the property they were taxed all along for, 4 or 5 years took it off this year and plus adjustments for roughly 600 parcels was 315,900 dollars minus adjustments of 97,600. Just on 600 parcels. It goes both ways. If we waited 5 years these people that minus adjustments of 97,000 they would have been assessed for 5 years.

B. Howard noted that according to the NH constitution we are only required to bring value to new once every 5 years and there is no statue that requires a municipality to complete a measure and a list they do so to keep the functional data correct and their statistics within the guidelines. A measure and list should probably be completed once every 10 years.

Should be brought up with selectmen.

Assessment review complete

Fire Department - 4220

Budget items reviewed line by line

017 – Part Time Staff Person

BOS cut request from 18075 to 9038

The responsibilities for this position would include fuel certified for fire and EMS, minor repairs of equip, facilitating training for the dept, weekly truck reviews to assure there serviceability organize and attend fire prevent risk watch at the school, bicycle safety for the Police Department also oversee fire rules at the school. 1 per month while school is in session. Must witness 4 of them. QA/QI of control of ambulance runs, quality of service up to par. Researching/purchasing of EMS supplies. Liaison for the hospital. Budgeted for 20 hours a week, board reduced to 10 hours a week.

We also have the possibility to qualify for Ameri Corp grant, The 9,038, can be applied to the Ameri Corp grant, For 9800 we can get an 11 month commitment at 30 hours a week our only cost would be the 9800 for that, vacation, insurance, workman's comp is covered by Ameri Corp. The only cost to the town of Alton is 9800. There is an educational allowance as well. No strings attached. Every year we have to re-apply. The town of Farmington has 3 people on their staff covered by Ameri Corp.

024 – Special Duty Pay and Veh

Reduced from 2033 to 1.00. Used for mini-half lake marathon. Get paid special duty pay, always used for EMS and has been moved to EMS.

134 – Fire Reference Materials

BOS reduced to 500. Need 1,000. Subscription services need National Fire Code Subscription Service, National Electric Code Handbook, Protection Guide for Hazardous Materials. NFPA 1500 we can't possibly strive to meet all requirements. Occupational Safety Program, Life Safety Code 101.

S. Miller makes motion raise item Number 134 to 1100. V. MacDonald seconds

Discussion, B. Howard would like to know if Selectmen have any justification. Discussion on how number was lowered.

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

Motion passed 3 approved, 2 abstain

202 Fire Equipment Expense

Last year Firemen's association bought some used SCBA, self-contained breathing apparatus. Association purchased about 100,000 worth of packs. Need to certify current and old packs. The old packs will be used strictly for training.

S. Miller asked how come Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid doesn't pay for testing of equipment. Lakes Region Mutual Fire Aid is purchasing testing equipment to perform the function for 8320, the town's share is 260.00 dollars. Allow someone to come in and test equipment at 35/hr. About 10 hours would now cost 350.00 Lakes Region Mutual Aid has not yet purchased the equipment. Mutual Aid was paid 60,000 as a community, funded through the Belknap County Tax. We have resources and mutual aid agreements.

Motion by S. Miller equipment expense is over budgeted by 1,000. Would like to reduce it by 700 to 5500. Costs of SCBA testing and maintenance budgeted at 1495 would probably come it at 350 – 400.

Discussion, This is in anticipation of buying the equipment. LRMA should get the equipment first. LRMA is billing at 2400 for computer-aided dispatch. About 10 hours to test equipment and that comes in January. At most around 1100. Will also need maintenance throughout the year. There is a chance you may not get it.

No second to motion

L. Carr made a motion to accept motion to accept the bottom line. V. MacDonald seconds.

Discussion B. Howard stated they have done all this work and I think it is our job to look at every line item.

Vote: Motion by L. Carr to accept bottom line, second by V. MacDonald

**L. Carr withdraws motion.
Motion withdrawn**

207 – Vehicle Expense

Motion by S. Miller to reduce line 207 to 11,000. Over budgeted for last 5 years. To get budget in line with previous years, which would still be well above the average by about 20%. Reduce to 11,000.

B. Howard Seconds

Discussion: No Discussion

**Vote: S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald No, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr No, M. DeCoff abstain
Motion failed to pass**

S. Miller makes motion to reduce to Line 207 to 12,000.00

B. Howard seconds

Discussion: No discussion

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

214 - Two different numbers shown. BOS came in at 6959

BOS calculated 36,557 miles @ 3.27 and estimated the ambulance. It was noted that the Ambulance fuel has always come from Ambulance line item.

Motion by V. MacDonald to change line 214 to 8000.

Discussion on price of fuel, mileage, usage and gallons. New rate of 3.27 averaging 7900 – 12000. R. Bailey reason why it is showing less is because of the price drop. New locked in price for diesel of 3.27, which is good for 12 months.

No Second

303 Electricity

Note: R. Bailey Received E-mail from Electric Coop today stating they are raising their rates effective today approximately 2%, depending on type of service. R. Bailey has not had a chance to analyze.

304 - Building fuel.

YTD 9400 is on a budget of 16,000. Average about 1100 a month BOS is recommending 14,000. For the central station projected using about 1700 or 1800 gallons.

Motion by S. Miller to reduce line 304 from 14000 to 12500

B. Howard seconds

Discussion: No discussion

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

Motion failed to pass

Fire Department review complete

Ambulance Account - 59000

General questions were asked on the Ambulance Account. Ambulance account will be reviewed at a later date.

Elections - 4140

Budget items reviewed line by line

There were 4 elections this year.

Election review complete

Town Clerk - 4132

Budget items reviewed line by line

Town Clerk review complete

8. Public Input

R. Howard, would like to speak on the Assessor's department and their budget. Over the past year had a serious incident with the Assessing Department. Doesn't like the way I was treated. For instance, I'll give you an example of what he (T. Sargent) ran by the Budget Committee tonight. Telling you that he picks up every year, but yet S. C. only does 800 properties. So if somebody was visited this year, they removed the building next year that building will not be picked up for 5 years. But he tried to lead you to believe that he picks these things up every year.

As a result of my issue I went to the state and I educated myself. I have an estimate for what it would cost to have someone in here a day a week. About 35,000/year and then at a 5-year period interval it would have to be a total reset of the assessments. The cost of that all total would be less than what we have spent on average. Especially where my going to the state, and getting the state involved with my issue they found that the Assessor was what they called chasing sales, and that's why everything was messed up and the state had to come in and to what they did recently which I believe cost us somewhere around 20,000.

S. Miller asked what was chasing sales. R. Howard stated it's the process they used for updating values, and I can't explain it all. it wasn't just some minor issue, or else the state would not have insisted on the problem being corrected.. Cost town 20,000 to correct the problem. I think you should take a Take a hard look at the actual process and what the state does require and what is the process for doing it. Because my rough math I'm looking at, at least a 200,000 savings every 5 years. Doing it through sub-contractor services. Yes you have to have a person in the office as a secretary full time. But we do not a full time assessor as far as I'm concerned. This is just another Bureaucracy like the fire hydrants, creates more costs. Keeps public service employees gainfully employed at our expense. That's all I have to say.

M. DeCoff asked Mr. Howard if he brought his concerns to the selectmen? When I was having my issues that was a sore subject as well. How he was treated he was not happy with it. So he did some research on his own.

Discussion S. Miller asked L. Carr was there an incident with the state charging us with a 20,000 increase from that department. L. Carr responded we had to do a different neighborhood type system the year before that the state previously OK'd process we used and they had new people come in and they said we had to update this. R. Bailey, said we had too many neighborhoods even though they had approved it in prior years. Basically we had to do an updated re-val and analysis and had to reduce our neighborhoods by about 50% almost. R. Bailey, there too many fluctuations for too many neighborhoods. That was done this year.

L. Carr there is a manual that we have to follow. That was the issue. Assessor was aware of it, he book was OK'd by state, but a new person came in and they wanted different standards.

B. Howard asked were 20,000 all of the costs, or were there other costs the year before. R. Bailey stated that it was a one-time item.

R. Howard would like to add that the August letter we get every year that the values fluctuate back and forth is suppose to let this model have a 4-5 year period to see if the models are working. When you change everyone's value ever year you are creating room for error. Because you never know if you have the right model functioning. I will agree to disagree with the selectmen on the state changing like that. From what my research has shown me that they have been going right along with this particular model. Maybe we did have too many different neighborhoods. That's information I didn't have privy too.

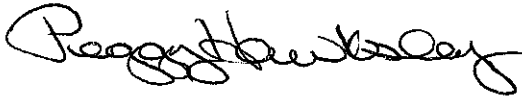
Question to L.Carr from B. Howard where does that 20,000 come up in the budget process. That was a onetime expense for last year. That is one of the reasons we are behind on the tax.

Next meeting, Solid Waste and Tax Collector. Solid Waste will be at 6:00.

S. Miller got an E-Mail from P. Landry about school budget, not for another couple of weeks. Meetings will be on a Monday and Wednesday so as not to conflict with Budge Committee meetings.

BH motion to Adjourn MD Seconds all in favor
Adjourned 8:10 pm

Respectfully Submitted



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