

Town of Alton  
Budget Committee Minutes  
November 10, 2011

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call  
M. DeCoff, Chair  
V. MacDonald, Member  
B. Howard, Member  
S. Miller, Vice Chair  
J. St. Cyr, School Board Representative  
L. Tilley, Member (arrived 6:25pm)  
L. Carr, Selectmen's Representative (arrived 7:05 pm)

Other Attendees:

S. Leggett, Principal Alton Central School  
K. Holt, Superintendent Alton Central School  
C. Dix-Herndon, Alton Central School  
K. Oblenes, Alton Central School

3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Approval of Agenda  
Motion by S. Miller, BH Seconds, all in favor
5. Minutes  
No Minutes
6. Old Business  
None
7. New Business  
School Budget Review

Opening statement by K. Holt

General questions asked by S. Miller

1. What areas did you cut this year due to the default budget?

Principal Leggett responded it was across the board, supplies, and equipment, made changes in improvement of instruction, where we reduced staff services. Line where we usually bring in professional development we have reduced this by half. The K-Plus teacher and the full time G&T teacher were not hired. They were in the proposed budget last. Went to default so positions were not hired. BC previously recommended K plus program, 4-2.

2. S. Miller with a follow up question. Is there a surplus from last year?  
K. Oblenes, Business Manager responded that there was a surplus of 599,968.

S. Miller requested to go over transfer of funds between lines that have taken place in the past year.

K. Oblenes stated that it was multiple lines, tried to work hard with everyone in the district, essentially what was needed to run the school without adding in any of the proposed ideas, but to make sure the school ran smoothly the way we needed to. Worked with administration for 3 months prior to the end of school and intently over the summer and where the lines needed to be and maintained. There were not too many lines that remained the same. K. Oblenes will provide list at next meeting.

Principal Leggett gave an example. The Proposed K-5 Reading program, instead of having it disappear because we went to default, we moved forward with the program which meant other lines had to give. It was prioritized.

S. Miller requested an accounting of what generated the surplus of 600,000.

K. Oblenes stated that it was definitely the Prospect Mountain line. We gross budgeted and they collect the net amount and subtract the revenues. There was a small amount of salaries. The 600,000 is cumulative over years.

Includes the contingencies, the warrant article placed before the voters every year put forward 60,000 for unanticipated utility expenses. These were not used. 60,000 for Alton and 33,300 for Prospect Mountain. Non-use of all of the funds for fuel oil and bottled propane.

Brunt of surplus was due to lower fuel prices.

S. Miller requested an accounting of the surplus and an accounting of all transfer of funds.

S. Miller asked a general question, would like the school board to try and answer the question and he understands what they are trying to do going forward.

“Alton is ranked 204 out of 222 elementary schools which puts it in the bottom 9%. Last year 2010 – 2011 that was down 24 places from the year before. The middle school is not much better, the school district is quite frankly a little worse. The school district, including the middle school, ranks 134 out of 142 which is the bottom 6%. That’s a huge cause of concern. I would like someone to tell me why is that so? Because if you look at our neighbors, everyone who borders us, Gilmanston is No. 7, Gilford is 112, Farmington is 162, Wolfeboro is 114 and we are 204. Obviously we could talk about bad tests, but everybody’s taking the bad tests. What are we doing wrong.”

K. Holt asked “what does that have to do with the budget?”

S. Miller stated “What I want to see is if we are throwing good money after bad.”

K. Holt stated "Uou have a budget in front of you and you are supposed to be addressing the budget."

S. Miller stated "I would like to know the money that we are giving you, is it being spent. For instance last year you presented a budget and we were very close and we recommended a budget and the end result was poor performance."

K. Holt asked "can you please address what's in the budget."

M. DeCoff stated that it should be addressed to the school board.

School board will provide the Budget Committee an accounting of the surplus and an accounting of all of the transfer of funds at the next meeting.

1100 -

S. Miller asked a question on enrollment numbers. 2011-2012 shows 547 and has been going down since we formed the JMA. Gone down 10% since 2004 – 2005. What do you see is the demographics going forward, not just this year; do you see an increase/decrease in enrollment?

Principal Leggett responded that she did a Cohort Analysis, which looks at vital statistics. Looking at number of births, looks at the number of enrollments in Kindergarten and then you multiply percentages year by year and come up with a ratio and see how the ratio is going. See a little bit of a drop; 3 years ago we had about 581 students. As of today have 544, next year projecting 530. That is a projection.

Recommending reduction of 1 full time teacher and ½ guidance and health position. Recommending we reduce that that 1 positon by the health half of it. Which would make the guidance team 2 ½. Direct result of projection of enrollment.

Budget will be reviewed line by line

S. Miller asked on the salary addendums to look at the Staff Listings – he noticed 1 significant increase; Director of Instruction went from 51,000 to 57,000.

Principal Leggett explained that this was a job change. Went from teacher to an administrator

S. Miller asked about the substitute line, it increased 5.00, surrounding towns are at or around 70.

P. Leggett explained they were hoping to keep a good pool of substitutes. Mr. Ross contacted all of the Lakes Region area schools to find out what the sub pay was and wanted to make sure Alton was competitive.

Salaries – down 179

Discussion of line includes addition of .5 to be able to run the K-Plus program and elimination of another 1 teacher. Costs to run the K-Plus program is dependent on the person that is hired under the teachers contract. Would also need ½ time assistant. Taking 1 ½ teachers out and bringing in ½. Proposal would be to get rid of a job and lay someone off.

Dental is -9.5%. Budget will drop 10,063

S. Miller asked about the Active Parenting class and how many were on the roster. Is this the job of the school as opposed to a number of other state agencies that we donate as a town and why is it necessary that the school does it and have you been able to validate that this class has helped in some way?

Principal Leggett responded that this is split 50/50 between the PTSA.

S. Miller's personal opinion is that the Artist In Residence program has always been a waste of 2,000, 3,000 or 4,000. The benefit is short lived, it is fun, and socially it makes sense. For a long term learning platform he doesn't see, in these economic times we have, why we are paying an Artist in Residence?

B. Howard stated personally, typically in her past experience the Artist In Residence reaches children of all levels. Its true interaction and it breaks down barriers. It is almost always a positive experience and she thinks that for those students who are not athletic, who don't make the team, who are top of the class or have quirks or disabilities, it is a time for them to be part of the whole group and participate equal with their peers.

**Motion to reduce 53230 by 2,000**

**V. MacDonald seconds**

**Discussion: No Discussion**

**Vote: J. St. Cyr No, L. Tilly No, M. DeCoff No, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard No**

**Motion Failed**

Tuition to JMA

S. Miller informed everybody in attendance that current figure for JMA has not been adjusted by anybody and is 3,506,200, which would be Prospect Mountain's 50% of the operating budget. Based on total budget of 7,012,401.

K. Oblenes stated that Alton paid the lower percentage, based on enrollment and flip flopped with Barnstead.

Supplies – down 4,000

Principal Leggett stated they worked very diligently to streamline supplies. Looked at the number of students and calculated the approximate cost it would take to supply and we also tried to reduce the burden on parents having to buy a lot of school supplies at the beginning of the year. We feel pretty confident that we've done a good job with the whole process.

Foreign language – Increased

Spanish is taught to every student in the school. Make sure teacher is supplied with what is needed.

Math supplies are down 236. Proposing a math program. When a program is purchased everything is included in the estimated cost. Including supplies, manipulatives and professional development would all be in the one cost. Math curriculum is for grades K-8.

If the budget goes through and with a REAP grant, believe a smart board will be in every math classroom. Will not be in every single classroom.

S. Miller asked would you put the value of the Artist In Residence above a Smart board?

Principal Leggett stated she wants both.

S. Miller asked why music was getting a Smart board?

Principle Leggett stated that the music teachers got their Smart boards because they specifically wrote a grant for it.

S. Miller asked due to the default budget did you cut anything in Math and Science.

Principal Leggett stated no.

K. Oblenes noted that they worked very hard to keep everything instructional there. So it mirrored what they requested in the budget.

S. Miller noted that the 1100 budget was down, there are other areas that are up, if any are that is up it should be instructional.

B. Howard asked for clarification on equipment new Phys Ed. and on the PE Supplies for 78850 what is the difference between supplies and equipment.

The supplies are something the students regularly need to replace and the equipment is something that the school would keep.

Equipment replacement for Family and Consumer Sciences, go through a cycle of replaces 5 sewing machines a year spread over three years. The previous ones were very old and not working well, it was not a good quality machine. Making sure a good quality mchine that will last with a lot of students using them.

K. Holt responded that the machines were made for an adult not for beginners. It was very difficult for young students to work with. They were breaking, yes, but they were not working for kids. The age group is 11-12, 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Equipment replacement for computers is placed in Technology.

General is down 289.00

1100 Complete

### **1200 – Special Education**

K. Dix-Herndon stated there are some major decreases in some areas and some of that has to do with students who will be leaving the district, either move out or graduates. The other decrease has a lot to do with what she called riding the AARA Wave. Some areas we're able to use the AARA to get some equipment and materials that would have come out of the budget.

B. Howard asked, are asked if all students who have an IEP are billable to Medicaid. C. Dix-Herndon responded no, from Birth to 3 it is all area agency involvement. We do a transition to the school, and provide consultation services 3 months prior to their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

B. Howard asked are the records reciprocal so that the area agencies can do some testing and bear the cost of that and forward to the School

C. Dix Herndon responded there are two different criteria. We need to look at that to see if they are eligible for special education.

Budget items reviewed line by line

### **1205 – Extended year**

Discussion regarding summer programs. It is mandated. It is looked at based on student need and we have the concept of faith, which is free appropriate public education. There are also other outside agencies, and we collaborate with parents helping them find outside services. That's why it is an IEP, varies by child.

S. Miller asked are there an inordinate amount of SPED cases vs. other communities? Alton is lower, around 12%; some districts are up around 14-15%.

### **2150 – Speech**

2 Speech assistants, 1 full time and 1 at 40%

There is an increase, but this was not for a full year.

When new contracts were negotiated, increases in salary have been given to some of the staff. For all staff it is based on merit. It averaged 1.5% increase

FM system is required for hearing impairment. Needed to purchase one for a student because of their processing skills. Often times Medicaid can purchase this but often they can't. It stays with the student during the day, but stays with the district

Discussion on revenues on Special Ed, what money came into the dept?

Received 159,812 in Medicaid and for catastrophic aid we received 89,875 and that was at a pro-rated amount. Each year the state budget decreases and we never receive 100%.

School nutrition

Last year 82,829. 23% of kids received free or reduced meals. Not everybody ops to use it. Based on the amount of meals served. 827.00 per child, 59 children.

2722 – Transportation

Decrease in the elementary transportation costs for next year.

Went down to one bus. Trying to control the account.

Special Ed complete

### **1280 – Enrichment**

Increased additional full time Science Gifted and Talented teacher. Last year we recommended .6, which would be 3 classes per day and the budget committee recommended full time position

Discussion regarding increase for DI coaches, 5 of them, 2700 that wasn't in previous year. Long history of adding stipend positions, depending on number of teams. Principle Leggett explained that we made sure we looked at all of the positions, interviewed G&T director, amount of prep time, time at competition, time for afterschool. Broke it down into units and figured out how many units each of the stipend positions would use and try to come up with an equitable way of assigning stipends.

L. Carr questioned the request for a teacher at .6% and the selectmen raised it to a full time person. Principle Leggett explained that since it was a default budget they did not hire anybody this year.

Enrichment complete

### **1410 – Co-Curricular**

Salary increase of 17,900.

Discussion regarding salary increase. This was a result of the Extended Learning Time. This is currently run thru the Title 2A grant and there have been some concerns that that it would be significantly decreased. It has already been decreased by about 1/3 this year, but we still had enough to keep the program. Wanted to added it in case something happens to the grant we still want to run the program. It is traditionally called the Homework Club, students stay afterschool to get additional help with specific skills, homework with the help of a teacher. On average there are about 55 students. Monitored carefully.

Question was raised as to why the stipends are equal to about 40.00/hour, the average pay for a teacher is around 22-25/hour why not use something in the middle. When you add all the stipends together, it appears you are paying double time overtime.

Principal Leggett had asked her staff for a history of all of the assignments and it does not come out to 40.00/hour. There are 6 - 8 teachers in the homework club and a paraprofessional and is student dependent. Depends on how many students show up, if the number is low the teacher would not work that day.

For an example, the Nat'l Jr. Honor Society, year long at 2 hours a week x 38 weeks divide by 400.00 is pretty low.

General Supplies went up 1,644 – Looked at the special events, field day, etc. past couple of years we were supplementing those with are student activities account and we wanted to make sure we put in an amount to cover the activities or the PTSA would have to buy shirts and etc.

Total Increase for account is 18,204.

### **Student Athletics**

Athletic Director Salary 30% increase.

Amount of time was more extensive than the stipend that was offered. Other districts have this as a full time position. Knew we needed an increase and took recommendation from previous Athletic Director.

This line is up 25% in 2 years. High interest in athletics and a very good program.

Increase of 2700.62 for a total of 52,242.30

### **1430 – Summer School**

Total students – 46. Does not include students who are in the extended year program.

Discussion regarding benefit of summer school. Make sure learning continues. It is usually a much smaller ratio so students who are struggling with their skills have a chance to advance and concentrate on specific things, students don't slide backwards, keeps them engaged. Try to design summer program on very specific skills that the kids need.

Summer school runs 16 days during the summer, 4 hours a day. Reading and math.

Salary – last year was 6900.00 increased 800.00, depends on the number of children in the program. Amount would change to reflect the number of the children.

**Motion by S. Miller to level fund at 15,731.00**

**V. M Seconds**

**L. Carr amends motion to reduce Summer Salary line from 8000 to 7700.**



**V. MacDonald seconds**

**Discussion: No Discussion**

**J. St. Cyr No, L. Tilly Yes, M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Yes**

**Motion Passed 6-1**

Break taken at 8:10

Meeting called back to order at 8:20

**2120 – Guidance**

Requirements for guidance is 1 for every 500 for elementary and 1 for every 300 students for middle school. Guidance counselors are also teachers. Need 2 ½ guidance counselors based on job description for Alton Central School. This is reduction of .5. The reduction technically will be shown in the General Education 1100 line. Last year there were 3 guidance counselors.

Discussion regarding total salary line.

Salary - Decrease 18,268 to 104,949

Total decrease of 17,366.17

**2130 - Health Services**

Salary increase of 1,976. Administrative person received merit.

Share costs of medical assistant with the district and the IDEA. This is the special education portion which is IEP driven for some of the students who receive special education services who also have medical need. Position is shared. Some of the time is picked up by the IDEA grant.

S. Miller noted that line appears to be over staffed.

About 110 kids a day go thru the nurse's office every day.

Discussion regarding need for medical assistant. 20% of school goes to nurse's office every day. This is Pre-K thru 8, kids playing in the playground with bumps and bruises and includes students requiring medication, special feeding issues. Medical assistant assists student with feeding tube. Looked at schools who have people with G-tubes and need to have a person assigned or they don't come to school. Issue is the younger the student the more care that is needed vs. a high school. School agreed to call other towns to see how other towns handle it.

Line increases 4,027.97, total 91,308.00

**Motion by S. Miller to reduce health line by 875.00, which is 11 days for substitute RN.**

**Believes they can get along with one nurse.**

**Principal Leggett noted there was already a day when they both nurses had the stomach flu.**

**S. Miller noted that if the nurse was out the medical assistant could handle it.**

**The medical assistant works under the direction of the RN. Currently looking for a substitute RN.**

**B. Howard Seconds**

**Discussion: No Discussion**

**Vote J. St. Cyr No, L. Tilly No, M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller Yes, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard Yes, L. Carr No**

**Motion Passed 4-3**

Health Services Complete

**2210 – Improvement of Instruction**

Salary down 11,000.

Down for 2 reasons, Improvement of Instruction stipend, looked at all of the committees, how many people are on them. Also, the new negotiated teachers contract the hourly rate was reduced from 41.83/hour to 33.47/hour.

2,000 tuition reimbursement for each teacher. Can go toward conferences, mileage, course work, and workshops. New contract allows for an additional 1500.

Discussion on increasing tuition reimbursement for the paraprofessional support staff.

**Motion by J. St. Cyr to increase the Tuition Reimbursement line to 58,100 with the intent of the additional funds going to the support staff.**

**V. MacDonald seconds**

**Discussion: No additional discussion**

**Vote: J. St. Cyr Yes. L. Tilley Yes, M. DeCoff No, S. Miller No, V. MacDonald Yes, B. Howard No, L. Carr No.**

**Motion failed**

Discussion regarding money being placed in a pool vs. individual. Pool for teachers is contractual.

**Motion by M. DeCoff to increase pool for support staff from 2000 to 10,000  
V. MacDonald seconds**

**Discussion, Would like to see it moved up to 6,000. This is not the year to do it as there is no history to validate what the number should be. The principal did not put it in the budget. There may have been some abuse of this line prior, opening up this line for potential further abuse. Trying to hold the line on level funded budget for the town and the school.**

**Support staff has contracts, complaints about the test scores, but no one is helping them better themselves.**

**One on one aid has to learn how to communicate, dependent on student, adapt curriculum, some students are non-verbal, a lot patience, para professional needs to maintain. Para professional pays 36% on their insurance rates.**

**Increasing line could be used as a recruitment tool and to retain current staff.**

**M. DeCoff amends motion to 6,000  
B. Howard seconds amendment**

**Vote J. St. Cyr Yes, L. Tilly Yes, M. DeCoff Yes, S. Miller No, V. MacDonald Yes,  
B. Howard Yes, L. Carr Yes**

**Motion Passed 6-1**

8. Public Input

Reminder there is a meeting at Prospect Mountain to talk about what is happening at the high school and a presentation is being given that the Budget Committee was invited to. The Budget Committee has been invited to hold their meeting immediately following the presentation on November 15. The results of the study that was completed regarding the high school will be presented. The presentation will take about an hour and a half and begins at 6:30.

9. Adjournment

Motion by B. Howard to adjourn, V. MacDonald seconds, all in favor

Adjournment 9:20 pm

Approved 12/6/2011

Respectfully submitted

Peggy Hawksley

