

TOWN OF ALTON

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

**ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
(Approved 11/27/07)
November 13, 2007**

Present: Stephen Miller, Elizabeth Dominick, Richard MacDonald, Karen Painter, Gregory Fuller, Peter Bolster (Alton Selectmen Representative), Jeffrey St. Cyr (School Board Representative), Krista Argiropolis (Recorder) Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ROLL CALL

P. Bolster was absent at the time of roll call but entered the meeting at 6:43PM.

III. HOUSEKEEPING

S. Miller added Public Channel to the agenda, under New Business.

There were no minutes available to be approved.

S. Miller announced that all the charitable groups needed to present their requests. He asked the Committee if they wished to hear the requests on 11/15/07 or if they wanted to do it on 11/27/07 or 12/4/07, when they met to review CIP. There was discussion about the scheduling. The Committee agreed by consensus to 11/27/07 for review of the charitable organization requests.

IV. OLD BUSINESS

G. Fuller asked if the Committee had made any decisions at the last meeting about taping the meetings. S. Miller stated he liked the informality of the meetings and felt that taping the meetings would change things. G. Fuller stated that if people knew how much time was spent they would look at what the Alton Budget Committee does much more and listen to them about it. He felt that people needed to know about it. R. MacDonald felt that nothing good would come out of taping the meetings. There was discussion about the benefits and problems that could come from videotaping meetings.

G. Fuller motioned to have the Alton Budget Committee meetings videotaped and played on cable television for better communication to be available to the public about what the Committee were doing. K. Painter seconded the motion. G. Fuller stated that if he was changing how he acted on camera then he would be a phony and felt that the public needed to see what they were doing. P. Bolster stated he felt that it would be too much information on the cable channel and that people wouldn't view the whole thing. The vote was called and the motion failed, with three members voting yes, three members voting no, and one member abstaining. (Yes - GF, KP, JS / No – ED, PB, RM / Abstain – SM).

G. Fuller motioned to have audiotapes available to the public from the Alton Budget Committee and K. Painter seconded the motion. There was discussion about the motion. The motion failed. (Yes – GF, KP, JS / No – ED, PB, RM, SM).

S. Miller motioned to have a special warrant article to be drafted by the Alton Budget Committee to request the Alton Budget Committee to have their meetings taped and presented to Metrocast Cablevision to be shown on the public access channel. K. Painter seconded the motion. The vote failed by a vote of one “Yes” and six “No votes. (Yes - SM / No – ED, PB, RM, GF, KP, JS).

V. NEW BUSINESS
a. ELECTIONS (4140)

Marybee Longabaugher reported that there would be four election days this year but there was only one last year. She spoke about Election Net, a statewide vote list that is available from Concord, NH and is online. Each voter now has a barcode number and has to be scanned. She stated the process is very time consuming.

The Committee reviewed the requested budget for FY 2008. There was very little discussion about the requested budget. All areas were felt to be covered.

b. TOWN CLERK (4133)

Lisa Waterman, Town Clerk, presented the requested budget for FY 2008. The Committee reviewed the budget.

L. Waterman spoke about the justification for some of the budget line increases for postage, office supplies, travel/mileage, and other areas. S. Miller asked what the projected revenue might be for 2008 and L. Waterman responded that she thought it might be around one million dollars, gross. All revenues are gross, not net.

There was a brief discussion about computer expense. S. Miller asked about how much was paid out for computer support and R. Bailey responded he thought it was probably about \$10,000 to \$12,000 per year. He noted that it would much more expensive to have a full time tech support person employed by the town.

P. Bolster spoke about the renovations to the Town Clerk's office. The project may be done tomorrow.

c. ASSESSING (4193)

Tom Sargent presented the requested budget for the Assessing Department for FY 2008. The Committee reviewed the requested budget.

It was noted that there is \$1.00 in the Benefit Buyout line. R. Bailey stated that everyone in the department would be taking a vacation and none of the department members would be eligible for benefit buyout.

There was a discussion about Dues/Fees. T. Sargent spoke about the conferences they would be attending, which is about \$20 per person.

T. Sargent reported that the Travel/Mileage is based on if he happens to get a used police cruiser, if the voters decided to grant the police department a new car. He stated that this could be higher if the new cruiser is not approved.

There was discussion about the increase in Office Supplies. T. Sargent spoke about the justification for the increase, which includes maps, envelopes, printer cartridges, and other items so that he can keep the department up to date.

T. Sargent spoke about the Forestry budget line item. This is to check intents to cut. There was discussion about what was entailed in an intent to cut.

T. Sargent spoke about the Contracted Services budget line item. The requested amount for this budget line item is \$46,165. This is for support for Vision software, Vision website, driver of boat to islands, printing, and hiring someone to measure and list properties. There was discussion about the scope of work that the Assessing office needs to complete.

T. Sargent spoke about changes that they have found to some properties that they have needed to make because things were incorrectly recorded. P. Bolster spoke about the benefits of funding this department because of the revenue it created for the town.

T. Sargent corrected the Map Updating budget line item. The requested amount should be \$2,400, but it is in the budget book as \$2,300.

T. Sargent spoke about the request for Assessing Equipment, which is \$4,500. This is for a Vision Tablet, a laptop-like device that will help save time so they won't need to do so much data entry in the computer. He stated he might try to find a less expensive device that would be compatible with Vision software but wasn't sure if that would be available.

S. Miller asked if the Assessing budget was going to be under budget this year. T. Sargent stated that there was a correction made and thought he'd come out at about 4%.

S. Miller asked R. Bailey if highway money was taken out of the budget that was causing the town to go into a deficit, if the town would be under or over budget. R. Bailey reported that if there wasn't a storm earlier in the year that they would be under budget but that he also had a payroll issue that needed to be resolved. He reported that there are 53 pay weeks in this year and he had budgeted for only 52. He stated he would be looking at how to pay that one extra week.

There was a discussion about the use of encumbered funds. R. Bailey spoke about the process of encumbering funds at the end of the year.

T. Sargent asked the Committee if the school has a budget committee such as this. S. Miller explained that there is a JMA Budget Committee, composed of members of the Alton and Barnstead town budget committees. S. Miller stated that the two schools presented their budgets to the Committee.

T. Sargent explained that the reason he asked was because the school's budget had increased 12% and felt that the other town departments were working to keep their budget amounts low while the school. He spoke about some of the problems he has with seasonal people trying to justify the budget. He stated that the school's portion of the tax rate was about 60%. J. St Cyr stated he was the school board representative to the Committee and would be glad to meet with T. Sargent to discuss his concerns.

d. PARKS & REC. (4520)

Kellie Troendel, Director, Parks and Recreation, presented the requested budget for FY 2008. She reported that there is a request for a computer in the budget, which is why the budget has increased from the previous year.

The Committee reviewed the requested budget. There was discussion about the Director's Salary. A cost of living increase has been approved by the Alton Selectmen. The Director reached step 10 in 2005 and has not had a cost of living increase since then.

G. Fuller asked if there was a standard for the computers that the town buys. R. Bailey responded that it depends on what the department needs, as decided by the computer tech support person. A new computer costs about \$1,100 to \$1,200. G. Fuller requested to see the specifications for the computers used by the town offices. There was discussion about possible cost savings that could be found in this budget line item.

S. Miller asked what estimated revenues were from special events and programs. K. Troendel responded that there were no revenues for concerts. R. Bailey stated he could get the Committee the information about revenues that would come from this department.

There was discussion about the fees of the programs offered by the Parks & Rec. department. S. Miller asked about the justification for increases in fees. K. Troendel responded that because of increases for coaches, t-shirts, and other things needed for the sports, that is why there was an increase in the fees.

e. BUILDING & GROUNDS (4194)

K. Troendel reported that the budget is over the percentage it was requested that the directors present their budget at and this was because of the bandstand in the water at Alton Bay. She stated that she would speak about it more when they got to it in the budget.

The Committee reviewed the requested budget.

K. Troendel made a correction on the Overtime Wages requested. The total requested should be \$10,493.

There was discussion about the amount requested for Benefit Buy-Out. K. Troendel reported that it was level funded and was a best guess. The amounts have been used in the past when there were terminations or when people did not use their vacation time.

The Committee discussed the requested budget line item for Telephone. There are two cell phones used by the department. One of the phones is the town's phone and the second phone is an employee's phone, which is paid for with a \$40/month stipend.

There was discussion about the Vehicle Expense budget line item. S. Miller spoke about his concerns with expenses being budgeted in the mechanic's budget and in the Grounds & Maintenance budget. There was a discussion about the appropriation of the money for vehicle expenses. K. Painter spoke about her concerns about the money being appropriated twice in the budget. R. Bailey stated that it didn't happen that way in the public sector and stated that they were not double charging for parts. P. Bolster stated they had done it this way for years and if it was an issue, the auditor would have found it when the accounts were audited. R. Bailey stated that things were done differently in the public sector and felt that S. Miller didn't understand how things were budgeted. There was additional discussion about the budgeting within the department for things that were requested from other departments, such as in this case of a car part that would come from the mechanic and was also budgeted for in the Highway Department's budget.

K. Troendel spoke about some of the expenses that were budgeted for the Alton Bay Community Center. There is going to be some upgrades done to the building. She stated they had actually received complaints from people about the condition of the building.

K. Troendel spoke about the requested budget line item for the Bandstand. She noted that the bandstand in the water at Alton Bay needs significant repairs and reviewed some of the repairs needed. G. Fuller stated it should be in a warrant article and that the default budget would increase because of this request. There was discussion about the history of repairs of the bandstand.

There was discussion about the requested budget line item for Dock Expense. K. Troendel reported that dock bumpers were needed and they had received complaints about the lack of protected edging around the docks.

P. Bolster spoke about the Milfoil issues in the public waters in the town of Alton. There is a new budget line item for Milfoil Treatment for \$2,500. The DES provided a matching grant that will be applied in 2008 to address the serious milfoil problem in the lake. There was a discussion about issues with milfoil.

The Committee completed the review of the requested budget. All areas were felt to be covered.

f. CONSERVATION

R. Bailey presented the requested budget for Conservation for FY 2008. The Committee reviewed and briefly discussed the requested budget.

g. PUBLIC CHANNEL

R. Bailey presented the requested budget for the Public Channel for FY 2008. This budget is to pay the public access channel for broadcasting videos for the town and for allowing the town to access the channel.

COMMITTEE VOTES

PUBLIC CHANNEL

P. Bolster motioned to accept the requested budget for Public Channel (4314) at \$12,422 for FY 2008 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, GF, KP)

TOWN CLERK

E. Dominick motioned to accept the requested budget for Town Clerk (4132) at \$80,507 for FY 2008 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, GF, KP)

ASSESSING

P. Bolster motioned to accept the requested budget for Assessing (4193) at \$161,216 for FY 2008 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. R. MacDonald spoke about his concerns about the costs for Computer Expense. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, GF, KP)

GROUNDS & MAINTENANCE

G. Fuller motioned to reduce the requested budget line item for Bandstand Building Expense (4194-389, \$10,850) to \$1,050 because he felt that \$9,800 should be placed in a warrant article and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. There was discussion about the criteria for warrant articles. G. Fuller spoke about his concerns with having large items in the budget because it would increase the default budget. S. Miller felt that this was more of a building expense and not a capital item. The motion failed by a "Yes" vote of two and a "No" vote of five. (Yes – GF, ED / No - SM, RM, PB, JS, KP)

P. Bolster motioned to accept the requested budget for Grounds & Maintenance at \$205,898 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six. (SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, KP / No - GF)

PARKS & REC.

G. Fuller motioned to reduce the requested budget line item for Computer Expense (4520-162; \$1,446) to \$1,196 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion failed by a vote of two "Yes" and five "No" votes. SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, GF, KP)

E. Dominick motioned to approve the requested budget for Parks & Rec. at \$80,144 for FY 2008 and P. Bolster seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six. (SM, RM, PB, JS, ED, KP / No - GF)

CONSERVATION

S. Miller motioned to reduce the bottom line requested budget for Conservation (4612; \$3,598) and G. Fuller seconded the motion. S. Miller spoke about some of the reasons why he felt the department would not use all of the money requested in the budget. R. MacDonald asked S. Miller why he was cutting this budget of approximately \$3,500 and not cutting larger budgets that had been requested.

S. Miller withdrew his motion and G. Fuller withdrew his second.

P. Bolster motioned to accept the requested budget for Conservation (4162) at \$3,598 for FY 2008 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of six. (RM, PB, JS, ED, KP, GF / No - SM)

ELECTIONS

E. Dominick motioned to accept the requested budget for Elections at \$14,452 for FY 2008 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (RM, PB, JS, ED, KP, GF, SM)

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

S. Miller asked for new books to be ordered about budgeting law. R. Bailey noted he could take care of that.

S. Miller asked the Committee when they would like to meet to discuss how to present the budget.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

There was a motion to adjourn and the motion was seconded. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (RM, PB, JS, ED, KP, GF, SM)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:52PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder, Public Sessions