

**TOWN OF ALTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING
November 20, 2024, at 6:00 PM
Alton Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Brock Mitchell, Committee Chair
Greg Fuller, Committee Member
Elizabeth Varney, Committee Member
Drew Carter, Selectmen's Representative
Carol Locke, Alternate School Board Representative

OTHERS PRESENT

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mitchell 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 Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Varney. Motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2025 Budget Presentations

Account 4155 Benefits

The committee reviewed the proposed budget presented. Mr. Heath explained the breakdown of the percentages paid by the town and employees: for medical, the town pays 96.5%; for dental, the town pays 80%. The committee reviewed the breakdown of family and single plans. Mr. Heath explained the retirement contributions for police and fire differ from all other full time employees. He also explained the fire department started transitioning to full time employees in 2021. There was extensive discussion on how the retirement system contributions are calculated.

MOTION: To approve the budget for FY 2025 for Account 4155 as presented in the amount of \$296,798. Motion by Ms. Varney. Second by Ms. Locke. Motion passed unanimously.

Account 4324 Department of Public Works – Solid Waste

The committee reviewed the proposed budget presented. Mr. Heath stated the facility is looking to add a roll off truck as the contract with Waste Management is ending in 2026; the trucking rates will be increasing by 110%. He explained there are three unfilled part time positions that

will be combined to fill this roll, but the rate spike doesn't occur until 2026. He stated a capital reserve fund is covering the costs for the landfill monitoring so that line was reduced in the budget. The committee discussed how capital reserve and expendable trust funds are used, as well as the role of the Trustees of the Trust Funds. It was noted the waste disposal fees went up.

MOTION: To approve the budget for FY 2025 for Account 4324, Department of Public Works, Solid Waste, in the amount of \$395,521. Motion by Ms. Varney. Second by Ms. Locke. Motion passed unanimously.

Account Household Hazardous Waste

The committee reviewed the proposed budget presented. Mr. Heath stated this is for disposal of hazardous waste materials including paint and fuels; they also partner with Wolfeboro to provide this service at a facility in both towns. There is tracking of who uses the service; the Town pays 30% of the operating costs. Mr. Heath explained there is a contract with Safe Harbors for the disposal of the items collected; this cost has increased by 15%. Mr. Fuller stated he believes the cell phone cost of \$70 per month is excessive for the part time position. Mr. Heath will verify the purpose of this line.

MOTION: To approve the budget for FY 2025 for Account 4326, HHW Program, in the amount of \$31,300. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Locke. Motion passed unanimously. Mr. Fuller abstained.

Account 4132 Town Clerk/Tax Collector

The committee reviewed the proposed budget presented. Mr. Heath stated this account includes three full time positions; he stated the main increases are in the wages line. The copier costs are shared between departments.

MOTION: To approve the budget for FY 2025 for Account 4132 Town Clerk/Tax Collector in the amount of \$193,666. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.

Account Water Department

The committee reviewed the proposed budget presented. Mr. Heath explained this account is funded by the end users; the Board of Selectmen have taken over the duties of the water commissioners and a warrant article is required to be presented for this account. He stated the costs are covered by revenues collected from users.

MOTION: To approve the budget for FY 2025 for the Water Department in the amount of \$541,430. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.

Tax Rate

The committee reviewed and discussed a summary presented. Mr. Heath gave an overview of the tax rate, which was reduced by \$0.20; he stated the Board of Selectmen has accepted over \$531,000 of FEMA funds for reimbursement of storm damage repairs, that will be paid back to General Fund and a warrant article will be presented to apply the funds to the operating fund. He stated the current unassigned fund balance is at 14%; the maximum recommended by the New

Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration is 17%. He explained that the tax rate is estimated based on projected revenues and debts. The finance manager will attend the next meeting to provide further details.

Approval of Minutes

September 23, 2024 -No edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as presented. Motion by Ms. Locke. Second by Mr. Carter. Motion passed unanimously.**

October 10, 2024 -Edits were made. **MOTION: To approve the minutes as amended. Motion by Ms. Locke. Second by Mr. Carter. Motion passed unanimously.**

Future Meetings:

December 4, 2024, 6:00 PM – Review Default Budget and warrant articles
December 11, 2024, 6:00 PM

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary