

**TOWN OF ALTON**  
**BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING**  
**November 20, 2025 at 6:00 PM**  
**Alton Town Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Greg Fuller, Acting Chair  
Priscilla Terry, Committee Member  
Hal Shurtleff, Committee Member  
Jill Houser, Committee Member  
Christi Wood, School Board Representative  
*Elizabeth Varney – Absent (excused)*  
*Drew Carter – Absent (excused)*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator  
Laura Parker, Finance Manager  
Seth Garland, DPW Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Fuller 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 Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

Ms. Parker provided amounts for state revenues; rooms and meals tax \$603,583 and highway block grant \$211,773.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Review of 2026 Budgets

*Account – Department of Public Works*

Mr. Garland gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget.

Ms. Houser asked if there was an assumption that all employees would receive a 4% increase.  
Mr. Garland responded yes.

Ms. Houser stated that she assumed the starting wage is around \$35/hour. Mr. Garland answered a Light Equipment Operator starts at \$22.50/hour.

Ms. Terry questioned the increase in postage. Mr. Garland responded that is due to notification of abutters of tree work and paving.

Ms. Houser asked where the security cameras are located. Mr. Garland answered there are cameras at the highway department as well as multiple town buildings around town.

Ms. Terry inquired about how to better enforce cars not displaying a sticker at the Solid Waste Center. Mr. Garland responded it is up to the staff to police stickers. Mr. Fuller stated he believes that the \$1.00 cost of stickers is too low.

Ms. Terry questioned why the increase in Equipment Expenses. Mr. Garland answered this is due to all departments under public works umbrella being combined into one line. Mr. Heath further explained the public works structure combining highway, cemetery, solid waste, grounds and maintenance into one department which was done in 2023.

Ms. Houser asked what is represented in the \$10,000 increase in the building expenses. Mr. Garland replied that is mostly due to pumping the floor drain holding tank which needs to be done twice a year and costs roughly \$5,300.

Mr. Fuller requested the balance in the recycling revolving fund. Ms. Parker provided the current balance is \$469,889, adding in 2024 \$139,474 was collected and \$111,000 was spent on qualifying expenses. Mr. Garland added that the qualifying expenses are mostly recycling equipment such as the upcoming expense for the roll off truck lease payment.

Ms. Houser commented she would like to see some public education regarding invasive species control such as not using japanese knotweed as decoration. Ms. Terry asked which product was being used. Mr. Garland answered a commercial version of roundup which is applied by a subcontractor with the necessary licenses.

**MOTION: To approve the Department of Public Works budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$2,107,862. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – DPW Solid Waste*

Mr. Garland gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, noting a \$53,302 increase due to contracted increases. Waste Management has a \$100/ton increase for disposal of household waste which is still the best price after checking with Casella which would have been \$30/ton more.

Mr. Fuller asked if the price of fuel went up. Mr. Garland responded currently State rate is \$2.63/gallon for diesel and \$2.30/gallon for gasoline. Ms. Parker added year to date spent on fuel is \$3,950. Mr. Fuller questioned what price per gallon was included in the default budget from 2023. Ms. Garland answered \$3.06/gallon. Ms. Parker clarified that the fuel line was over expended in 2023 by \$1,100 and in 2024 by \$500.

Mr. Shurtleff asked how many employees are currently employed at the Solid Waste Center. Mr. Garland responded four.

Ms. Houser questioned the waste disposal fees line which has a sizeable increase and whether it is due to increased tonnage or increased disposal costs. Mr. Garland replied the increase is due to the increase in per ton disposal costs with the new Waste Management contract.

**MOTION: To approve the DPW Solid Waste budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$394,641. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Houser. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – DPW Cemetery*

Mr. Garland gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, noting a lot of the lines have been moved to the Department of Public Works budget.

Mr. Fuller asked why the dues and fees increased. Mr. Garland answered the increase is due to the added Chronical subscription, which tracks both Town cemeteries which allows people to go on and find their loved ones.

Ms. Houser questioned whether there was a fund to handle cemetery maintenance costs. Mr. Garland explained there is a CRF for the New Riverside Cemetery expansion and the operating budget is for the day-to-day maintenance of the existing buildings.

**MOTION: To approve the DPW Cemetery budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$7,800. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – DPW Grounds & Maintenance*

Mr. Garland gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, noting a \$7,731 decrease.

Mr. Heath explained that the 2023 budget the default was based on was anticipated a significant increase in electricity that was never realized which is why the electricity lines have decreased.

Ms. Houser questioned the propane increase. Mr. Garland explained that is due to the Town Hall switching over to propane with the new HVAC system. Mr. Fuller asked if all Town buildings were propane now. Mr. Garland answered all except the DPW building and Solid Waste garage.

**MOTION: To approve the DPW Grounds & Maintenance budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$140,093. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Election & Registration*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget and explained the Board of Selectmen removed the polling tablets due to the current state of the budget. He added this budget is dictated by Statute regarding how many elections we need to hold each year.

Mr. Fuller asked how many elections there will be in 2026. Mr. Heath answered three.

Ms. Houser recommended everyone review the Board of Selectmen meeting where they had an

informative discussion regarding the polling pads with the Town Clerk and Moderator.

Ms. Terry questioned the audio students referenced in the part-time line. Mr. responded that pays for the audio students who work at the Deliberative Session.

**MOTION: To approve the Election & Registration budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$20,207. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Insurance*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, noting the rates are provided to the Town by Primex each year. He added there is an overall increase of 5.6% which is reasonable considering what is currently going on in the world with insurance.

**MOTION: To approve the Insurance budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$363,420. Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – IT Department*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget, noting most of the increase is due to software subscriptions have increased since 2023 budget the current default is based on.

Mr. Fuller asked how many people work in the IT Department. Mr. Heath answered one employee, which is the IT Manager.

Mr. Fuller stated that 34 countries use free alternatives to Microsoft and wonders why the Town doesn't consider this option. Mr. Heath replied he assumes the concern is with security, however he would pass the question on to the IT Manager.

Ms. Houser questioned when people will be able to do more transactions online, such as registration for recreation programs or purchasing solid waste stickers. Mr. Heath responded the Town is in the process of transitioning to new finance software and hopes more online payment options will be available in the future.

Mr. Fuller asked what was reflected in the \$5,200 average spent under general expense. Mr. Heath explained this reflects miscellaneous, unforeseen hardware parts that need to be replaced.

Mr. Fuller questioned what are considered hardware accessories. Mr. Heath answered items such as keyboards and mice.

**MOTION: To approve the IT Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$210,412. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Houser. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Benefit Administration*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. He gave an overview of the current status of the Town's medical insurance. New Hampshire Interlocal Trust, the Town's former risk pool, went out of business effective July 1, 2025. The finance team was

able to secure an 18-month contract with Anthem with a 3% increase, which is unheard of in this insurance market. The overall benefit budget has only increased 1.5% in this proposed budget.

Mr. Fuller asked what percentage employees pay of the premium. Mr. Heath answered 3.5%.

**MOTION: To approve the Benefit Administration budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$2,841,118. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.**

*Account – Library*

Mr. Heath gave an overview of the department's proposed FY 2026 budget. He explained the wage line went down due to hiring a new director since the current librarian is retiring at the end of the year.

Mr. Fuller commended the current director regarding the level of detail in her budget justification.

Mr. Heath explained the unique situation regarding the Library Trustees and their relationship with the Town.

**MOTION: To approve the Library Department budget for FY 2026 in the amount of \$172,178. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

October 29, 2025

**MOTION: To approve the October 29, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed 4-0 (Mr. Fuller abstained).**

**OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Heath stated the Joint School Budget Committee is looking for two members from this Budget Committee to sit on that committee. They are meeting Tuesday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, if needed, and their Public Hearing will be Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. All meetings will be held at the Prospect Mountain High School Library at 6:00 PM. Ms. Terry and Mr. Shurtleff volunteered.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday, December 3, 2025, 6:00 PM (*Fire Department & Default*)

Thursday, December 18, 2025, 6:00 PM (*School & Warrant Articles*)

Wednesday, January 7, 2026 6:00 PM (*Public Hearing*)

Wednesday, January 14, 2026 6:00 PM (*Public Hearing Snow Date*)

Thursday, January 15, 2026 6:00 PM (*Public Hearing Snow Date #2*)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Carol Long*

Carol Long, Budget Committee Secretary