

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
December 14, 2020
(Approved – December 28, 2020)

Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

R. Wentworth announced the following:

Until Further Notice: To keep our members and staff safe, and to comply with RSA 91-A, the State of Emergency, and Governor's Orders, restrictions on public gatherings, The Town of Alton is moving from "in-person" meetings to "remote audio participation meetings". To remotely attend the meeting (audio only) visit our website: www.alton.nh.gov for telephone access and remote access instructions listed under News and Announcements on the home page or telephone the Selectmen's Office 603-875-2113 or 603-875-0229 between 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM for the Dial-in Code and Meeting ID for each Selectmen's Meeting .

The Board led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence.

The following staff members were present:

Reuben Wentworth, Chairman
Virgil MacDonald, Vice Chairman, Excused Absence
Philip V. Wittmann, Selectman
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman
Bob Holt, Selectman
Elizabeth Dionne, Town Administrator
Laura Parker, Finance Manager

R. Wentworth informed the Board that item #1 under New Business will be removed and placed after returning from Non-Public Session and add #2 under Old Business, Year End Budget.

Agenda Approval

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Announcements

None

Submission of Public Comments - Questions - Concerns

None

Appointments

- Jane Davis - Involuntary Lot Merger - Request to Unmerge, Map 40 Lot 44

Jane Davis was invited to remotely join the meeting. The Board was informed that a plot plan was dropped off to the Town Hall today. This Plot Plan has not been reviewed by the Tax Assessor, Planner or Code Official. L. Dionne noted that the Town Attorney has reviewed and feels that J. Davis should be allowed to speak but hold off on a decision until the next meeting to allow the Plot Plan to be reviewed by all involved. B. Holt does not see a date on the Plan and would like to know when this plan was done. The Tax Assessor is recommending that an updated Plot Plan/Survey be done. According to the Town Planner when the septic approval was applied for they used the total lot as the basis. Ms. Davis remotely joined the conversation. The Board was informed that she visited the Engineer, Tom Varney on November 5, 2020 and he clearly indicated to her that there were two (2) separate septic designs and each was designed on the individual lots. One lot has 26,400 square feet, the other has 19,450

square feet. The Tax Assessor is recommending that a registered Plot Plan be done. The one that was dropped off has no dates on it. This will need to be reviewed by all parties involved. In order for this to move forward the Board requests that a Plan with a date or a letter stating when this was plan was done which was based on two (2) individual lots. Ms. Davis will request the information from Mr. Varney. She informed the Board that her and her brother hired an attorney to be sure because the deed clearly indicated (100 year deed) that it was two (2) lots. The Board needs to be sure that they have all of the information before making a decision. This will go back to them next Monday. B. Holt questioned if both of the septic systems have been installed. Back in the 1980's her parents as a stipulation of the Town required the second system which is totally separate. P. LaRochelle asked about the access to the 19,450 square foot lot; it appears there is no driveway to that lot. Ms. Davis confirmed that there is no formal access to that lot. Is there a proposed driveway? Ms. Davis stated, it has not gone that far yet but would be addressed in the future with a possible easement; the intent is to sell the year round home with an easement being created with a potential buyer. The intent is to continue with a shared well. Ms. Davis gave a history of the lots was given and hopes that there would be a favorable opinion from the Board. B. Holt feels that with no current easement that this should be addressed with the Town Attorney for clarification. Ms. Davis will get the information to the Board.

New Business

1. Solid Waste Department - Annual Facility Report Signator

This item was moved to after Non-Public Session.

2. Solid Waste Department - Part-Time Hour Schedule Adjustment

S. Simonds, Solid Waste Director is requesting that the hours for the Part-time position at the Solid Waste Center be adjusted to be more accommodating to all involved.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the adjustment of the Part-Time Solid Waste Center employee's hours for the 2021 budget (\$18,330) for 24 hours a week, 6 hours a day, 4 days a week and P. Wittmann seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Note: L. Dionne, Town Administrator fully supports this recommendation.

3. Fire Department - Boat and Ladder Truck Discussion

J. Beaudoin, Fire Chief remotely joined the meeting. He reminded the Board that he had previously come to the Board for replacement of the ladder truck with a used truck. The preference was for the Chief to work with CIP for a new truck over two (2) years, placing \$500,000 each year. A new situation has come up with the fire boat which has a leak. The boat is scheduled to be replaced in 2022. Currently they are quoting 3K for the repairs with what they can see. Once it is further looked into it potentially will have other problems. Last year roughly 4K was spent on repairs. J. Beaudoin would like to move the boat up to 2021 but fears that the account will be decimated. The solution would be a Warrant Article for a lease option for the ladder truck. A purpose built boat is roughly \$300,000. Money for the boat would come from the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve and the Ambulance Revolving Fund because the boat is used for both functions. R. Wentworth asked if there was enough money in the Ambulance Fund for a new Ambulance; J. Beaudoin responded "yes" which currently has \$676,500. Approximately \$200,000 is being brought into that account yearly. The boat is getting to the point of needing to be replaced. Gilford's boat would be a somewhat comparable vessel with some differences discussed. Grants will still be looked into. Scenario plans were discussed. 250K for the boat, 250K for the ladder truck with hopes of a grant assisting. P. LaRochelle asked about the other repairs that might be necessary for the boat besides the leak. There is a significant amount of water causing the bilge pump to run constantly therefore killing the batteries in a couple of days. Selling the boat and the value were discussed. The boat is currently at Eastern; they are waiting on the Town for a decision as to moving forward with a fix. They could be asked about a trade-in value and are the ones who quoted the replacement boat. The year of the boat was unknown and needs to be known, it is wood decking but mostly fiberglass. The leak is on the underside somewhere near the bilge and is the one issue that is known, the unknown is what is under the deck. The Board members agreed that spending roughly 4K in repairs in a two (2) year period is not a lot of money, see what it would take for repairs to get another year or two of services from it.

The boat has two (2) motors and believed that they are 22-years old. R. Wentworth will request a motion with a dollar value for the repairs because Eastern will probably not tear the boat apart without charging; an estimate will need to be obtained. Warrant Articles will be coming forward. R. Wentworth offered other options and further requested that J. Beaudoin get rough estimates for the repairs for pulling the boat apart and get the year of the boat (now known, 1997) then come back to the Board at the next meeting or once the information is obtained. L. Dionne had no comments. It was the consensus of the Board to get the discussed/requested information. Roll call consensus:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

4. Special Event Applications - Castleberry Fairs, July 17 & 18, 2021 and September 4, 5 & 6, 2021

L. Dionne informed the Board that these are annual applications for the Craft Fairs. Everything would be status quo as has been in the past. R. Wentworth feels that the COVID situation will not disappear; he has a concern that if the public restrooms are being used during these events which will result in additional cleaning that will need to be done during these events; will there be an upcharge. L. Dionne feels that this should be something that the EM Team should weigh in on; they might require porta-potties. The Board was in agreement to this and would like an opinion from them before approving. B. Holt would like to have a contingency of the COVID status at the time of the events. This will be tabled until the EM Team reviews the applications and makes comment.

TABLED

Old Business:

1. Proposed 2021 Budget Discussion

A breakdown of the Proposed 2021 Budget was given to the Board. R. Wentworth informed the Board that this is no longer the Selectmen's Budget it is actually the Budget Committee's Budget. They have reviewed and agreed with the Selectmen's recommended budgets. The only time for making any changes would be at the Deliberative Session. The Selectmen can no longer make changes as it is not our budget. The \$605,000 represents a lot due to the major impacts of the insurance rate increases of \$232,000 and the Reassessment at \$81,000 in addition to the new Driver position at the Highway Department, new Full-Time Fire Crew, increase in the Highway sand costs, Solid Waste increases which all result in a \$400,000 increase. This all makes a significant impact to this budget. The only way this could be done would be against the merits, salaries and COLA. R. Wentworth does not know where else it could come from and is satisfied with the budget and would defend it if necessary. He is not in favor of percentages which are very misleading. B. Holt commented he is not happy with the 7.78% increase and wants to cut the overall budget by \$200,000. This can be reviewed and discussed now but changes can only be made on the floor at the Deliberative Session. He questioned the budget process. R. Wentworth again voiced he doesn't know where any cuts can be changed. P. LaRochelle voiced it would be directly effecting merit and COLA. R. Wentworth stated you would need to go through each budget line by line cutting each accordingly or you take certain lines and eliminate totally. This could be given to the Department Heads to decide where to cut but it is the Board of Selectmen's responsibility as it is now our budget. B. Holt feels that every year there is a healthy surplus which could be a result of good management. He feels that if this budget gets cut at Deliberative Session by a little over 2% he believes it can be saved within the Operating Budget and is the job of the Town Administrator, Finance Director and the Department Heads to decide the cuts. B. Holt is seriously considering making the motion to cut \$200,000 at Deliberative Session and would do it tonight if it were possible. P. Wittmann made comments on the benefit package being left alone this year and agreed that it would be worked on in January; that can't be touched. He feels that the departments can come up with a 2% cut when it works within a private sector and makes sense to make cuts. R. Wentworth referred to all of the budgets from Administration to Solid Waste with a 2% cut would result in \$254,000 +/- . P. Wittmann agrees with B. Holt that cuts can be made and is the job of the departments. Particulars of the various department budgets were mentioned and where cuts might be made. The Board agreed with this budget right from the start. This can be discussed until Deliberative Session with the \$8,378,183 going to that session. B. Holt feels that the salaried employees in this Town are paid a lot of money; R. Wentworth agrees. Again, it is their job to operate the Town and the Selectmen's job is to give them allotted money to do so. P. Wittmann wants to discuss this over the next couple of meetings. R. Wentworth requested a motion on how the Board wants to proceed on whether to discuss and reduce the budget at Deliberative Session.

P. Wittmann made a motion to cut the Budget at Deliberative Session by 2% or \$209,454 and B. Holt seconded.

Further Discussion: P. Wittmann feels it would be worth asking each Department Head to come up with a 2% cut in the budget.

At this time the motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, no

R. Wentworth asked the Board if they wanted the Town Administrator to go to the Department Heads to find out where they can cut the budgets by \$200,000 at Deliberative Session. P. Wittmann stated it would be 2% out of their current budgets that were approved. B. Holt would like to change that request to ask the departments if they can live with that cut and would it work. P. LaRochelle would like to know if this would be possible by the Departments. R. Wentworth feels that the Board should direct the Town Administrator get together with the Department Heads to come up with a 2% reduction in the budgets. This would be the best and easiest way to accomplish this. P. LaRochelle stated that this should be done to see if it is possible. It is either the Board wants this or they don't want it. P. LaRochelle was going to cut this amount in half to \$100,000 or 1%; it doesn't hurt to ask each department for the possibility. P. LaRochelle would like to make the motion 1% to 2%.

P. Wittmann made a motion to ask the Town Administrator (motion not completed)

Further Discussion: R. Wentworth noted it should be to direct the Town Administrator as the Department Head to the Board of Selectmen and she should go to her Department Heads for cutting the 2% or \$200,000 from the departments. This would be reported back to the Board. P. LaRochelle agrees and would make a motion for it to be is it possible to ask the Town Administrator to go to each department asking them to cut their budgets by 1% to 2%. This is not directing this is asking. L. Dionne understands the direction the Board is leading to and offered to take care of this task.

The Consensus of the Board is to have L. Dionne, Town Administrator to work with the Departments to accomplish the reductions as discussed.

2. 2020 Year End Budget

R. Wentworth feels that at this time, in the current budget a spending freeze should be implemented for essential spending only until December 31st. The consensus of the Board agreed to the spending freeze. Various Boards were mentioned. L. Dionne will send reach out to all departments.

Selectmen Reports

B. Holt had nothing to report.

P. LaRochelle reported that there have been several meetings with the Master Plan Committee; they are moving forward with the RFP for the Master Plan Consultant narrowing it down to the direction it will take. The next meeting is January 6, 2021.

P. Wittmann had nothing to report but recalls he is the Alternate and feels that he can be there during the Master Plan Committee meetings but cannot vote. Most members are remote.

R. Wentworth has nothing to report.

Town Administrator Report by L. Dionne

Shibley's Lease

An email chain and Draft Plot Plan were provided to the Board. Do you want the curtilage to be measured out from the building or from the soffit (dripline) which sticks out approximately a foot from the side of the building? R. Wentworth asked about the plan with the dashed lines with the dock not being within the curtilage. There has been a lot of discussion between the involved parties including the Town Attorney. R. Wentworth noted that there is case law on this. P. LaRochelle believes it should be measured from the dripline.

R. Wentworth made a motion have the shown curtilage area on the plan for Shibley's by the Pier Restaurant; to be measured from the dripline on the building and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

It was noted that this will come back to the Board. P. LaRochelle elaborated on the dock and curtilage. This plan is a draft and will change.

West Alton Brook

A DOT document was provided to the Board in reference to some bridge maintenance on the bridge on Route 11A over the West Alton Brook. This was given to the Board as a courtesy, this was sent to the Conservation Commission too. They are looking into the request from DOT regarding Wetlands Mitigation that DOT will need to do. This has been discussed by the Conservation Commission and will be followed up by them.

Deliberative Session

According to the NHMA calendar there is a week timeframe for scheduling the Deliberative Session which would be January 30 to February 6th. Normally it is on a Tuesday evening which is February 2nd with a Snow Date of Wednesday, February 3rd.

P. Wittmann made a motion to schedule Deliberative Session on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 with a Snow Date of Wednesday, February 3, 2021 and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Reed Road Paving and Parking Issues

The Emergency Management Team recommends signage for both sides of Reed Road. One set at the end of the Class V portion with the other set further up on the Class VI portion of the road similar to the signage on Jesus Valley Road. The installation of the signs is recommended to be done in the spring. Soon this will be brought to the Board as an agenda item with the Forest Society wanting to participate.

2021 Default Budget

A copy of the 2021 Default Budget Worksheet was provided to the Board. There are numbered columns at the top of the worksheet. L. Dionne gave an overview of the columns. L. Parker was available to answer questions. R. Wentworth questioned the salaries with COLA and merit; COLA is considered contractual. L. Dionne noted that merit is not issued in a Default Budget. It was noted that this does not include the Water Department.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the Default Budget for 2021 in the amount of \$8,099,570 and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Water Budget

L. Parker, Finance Manager addressed the Board in reference to the Water Budget. This has been discussed back and forth with DRA because the Board expends the money. They are telling her that it should not be within the Operating Budget. This is still being debated with them. The department is self-funded. There are a couple of ways to handle this, it can be kept in the Operating Budget or there can be a second Warrant Article that states what the Water Department needs to show is that it is offset with billing so there are no taxes raised. R. Wentworth feels this is the best way to show the people. P. LaRochelle agrees. The Warrant Article will show the particulars and will show the residents that the Water Department is solely funded by the water users.

R. Wentworth made a motion to have the Water Department have its budget presented in its entirety on their own Warrant Article and P. LaRochelle seconded. L. Parker gave further explanation.

At this time the motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Water Department Default Budget

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the Water Department Default Budget for \$507,884 and B. Holt seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Approval of Minutes

December 7, 2020 - Regular

P. Wittmann made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting, December 7, 2020 as presented and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

Consent Agenda Approval

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented December 14, 2020 and P. Wittmann seconded.

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

1. Old Home Week Committee:

a. Committee membership appointment: Stacie Kiczuk, Committee Member, exp 3/31/21. (See Appointment form)

2. Town Clerk/Tax Collector Department:

a. Annual Contract Renewal: Sanders Searches LLC, for the annual mortgage searches for liens.

Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)

- Scott Williams - Ingalls Wood Subdivision

The Town Administrator recommends that this appointment, due to the legal opinion received, advising that this is not a Board of Selectmen’s issue it is a Planning Board issue only. The Board agrees it is a Planning Board issue.

B. Holt made a motion to deny the Request for Appointment from Scott Williams and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

B. Holt, yes P. LaRochelle, yes P. Wittmann, yes R. Wentworth, yes

R. Wentworth noted that this should be taken up with the Planning Board opposed to the Board of Selectmen.

Non-Public Session:

R. Wentworth moved at 7:36pm to enter into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3,II,a,c. P. LaRochelle seconded.

Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes P. LaRochelle - yes R. Wentworth - yes
R. Holt - yes Roll call vote carried unanimously

R. Wentworth moved at 8:22pm to exit nonpublic session. P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes
R. Holt - yes

P. LaRochelle - yes
Roll call vote carried unanimously

R. Wentworth - yes

R. Wentworth moved to “not divulge” #1, #2, and #3, and release #4, because divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board, or render the proposed action of the board ineffective. P. Wittmann seconded. Roll call vote:

P. Wittmann - yes
R. Holt - yes

P. LaRochelle - yes
Roll call vote carried unanimously

R. Wentworth - yes

P. LaRochelle moved to allow the Solid Waste Superintendent to sign the DES Annual Facility Report. R. Wentworth seconded. Motion carried.

Adjournment

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:24pm to adjourn. P. Wittmann seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis

Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary

