

**TOWN OF ALTON
BUDGET COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING
December 16, 2021, at 6:00 PM
Alton Town Hall**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Reuben Parker, Chair of Budget Committee
Rebecca Johnson
Brock Mitchell
Jake Bemis

OTHER PRESENT

Ryan Heath
Tim Broderick, Superintendent of Schools

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Parker called the meeting to order at 6:00PM. Roll call taken for members present.

Review of Agenda

The committee reviewed the agenda. No changes were made.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Chair Parker seconded the motion. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. CIP Committee

Mr. Heath stated the proposed budget was presented to the Board of Selectmen and after review, they were instructed to cut \$200,000. He stated the focused priorities then looked at items which could be cut, reduced or funded in another way, including some items being put on warrant articles.

2. Budget Presentations/Approvals

a. Fire Department (4220)

Mr. Heath stated vehicle lease payments were removed from the budget and then put in a separate warrant article with a proposal to pay off the loan which would save \$60,000 in interest, being funded from the unassigned fund balance and no tax rate impact. It won't affect the operating budget moving forward.

Chair Parker made a motion to rescind the prior motion and update the approved budget amount for the Fire Department to \$994,586. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.

b. Highway Department (4312)

Mr. Heath stated some items were taken out including vehicle leases; three leases were added to warrant articles to be paid off through surplus and the unassigned fund balance; there will also be savings in interest of around \$7,000.

Chair Parker made a motion to approve the updated Highway Department budget in the amount of \$1,323,901. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.

c. Water Works (4331)

Mr. Heath stated there are two projects planned for this year which are allocated in the operating budget but those were pulled out and will be paid with surplus funds so the operating budget could be reduced.

Chair Parker made a motion to approve the budget for Water Works Department in the amount of \$520,072. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.

d. Patriotic Purposes (4583)

Mr. Heath stated they pulled the fireworks display from the budget and clarified the fireworks display will not be eliminated but the funding will come from surplus.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve account for Patriotic Purposes in the revised amount of \$1,991. Mr. Bemis seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.

e. Benefits (4155)

Mr. Heath stated due to hiring problems, some of the premiums for benefits that were budgeted for last year, were not utilized last year so they took \$70,000 out of health and dental to pay the first month's premiums for this year.

Mr. Mitchell made a motion to approve the Benefits account as presented in the amount of \$2,195,578. Mr. Bemis seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.

3. Alton School Budget

Tim Broderick, Superintendent of Schools, stated the school board will be voting on the budget presented on January 4 and presented draft warrant articles.

Chair Parker asked why special education costs are down by 25%. Mr. Broderick explained that line includes transportation of students for out-of-district placement and there are numerous reasons why those services may no longer be needed.

Chair Parker asked what the purpose of the technology trust is. Mr. Broderick explained this was set up by the school board two years ago, by warrant article, to hold funds in reserve if the district has a cyber attack and basically acts as an insurance.

Chair Parker noted technical support has increased significantly. Mr. Broderick stated there was a program related change; he explained last year's budget was based on a plan to hire a new employee but they weren't able to fill the position so the change reflects the need to go back to outsourcing services.

Chair Parker noted the software expenses are up as well. Mr. Broderick stated it reflects an increase in network servers and supports; he stated the firewall content filter is new as well.

Mr. Broderick explained extended learning plans and individual education plans, noting some of these lines were granted funded in the past.

Chair Parker noted athletic salaries were increased. Mr. Broderick stated the administration requested the increases as coaches for A teams were paid higher than B teams but this is to pay all coaches the same stipend for a season of work.

Chair Parker noted the equipment replacement line is nearly zeroed out. Mr. Broderick stated there are no projects scheduled for this year.

Mr. Broderick stated they are discussing an automation project to eliminate pneumatic controls for the environmental systems with computerized controls; this would be a phased project and is in the Capital Improvement Plan with the school board.

Mr. Broderick gave an overview of the per pupil cost for the school; he explained the school board is working on plans with the Milton school to possibly bring in students and the costs would then be shared. He stated the overall affect will be to reduce the per pupil cost. Mr. Broderick stated renovations were done last year to expand the size of the cafeteria and the second phase of the project is reflected in the proposed budget.

OLD BUSINESS

Approval of Minutes

- **November 4, 2021 – Chair Parker made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion. Motion passed, 4-0-0.**
- **December 2, 2021 – Tabled.**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jennifer Riel

Jennifer Riel, Recording Secretary