

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
December 21, 2020
(Approved – January 4, 2021)

Chairman R. Wentworth convened the meeting at 6:02 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.

R. Wentworth added: To the Citizens and Taxpayers of the Town of Alton and visitors coming to the Town Hall, there is a protocol entering into the Town Hall that you are required to wear a mask and that you sign in, have your temperature taken then asked a few short questions. These guidelines are handed down by the Emergency Management Team with your protection and the employee's protection and are in place for consideration. We are asking that all citizens, taxpayers and visitors to respect the EM Team's recommendations and regulations while entering Town Buildings, especially Town Hall. If you don't want to participate in the questionnaire/temperature check or mask requirement we would ask that you remain outside. The department that you are here to see will come to you outside and conduct business with you outside the building. We ask this because the employees downstairs are doing the jobs that they are instructed to do by the Emergency Management Team.

Police Chief, Ryan Heath 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

R. Wentworth informed the Board that there are three (3) amendments to the agenda item #1 under Old Business Fire Department Boat, Snowmobile Trailer Parking in the Bay and Street Light on Main Street Business at Village Pizza

Agenda Approval

P. Wittmann made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and P. LaRochelle seconded.

Further Discussion: B. Holt asked to add items (allowed, after the roll call).

Roll call vote:

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

B. Holt asked to add Bay Parking Lot; this will be included in the Snowmobile Trailer Parking in the Bay discussion and Operating Budget under Old Business. He then inquired if there would be a Non-Public Session; he was informed there would be under Personnel (a).

B. Holt made a motion to add the Operating Budget under Old Business and P. Wittmann seconded. Roll call vote:

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

Announcements

- Town Offices will be closing at noon on Thursday, 12/24 and closed all day on Friday, 12/25 in observance of the Christmas holiday. HO, HO, HO, Merry Christmas!

Submission of Public Comments - Questions - Concerns

None

Appointments

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

This was previously brought to the Board last week. A Plot Plan was provided which had no date, she was asked to bring the original if possible to the Board, dated. Ms. Davis was contacted after the last meeting. An email was provided by legal counsel which referred to the need for an Easement that was discussed at the previous meeting. L. Dionne spoke in reference to the topography of the land and the concerns raised by this. The Assessor originally requested that a survey or certified Plot Plan of the property be required. The Easement would need to go before the ZBA and would not be up to the Board of Selectmen. Particulars of the merge were mentioned along with the process that was done by the Town in comparable cases. P. LaRochelle feels that this should be brought before the Zoning Board for a Special Exception to get the Easement taken care of then they would not need to come before the Board of Selectmen. It definitely appears that there were two lots. Attorney Sessler should be consulted. B. Holt referred to the radius of the Septic to the well. L. Dionne will bring these issues to Attorney Sessler for his opinion. At this time, J. Davis remotely joined the meeting. R. Wentworth informed Ms. Davis of going before ZBA for the Easement. J. Davis voiced displeasure with this process stating her reasons. R. Wentworth read the following opinion of Attorney Sessler which was sent to L. Dionne for the meeting:

Liz: The very fact that an easement is needed to make the division of the property work is extremely good evidence that the property has up to now been used as one lot and thus has been voluntarily merged. The easement is needed now in order to divide the property..... Add that to the septic site plan the owner submitted when seeking septic approval which showed the lots as one, with common elements such as walkways, driveways etc. there is more extremely good evidence that the owner voluntarily merged the lots in order to gain regulatory approval. If the BOS finds that the property has been merged and used as one.....there is sufficient evidence to support the decision.

J. Davis does not feel that Attorney Sessler has received all of the information that has been verified. L. Dionne confirmed that all of the information that has been provided has been forwarded to Attorney Sessler for his review. R. Jutton, Assessor remotely joined the meeting. He clarified what he believed Attorney Sessler was referring to which is merger by conduct. There is no form filled out for the merging it is done by the nature of the use of the property. R. Jutton has not changed his statement from last week and feels a true certified survey of the property on the center line showing the elevation contours is recommended. His concerns are the access with the possible use of the property as a single entity and the proximity of the house on Tract 2 to the center line. If it observes all of the setbacks that were in place in the 1985 it would lead towards the property owner considering it two (2) separate lots. This historically is two (2) lots when it was purchased in 1904 by separate deeds then recorded separately in the description by one deed. The question is the way the property is currently being used, again Merger by Conduct. R. Jutton feels that a Certified Engineered Stamped Survey of the property that bounds exactly where the center line is with exact elevations from the road with distances from the second house on Tract 2 is from the center line will put the questions to rest. Upon receipt of this, then a credible answer can be given. R. Wentworth questioned R. Jutton who explained that Merger by Conduct does not require knowingly or unknowingly; this is not a qualification for a Merger by Conduct. It is a decision of the Board of Selectmen by Statute to make the final decision either voluntarily or involuntarily. You need to have the pure facts and R. Jutton is not prepared to make an opinion on this until there is a certified survey of the property showing the elevations demonstrating that Tract 2 can have its own access. Whether or not it has an easement over the existing driveway or not for convenience in his opinion is irrelevant as long as it can access over its own road frontage. The Board was satisfied. J. Davis does not understand this matter and questioned the records from the

previous building files. R. Wentworth informed her of the circumstances of other cases that have come before the Board. R. Jutton informed everyone that the building files were reviewed and they had the approved building permit from 1985 and the certificates of occupancy but there were no records of distance measurements on any of those documents. There were no house plans in the files. Correspondences were within the files from various parties. J. Davis was consulted and stated that she has already been in touch with a surveyor to discuss and it is possible to get this accomplished. B. Holt feels that the Board should take the recommendation of the Assessor. P. LaRochelle feels the survey needs to be done in reference to the center line to the house location and believes it is 10' from the line. P. Wittmann is leading to the deeds being the "bible" and would like to just be able to unmerge but goes along with the Assessor's recommendation. R. Wentworth informed J. Davis that it is the Consensus of the Board to have the survey done showing the center line in conjunction to the house, meeting the setback requirements. The Easement would be between Ms. Davis and a potential buyer. The survey needs to be done then given to the Town Assessor to see if it met the requirements set in the 1980's then it would come before the Board with a recommendation that it be unmerged. In addition, it would be sent to the Town Attorney. R. Jutton will get Ms. Davis the information on the required setbacks and she will get in touch with the surveyor. B. Holt would like to have the statement of the Town Attorney clarified regarding the need for an easement in order to divide the property; P. LaRochelle agrees. L. Dionne to get clarification on the Easement; a debate on this transpired.

New Business

1. Assessing Department - RFP Award for Tax Mapping/Map Updating/GIS

R. Jutton, Assessor remotely joined the meeting. He is requesting that the Board award the RFP to Anchor, Barton & Loguidice Group. They had the most competitive bid as a contract over time. They were not the lowest on the initial bid but overall they would be the lowest with services provided factoring in the annual mapping contract which was part of the original bid request. This gets the base GIS Platform in place but does not include the licensing for which program will be implemented; it is R. Jutton's understanding that the single license will be between \$500 to \$1,000 per year. Other department specifics (hydrants, culverts, etc.) would be an additional add on and would need to be negotiated between the departments and the provider. J. Monaco stated this will set the foundation for more layers to be added with the GIS System and it is always recommended that you begin with the Tax Maps. B. Holt thought that this would encompass the whole Town and the allotted monies was originally 80K. L. Dionne informed the Board; this was a Special Warrant Article and will expire in five (5) years and can be used for any expenses related to its use. P. LaRochelle inquired about the optional services which are not included as part of the RFP; R. Jutton elaborated on the particulars of what is included which will include any information that is already in the original assessing database. All information would be sent to the vendor who would adjust all of the changes into the digital system. The accuracy improves year by year. P. Wittmann asked what the benefits of this system would be. R. Jutton stated the accuracy of the mapping will be improved, information distribution and access to the public and is invaluable to them.

B. Holt made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Tax Assessor to award the RFP for 2020 Tax Mapping/Map Updating/GIS Project to Anchor, Barton & Loguidice, 41 Sequin Drive, Glastonbury, CT for \$42,700 and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

2. Highway Department - Approval, Stockbridge Corner Road Draft Signage

R. Wentworth informed the Board that this was previously discussed for placing load limits in on Stockbridge Corner Road. A questions came up whether it could be done if State Block Grant money is being used. The Selectmen by RSA do have the right to place these limits. New Durham has been contacted and consulted and both Town's have agreed to the proposal for No Thru Trucking, 10 Ton Weight Limit. K. Roberts, Highway Manager and R. Heath, Police Chief have been conversing. K. Roberts remotely joined the meeting. He informed the Board that the fine shown on the draft sign is believed to still be part of the Highway Policies. New Durham agrees with the sign and once the Ordinance is created and brought back to the Board for approval then New Durham will do the same and adopt our policy. R. Wentworth brought forth a scenario; R. Heath responded that residential deliveries, fuel deliveries, agricultural and farm goods, construction, etc. would be negated. A possibility of leveled offenses

was mentioned; this could be done locally through the Ordinances. If it is a Town Ordinance the fines stays locally. P. LaRochelle asked if the \$1,000 fine was a standard amount; this was based on the prior policy and is not an uncommon amount it is a strong deterrent. Right-of-Way Permits are in place already. There are other roads that have similar concerns. It would be the decision of the Board for which roads to implement this restriction. Currently the limits have been lifted on all of the Town roads. B. Holt added that there is a weight limit sign on Bay Hill Road. This matter was debated and noted that enforcement is not being done. The concern is people not wanting trucks on their roads. The roads that are being considered are neighborhood impacted roads. In question, is having the graduated fines before or after the Public Hearing. K. Roberts needs the Board's approval on the layout of the sign then he can get together with R. Heath, Police Chief and the Town Attorney to write the Ordinance; this would then come back to the Board to set the Public Hearing then New Durham can do exactly the same.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the Stockbridge Corner draft signage as presented and P. Wittmann seconded.

Further Discussion: B. Holt questioned the sign as presented which was further discussed and elaborated on. P. LaRochelle noted it was to approve the sign size and the wording. R. Heath stated it could be amended to say up to \$1,000 fine. P. LaRochelle amended the motion on the table.

P. LaRochelle amended the motion to approve the Stockbridge Corner Road draft signage as written with a maximum fine of "Up to \$1,000" and P. Wittmann seconded. Roll call vote:

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

3. Highway Department - Winter Road Maintenance - Discontinuance Eugene Drive

K. Roberts received an email from Melissa Ingham who asked that Eugene Drive no longer be winter maintained. R. Wentworth asked if there were any others that would be affected by this request with his response of "no".

R. Wentworth made a motion to approve the request from Melissa Ingham to discontinue winter maintenance on Eugene Drive and P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

4. Snowmobile Trailer No Parking Bay Area

R. Wentworth noted it was brought to his attention that since the Pandemic there has been more No Parking, No Trailer Parking implemented in the Bay area. Someone came to him regarding parking trailers for snowmobiles mentioning there were comments on the Community Page and asked about this issue. They were told to go to the Jones Field area and park there however it had not been plowed out which brought up this question. Is there going to be trailer parking allowed on the right hand side in the Bay. Originally this was for boat trailer parking. This would need to be looked at between the Town Administrator, Police Chief and Highway Manager. The Board cannot make a decision tonight; this would require an Ordinance change and cannot readily be done. It was suggested the Town Administrator, Police Chief and Highway Manager sit down to discuss how this needs to be handled and get back to the Board at the next meeting. R. Heath believes the Ordinance reads boat trailers but would need to know what the Board desires. R. Wentworth thought parking possibly can be done in the newly created parking area however he would not want to see parking in the main parking lot. P. LaRochelle agreed with R. Wentworth's thoughts on the parking especially in the boat ramp area. This would need to be controlled by enforcement. B. Holt was under the assumption and was told that there are areas that cannot be plowed per the State because of impervious pavement. Last year they were not plowed to prevent large tractor trailer parking for lengths of time because of the base. There are two (2) areas that have impervious pavement. After this discussion it was the Consensus of the Board to have the parties get together discuss and bring back to the Board with a recommendation. L. Dionne will make every effort to get this done but cannot guarantee it will complete.

1. Street Light on Main Street Business at Village Store

R. Wentworth has had a few residents that have approached him and he would have to agree with them. When all of the power lines were taken out from Main Street from Ginny Douglas Park across to the Museum it made this area quite dark. There is one street light on the Telephone Company side. For a safety issue, R. Wentworth suggested having the Town Administrator, Police Chief and Fire Chief looking into this, if the Board was in agreement; this would be for some kind of light to be placed on the telephone pole on the west side of Route 11 in that area. P. LaRochelle inquired about the voiced concerns which has been by residents and customers of the business not the owners of the business. The Board was in agreement to this being looked into from a safety standpoint.

Old Business:

1. Fire Department Boat

J. Beaudoin, Fire Chief remotely joined the meeting along with Capt. Patrick O'Brien who has been tasked with being responsible for the fleet for the Fire Department. The recommendation has come at his request having all of the knowledge of the boat and its needed repairs etc. At face value the repair was being quoted at roughly 3K. There has been an ongoing battery draw which was discovered to be a result of a water leak from an undetermined location. Eastern was not able to evaluate the issue on location and brought the vessel to their facility, filled the hull with water and saw the water coming from the bottom in the location of the suction tube that feeds the fire pump. This was the only leak they saw at that time. The boat is a 1997 Eastern 27, it has gone through two (2) motor overhauls, the original motors were from 1998 and upgraded in 2012 to Evinrudes'. This motor line was discontinued last year. In 2017 the lower ends were replaced, approximate cost of 5K and are approaching this mark again for the same need. A concern is parts availability. Age issue and stringer rot are of concern and the mobile radios are obsolete and cut out frequently. There are so many issues with the vessel and are becoming a domino effect. He feels and agrees with timing voicing that once a vessel is ordered that it won't be seen for at least a year. He hopes that once they move forward with the repair that they won't find any further issues but still feels moving forward with an RFP for the boat build is needed. The hope is for the current boat to get the department through the next year upon arrival of a new boat in 2022 as recommended by CIP. The current pump is approximately 15 years old, made overseas with no option for parts; the pump is valued at 25K and it is failing. P. O'Brien would like approval of the 3K repair with possibly capping the amount if necessary. They are willing to repair up to 8K but if beyond they would need to reevaluate. Eastern is top of the line and are very accommodating. P. LaRochelle asked about the makeup of the boat which has an all fiberglass hull but underneath is wood with its stringers. Bid Specifications are already being worked on and will be coming to the Board in the near future. The recommendation is to approve the 3K and cap at the 8K for the repairs.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to allow the Fire Department to repair the Eastern Fire boat for \$3,000 capping the amount at \$8,000 and P. Wittmann seconded.

Further Discussion: B. Holt questioned the actual repairs which were elaborated upon. P. O'Brien cannot guarantee that other issues will come into play next summer. As a general rule they should be able to get through next summer with the current boat. There is no issue with going out to bid however R. Wentworth would like to see the financial numbers and how it would be paid for as previously discussed. Preliminary numbers have come in at approximately 300K and would leave it to the Chief believing that half would come from Ambulance and the other half from CIP, feeling this would be adequate. Currently the department runs with 20 emergency calls with countless service calls. At least half of the calls are EMS in nature. L. Dionne noted that the letter from the Chief showed it would be coming from the Equipment Capital Reserve Fund and the Ambulance Revolving Fund. It was the consensus of the Board to allow the RFP for the Boat

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

2. Operating Budget

B. Holt had a couple of questions on the Operating Budget asking what the amount did the Budget Committee approve for the Operating Budget; R. Wentworth stated they approved everything that the Board approved. The Water Department is separate as it was removed to its own Warrant Article. The Bottom line Budget is \$8,378,183 and is

the Budget Committee's Budget. The Water Department Budget is \$475,042. Confusion was voiced on the bottom line budget; L. Parker, Finance Manager will need to be consulted tomorrow. The Water Department budget is self-funded by the ratepayers. Question is does the 8 million include the Water Department because it is not listed. L. Dionne will get the answers and provide to the Board at the next meeting.

Selectmen Reports

B. Holt had nothing to report.

P. LaRochelle had nothing to report.

P. Wittmann reported that the Old Home Week Committee had a meeting but he was not able to attend. He received the minutes and the Committee agreed to pay a deposit of \$2,500 towards the ad booklet for next year to Lilac Printing. P. Wittmann is not sure this can be done. L. Dionne feels that this is an Encumbrance and they will be coming before the Board next week. R. Wentworth's opinion is it should not be spent and should not happen; this is wrong! L. Dionne informed the Board that the money will expire this month; it was a regular Warrant Article and the Selectmen hold the purse strings.

R. Wentworth had nothing to report.

Town Administrator Report by L. Dionne

Public Works Director Position

L. Dionne informed the Board that the Public Works Position has been advertised for weeks with less than a handful of applicants. There are not as many as hoped. L. Dionne is asking that the deadline be extended until early January. Only three (3) applicants have applied. The ad will be placed again in the Union Leader for a Friday through Saturday edition. The particulars of where it has been posted were given. B. Holt inquired about using the Laconia newspaper. In addition, L. Dionne read an email that she sent to the Board last Friday about the 2021 Budget as follows:

BOS, With the Water Department now being taken out of the Town budget, you may want to rethink your request about cutting the budget further at Deliberative. The removal of the Water Department has removed 2% plus out of the proposed budget. Also at the December 16th EMT meeting the EMT asked that I forward this to you. The EMT was in unanimous agreement that further cutting should not be done because of the probability of unanticipated expenses coming forth in 2021 due to the Pandemic State of Emergency as it has done in 2020.

L. Dionne informed the Board that this is why R. Heath is here tonight to speak to the Board as the EM Director. Furthermore it has been very difficult to remove a 1% to 2% cut from many of the proposed lean budgets. Various cuts were given on a spreadsheet but it is basically "nickel and dime" cuts. L. Dionne asked the Board to allow the Emergency Management Director to speak. Allowed.

B. Holt feels that this is a mute issue with the only way to make the cuts would be at the Deliberative Session which is a correct statement. Roughly sixty (60) people attend the Deliberative Session. At this time nobody knows how Deliberative Session is going to take place. A debate transpired on whether this would be done on the floor at Deliberative Session. B. Holt stated he will not make this motion at Deliberative as he respects the opinion of the Board. P. LaRochelle commented and agrees the point is mute at this time. He likes K. Roberts' comments and eliminating the Public Works Director position is important. He feels it is a waste of time and too late in the season and would be good for another time. If this is taken off the table it would be helpful. He believes they ought to keep the Truck Driver position and keep the lease/purchase agreement. In his opinion a Public Works Director position is not necessary. R. Wentworth stated that if this doesn't go through this time around he will not bring it forward again in his term. B. Holt differs, he will pursue it and would be very important for the Town. R. Wentworth would like for the Board to extend this out until January 6th. This will be brought back to the Board in January with a recommendation to the Board. P. Wittmann recalls a discussion regarding the Warrant Articles which still need to be decided upon. L. Dionne informed the Board they will have the option to use fund balance or to raise and appropriate the Articles. B. Holt further questioned the bottom line of the Default Budget, if it was correct, it is \$8,099,570.

Approval of Minutes

None

Consent Agenda Approval

P. Wittmann made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented December 21, 2020 and P. LaRochelle seconded.

Further Discussion: R. Wentworth questioned #2 Solid Waste Department Hire, Full-Time Temporary Facility Attendant. L. Dionne explained. It was requested to remove the word Fulltime.

The motion on the table was called. Roll call vote:

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

1. Assessing Department - Land Use Items:

Administrative Abatements

Prospect Forest Enterprises; Prospect Mountain Road; Map 3 Lot 23; \$68.00

Military Service Tax Credits

David Clemm; 94 Route 11-D; Map 51 Lot 27; \$750

Lori Stevens; 30 School Street; Map 28 Lot 20; \$750

David Page; 83 Stockbridge Corner Road; Map 5 Lot 3-4; \$750

Robert Haverty; 274 Woodlands Road; Map 57 Lot 4-1; \$750

Carl Nilges; 40 Ingalls Terrace; Map 8 Lot 3-5; \$750

Marcella Perry; 43 Osprey Road; Map 6 Lot 1-40; \$750

Timber Tax

RC McLucas Trucking, LLC; Alton Mountain Road; Map 11 Lot 4; \$3,679.12

2. Solid Waste Department:

Hire: Grant Shealy, Facility Attendant, (Temporary), \$14.70/hr, effective 12/26/20.

(This will be for approximately two weeks as a fill-in due to lack of staff)

(Mr. Shealy worked for the Town in 2020 in the Grounds & Maint Department as a seasonal employee)

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

None

Non-Public Session:

R. Wentworth moved at 8:27pm to enter into nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3,II,(a) (personnel). Motion seconded by P. Wittmann. Roll call vote:

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

R. Wentworth moved at 8:48pm to exit nonpublic session. P. LaRochelle seconded. Roll call vote:

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

R. Wentworth moved to release item #1, and to “not divulge” #2 and #3 of the minutes 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

Adjournment

R. Wentworth moved at 8:49pm to adjourn and to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. P. Wittmann seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary K. Jarvis

Mary K. Jarvis
Recording Secretary

