

**TOWN OF ALTON
DELIBERATIVE SESSION
FEBRUARY 7, 2023
PROSPECT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL**

Robin Lane-Douglas, Town Moderator, called the meeting to order at 6:07pm and then announced: You are hereby notified to meet at the Prospect Mountain High School on Tuesday the seventh day of February in the year Two Thousand and Twenty-Three (2023), beginning at six (6:00) o'clock in the evening, for the purpose of deliberating upon the following Warrant Articles and also to meet on March 14, 2023 at St. Katharine Drexel Church (lower level) 40 Hidden Spring Road from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. The purpose of tonight is to prepare these warrant articles into their final form for the ballot.

Moderator Lane-Douglas welcomed 42 voters in attendance to the first session of the 2023 Town Meeting and asked all those who are not registered voters to stand.

All in attendance rose to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Brock Mitchell introduced the members representing the Town of Alton.

Brock Mitchell, Chairman
Steven Whitley, Town Attorney
Ryan Heath, Town Administrator
Paul LaRochelle, Selectman
Reuben Wentworth, Selectman
Bob Holt, Selectman
Andrew Morse, Selectman
Laura Parker, Finance Officer

Reuben Parker, Budget Committee Vice Chairman introduced the members representing the Alton Budget Committee.

Reuben Parker, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Varney, Member
Leann LaPlante, Member

Robin Lane-Douglas then introduced:

Jennifer Collins, Town Clerk
Amber Healey, Deputy Finance Officer

Moderator Lane-Douglas then read the "Moderator's Rules" that were supplied upon entering the auditorium.

Article 1: To choose all necessary Town Officers for which there are vacancies, for such terms as may be permitted by law; and to elect: two selectmen for three years, one trustee of trust funds for three years, two library trustees for three years, one budget committee member for three years, two planning board members for three years, one supervisor of the checklist for five years and two zoning board members for three years.

Articles 2-8 have gone through the Planning Board process and there will be no changes or discussion pertaining to those articles.

Article 9: To see if the Town will raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$9,252,980.00 Should this article be defeated; the Default Budget shall be \$8,854,314.00, which is the same as last year (with the exception of the Water Budget) with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Board of Selectmen or by law; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised Operating Budget only. This article does not include special or individual articles addressed. (Majority vote required) Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (The estimated tax impact is \$4.25)

Elizabeth Varney moved Article 9 and was seconded by Leann LaPlante.

Reuben Parker proposed the operating budget is the aggregated amount established during the budgeting process that is needed to operate town functions and services for the year.

No further discussion.

Reuben Parker motioned to restrict Article 9 and Elizabeth Varney seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$538,475.00 for the operation and maintenance of the Water Distribution system for the ensuing year, said sum is to be offset by users' fees. Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be \$480,764.00, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law. (Majority vote required) Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.025)

E. Varney moved Article 10 and was seconded by L. LaPlante.

R. Parker stated the proposed water works operating budget is the aggregated amount established during the budget process that is needed to operate Town's municipal water system for the year.

K. Roberts asked if the tax impact was against the user fee, not against taxes.

R. Wentworth responded correct.

No further discussion.

Reuben Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 10 and Brock Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,500.00 to be added to the Assessing Department Vehicle Capital Reserve as previously established in 2022. Recommended by the Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 11 and was seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

R. Wentworth stated the funds are to be used for the eventual replacement of the vehicle used by the Assessing Department.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 11 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,500.00 to be added to the Building Department Vehicle Capital Reserve as previously established in 2022. Recommended by the Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 12 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

R. Wentworth stated the funds are to be used for the eventual replacement of the vehicle used by the Building Department; this vehicle is used more than the Assessing Department.

No further discussion.

P. LaRochelle motioned to restrict Article 12 and R. Wentworth seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be added to the Benefit Pay Expendable Trust Fund, previously established in 2001. Said funds are recommended by the Town Auditors to be used to pay for benefits accrued by Town employees and redeemed when they leave employment with the Town of Alton, in accordance with the Town Personnel Policy. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.02)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 13 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

P. LaRochelle stated the funds will be added to the existing trust fund to pay for the accrued benefits owed to employees leaving employment with the Town, consistent with the conditions laid out in the employee manual. This trust fund currently has a balance of \$21,736.15

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 13 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$375,000.00 to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established, then clarified in 2022. This fund is utilized in conjunction with the capital improvement plan. Recommended by the Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.17)

B. Mitchell moved Article 14 and was seconded by Andrew Morse.

B. Mitchell stated the Fire Department Capital Reserve Fund is utilized to repair, replace and equip four fire engines, a ladder truck, a rescue truck, several specialty units, and support vehicles. In 2024, Engine 2 will be replaced at \$884,221. This will be followed by the planned replacement of the ladder truck in 2025 at approximately \$1.3M.

James Beaudoin, Fire Chief, stated there is currently \$1,300,000.00 in the fund but with a payment coming out this spring to finish paying off boat, will leave \$244,000.00. They will also have \$1.3 million coming out for the ladder truck in another year. Adding the \$375,000.00 will put them in the \$600,000.00 range.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 14 and Bob Holt seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to be added to the IT Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2020. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 15 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

P. LaRochelle stated this capital reserve fund was established to fund large-scale technology hardware and software needs and emergencies. This fund supports updating technology resources over time, thereby significantly reducing cybersecurity risk and any burden these large scale projects would have on an annual budget. A one-time increase has been requested by the IT Department and CIP collectively to cycle out some old equipment and get these systems current while requests in subsequent years will focus on remaining current and flattening out future budget projections. The capital reserve fund currently has a balance of \$29,517.58.

No further discussion.

P. LaRochelle motioned to restrict Article 15 and B. Holt seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to be added to the Jones Field capital reserve fund as previously established in 2022. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

B. Holt moved Article 16 and was seconded by A. Morse.

B. Holt stated that the capital reserve fund is for the maintenance and improvements to the recreation area, park property, and parking lot. The current balance is \$10,000.00. Upcoming improvements include repairs to the fence, and ADA accessibility upgrades to the playground equipment.

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 16 and E. Varney seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to repair and replace the local radio communications for the Town of Alton. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0) (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.05)

R. Wentworth moved Article 17 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

R. Wentworth stated these funds will be used to repair, maintain, and replace and install a new radio repeater. It will also be used to support equipment needed for town departments and vehicles. This will ensure our municipal departments can adequately communicate with each other during emergency and storm operations with or without power. The town crews were without communication during the last big rain/wind storm.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 17 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 18: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,186,142.00 to be added to the Highway Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1998. Said amount is partially offset by revenues from the Highway Block Grant Fund estimated to be \$196,763.00, the remaining balance is to be funded through taxation. This is an annual appropriation that provides for the reconstruction of existing roadways. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.55)

B. Mitchell moved Article 18 and was seconded by B. Holt.

B. Mitchell stated this fund was established to continue the pavement preservation and road rehabilitation. A practice which aligns with our Road Surface Management System. There is a cost to the town by performing this practice. The current balance in this fund is \$8,469.71.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 18 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 19: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 to be added to the Rock & Asphalt Crushing Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2017. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

A. Morse moved Article 19 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

A. Morse stated this fund was established for the purpose of crushing recyclable materials. The current balance is \$5,914.22.

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 19 and B. Holt seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 20: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to be added to the Highway Sand Shed Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2003. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

B. Holt moved Article 20 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

B. Holt stated this fund was established for the purpose of having and maintaining a building to put sand & salt in to reduce environmental impacts and to comport with the NHDES Best Management Practices (BMP's). The current balance is \$19,607.55.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 20 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 21: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to be added to the Sidewalk Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2007. Recommended by the Board of

Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 21 and was seconded by A. Morse.

P. LaRochelle stated this fund was established to add funds for the future improvements to the sidewalks in town. In 2023 we hope to replace the sidewalks in the Alton Bay waterfront, and then our vision is in a phased approach to replace/rehab sidewalks on Main Street from the Village Store to Alton Bay. The current balance is \$102,893.49.

Kelly Sullivan, resident on Main St, states she supports this article. More people are being active by walking and they deserve nice sidewalks to use.

No further discussion.

E. Varney motioned to restrict Article 21 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 22: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to be added to the Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2014. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 22 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

P. LaRochelle stated this capital reserve was established to add funds for future improvements to the highway garage, to include its future replacement. The current balance is \$61,995.77.

No further discussion.

P. LaRochelle motioned to restrict Article 22 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 23: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to be added to the Bridge Construction Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1997. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

A. Morse moved Article 23 and was seconded by B. Holt.

A. Morse stated this fund was established to assist with the cost of repair/replacement of town owned bridges. The next bridge on our radar is the Beaver Brook Bridge on Roberts Cove Road. The current balance is \$14,863.32.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 23 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 24: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1981. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.05)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 24 and was seconded by B. Holt.

P. LaRochelle stated this fund was established to repair/replace highway vehicles and equipment. These equipment life cycles and replacement costs are updated annually, and as are the forecasted project replacements, which are within the Capital Improvement Plan. The current balance is \$108,107.50.

No further discussion.

P. LaRochelle motioned to restrict Article 24 and B. Holt seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 25: To see if the Town will vote to establish a Town Owned Parking Area Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of maintaining, improving, and expanding Town owned parking areas and raise and appropriate the sum of \$170,000.00 to be deposited into the fund and name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.08)

R. Wentworth moved Article 25 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

R. Wentworth stated the town has several municipal parking areas in Alton Bay, Pearson Road, Community Center and in the Freight Yard buildings down by the Police Station. The town has never set up a fund to maintain parking lots. The funds would help maintain the parking lots at a better rate to take out the impervious pavement needed.

No further discussion.

P. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 25 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 26: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00, to be added to the “Senior Center Building” Capital Reserve fund, as previously established in 2010. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

B. Holt moved Article 26 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

B. Holt stated the funds would be used for interior and exterior repairs such as: painting, roofing, siding, flooring, windows, kitchen, bathrooms, and upgrades/repairs to the septic, electrical, plumbing and heating systems when needed. The current balance is \$5,277.05.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 26 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 27: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00, to be added to the Alton Bay Community Center Property Capital Reserve fund, as previously established in 2020. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 27 and was seconded by A. Morse

P. LaRochelle stated the funds would be used for interior and exterior repairs such as: painting, replace support beam, decking, boardwalk, fencing, railings, supports for underneath the building and boardwalk, siding, flooring, windows, kitchen, bathrooms, and upgrades/repairs to the septic, electrical, plumbing and heating systems when needed. This is a historical building, we must take care of it; it is showing signs it needs to be repaired now. The current balance is \$25,711.99.

No further discussion.

P. LaRochelle motioned to restrict Article 27 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 28: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to be added to the Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2019. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

A. Morse moved Article 28 and was seconded by B. Mitchell

A. Morse stated the Grounds and Maintenance Department is expected to replace the 2015 F250 pickup truck in 2025 with a similar vehicle for approximately \$55,000. In 2023 purchases will include a replacement vehicle for the 2008 Dodge Caravan which is the transportation for the town custodian. The current balance is \$34,482.33.

No further discussion.

A. Morse motioned to restrict Article 28 and B. Holt seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 29: To see if the Town will vote to establish a New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund, for the purpose of expanding and maintaining the grounds, buildings, and infrastructure of New Riverside Cemetery and to see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$75,000.00 to be deposited into the fund and name the Board of Selectmen as agents to expend. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.03)

R. Wentworth moved Article 29 and was seconded by B. Mitchell

R. Wentworth stated the expansion will include additional burial lots and relocation of some pieces and new roads. This will also include future expansion of the maintenance facilities at the cemetery. He states this has been an ongoing process since the Board of Selectmen took over the new Riverside Cemetery. Plans were sent out when Covid started and now plans are finally in. This money will be used for expansion, to increase burial lots, relocation of some pieces that have been there, and new roads. This will make the area more acceptable to the public than what it is now.

Desmond Douglas asks if the warrant article can be used for landscaping first before moving to the buildings and infrastructure. He is not pleased with the way the cemetery looks.

R. Wentworth agrees with Mr. Douglas and states this is for infrastructure; roads have to be put in, lots mapped out, eventually adding a new maintenance shed. The columbarium may be moved to a better location, up on a flat surface, as the current location makes it hard to visit loved ones.

K. Sullivan agrees this has been an eyesore. Mrs. Sullivan has seen the plan and believes \$75,000.00 won't cover the while project; but it is the starting point.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 29 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 30: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$50,000.00 to be added to the Transfer Station Building Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established 2005. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.02)

B. Holt moved Article 30 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle

B. Holt proposed to add funds to the existing CRF for the purposes of improvement or construction of a transfer station. He reminds everyone of the damage that had been done to the transfer station during a previous storm with high winds. The current balance is \$159,041.72.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 30 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 31: To see if the Town will vote to readopt RSA 72:28 Optional Veterans' Tax Credit as amended by the New Hampshire Legislature to include individuals who have not yet been discharged from service in the armed forces. The credit as previously adopted amounts to \$750 per qualified veteran annually.

B. Mitchell moved Article 31 and was seconded by A. Morse.

B. Mitchell states the NH Legislature changed some wording in RSA 72:28 Optional Veteran's Tax Credit requiring towns to re-adopt the credit. Alton had adopted RSA 72:28 and set the Veterans' Tax Credit at \$750. This article will preserve the existing \$750 Veterans' credit as it currently exists.

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 31 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 32: To see if the Town will vote to readopt RSA 72:28-b All Veterans' Tax Credit as amended by the New Hampshire Legislature to include individuals who have not yet been discharged from service in the armed forces. The credit as previously adopted amounts to \$750 per qualified veteran annually.

B. Mitchell moved Article 32 and was seconded by A. Morse.

B. Mitchell states the NH Legislature changed some wording in RSA 72:28-b All Veteran's Tax Credit requiring towns to re-adopt the credit. Alton had adopted RSA 72:28-b and set the All Veterans' Tax Credit at \$750. This article will preserve the existing \$750 All Veterans' credit as it currently exists.

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 32 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 33: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$90,000.00 to be added to the Town Hall Building Improvements Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2011. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0) (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.04)

R. Wentworth moved Article 33 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

R. Wentworth states these funds will be used to improve the interior and exterior mechanical issues that are on going with the building. This past storm blew rain into the east side of the building and blew

through the windows that were replaced 8 years ago. They did not replace the frames of the windows and these frames were original to the building back in the 1800's.

Cydney Shapleigh asks how much money has been on spent on Town Hall improvements this past year and what the money has gone towards.

R. Wentworth defers to the Town Administrator for the exact amount. He added that money was used out of the Clough Memorial Trust Fund to replace any infrastructure upstairs. Remodeling was started to make room for an office. Within remodeling, there was a lot of rot found in the rafters. The heating system was also replaced this past year.

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator states he does not have one exact breakdown. He goes on to mention the heating system alone was \$181,000.00, this was interest that came out of the Clough Memorial Fund; no principal. The last update he gave the board was roughly \$110,000.00 was a combination contractor crew that was remodeling the stage area to open structurally some office space and file storage. While upstairs in the first phase of the project is when they discovered more issues within the third floor. All of the chimneys needed to be flashed which was \$14,000.00. There is approximately \$28,000.00 into the ADA compliant restrooms.

C. Shapleigh asks how many offices are being created with this project.

R. Heath states there is one office on the third floor in addition to the long-term file storage. This frees up space on the second floor where the Finance Officer and Deputy Finance Officer share an office with ample amount of files and separates them now into two offices.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 33 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 34: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$65,000.00 to replace the flooring in Town Hall. Said funds are to come from the unassigned fund balance. There will be no funds raised from general taxation. This will not affect the tax rate. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0) (Majority vote required)

B. Holt moved Article 34 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

B. Holt states this money will be used to replace the existing flooring throughout the Town Hall. The current flooring is estimated to be over 25 years old.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 34 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 35: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 for the purpose of replacing the first-floor lift which provides access to the second floor of Town Hall. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until project is completed or by 12/31/2025 whichever is sooner. Said funds are to come from the unassigned fund balance. There will be no funds raised from general taxation. This will not affect the tax rate. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.)

B. Holt moved Article 35 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

B. Holt states this money will be used to replace the current chair lift from the first floor to the second floor in Town Hall with either a new ADA compliant chair lift or vertical lift. Our current lift is no longer serviceable or conforms to current ADA specifications.

C. Shapleigh asks to clarify that this will make the second floor ADA accessible, but not the third floor. So, no townspeople or employees who have ADA issues will be able to access the newly renovated third floor, is that correct?

R. Wentworth responded, “yes ma’am”.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 35 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 36: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 to expand the Library Parking Lot for Municipal use. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until project is completed or by 12/31/2025 whichever is sooner. Said funds are to come from the unassigned fund balance. There will be no funds raised from general taxation. This will not affect the tax rate. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required.)

A. Morse moved Article 36 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

A. Morse states this money will be used to begin the permitting and engineering to expand the library parking lot off Depot Street. This will create a larger municipal parking area in the center of town that can be used by the community for events, municipal business, and employee parking.

D. Douglas asked to clarify where the parking lot is going to be expanded. Isn't there wetlands down back?

A. Morse verified the expansion is outback, and because there are some wetlands that is included in the permitting and engineering process.

No further discussion.

A. Morse motioned to restrict Article 36 and P. LaRochelle seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 37: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$25,000.00 to be placed into the Environmental Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2022. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

R. Wentworth moved Article 37 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

R. Wentworth states the funds will be used for environmental failures that come upon us that need to be handled quickly. There was an issue in the area with the road runoffs causing Cyanobacteria recently because there were no catch basins. Work is continuing to be done from previous storm runoffs for Main Street, Mills Pond and Merrymeeting River. This money will be used for part of that as well.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 37 and B. Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 38: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 to be added to the Milfoil Treatment Program Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2010. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

B. Holt moved Article 38 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

B. Holt states this article will take care of anticipated work next summer including herbicide treatments and DASH work in the lake and the Merrymeeting River. One of the tasks for next summer is to begin treatment above the dam in Mill Pond and Wentworth Pond; areas which are relatively large and have not been previously treated. The current balance is \$22,054.61.

No further discussion.

Richard Shea motioned to restrict Article 38 and Nathan Schrider seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 39: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000.00 for the purpose of supporting the Alton Community Services which provides a food pantry and assistance programs for fuel, prescriptions, utilities and housing in close coordination with the Alton Welfare Department. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

B. Holt moved Article 39 and was seconded by A. Morse.

B. Holt states all the monies spent are only for the Town of Alton residents in coordination with the Welfare Department.

Peter Bolster states this organization has been in existence for 24 years and will celebrate its 25th year next year. The organization has volunteers who have never been paid a single cent. He is very thankful for all of the volunteers for coming forward. A special thanks to Hannaford's for participating in the Fresh Rescue program. He is very pleased with the support of the community and the ability to expand with other programs. Most of this \$15,000.00 goes towards the rent for the facility.

No further discussion.

D. Douglas motioned to restrict Article 39 and James Beaudoin seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 40: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000.00 for the purpose of supporting the American Red Cross which provides disaster relief, shelters, basic household necessities and counseling. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (3-1). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 40 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

No further discussion.

B. Mitchell motioned to restrict Article 40 and Linda Roy seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 41: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purpose of supporting the Community Action Program which provides supplemental food, fuel, utility, transportation, meals on wheels, weatherization assistance and Women, Infants & Children food assistance program (WIC). This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 41 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

R. Wentworth states the warrant article explains itself without more explanation. There are many folks from Alton have benefited from these services.

No further discussion.

L. Roy motioned to restrict Article 41 and N. Schrider seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 42: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,000.00 for the purpose of supporting Caregivers of Southern Carroll County & Vicinity, Inc. (includes Alton) which provides free transportation to handicapped, elderly and other residents needing assistance with all these services provided by volunteers. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 42 and was seconded by A. Morse.

R. Wentworth states the Caregivers of Southern Carroll County and Vicinity non-profit has been in Alton for quite a long time. Again, this warrant article explains everything they do for our community.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 42 and J. Beaudoin seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 43: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500.00 for the purpose of supporting CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) which provides advocacy for abused and neglected children. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

B. Holt moved Article 43 and was seconded by P. LaRochelle.

No further discussion.

B. Holt motioned to restrict Article 43 and L. Roy seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 44: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$12,000.00 for the purpose of supporting the Granite VNA fka Central New Hampshire VNA & Hospice which is a non-profit agency that provides health care, hospice care and maternal child health services. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

P. LaRochelle moved Article 44 and was seconded by B. Holt.

P. LaRoche states the VNA and Hospice speaks for themselves. This program is a tremendous help to the community and is essential to the town.

No further discussion.

Linda Roy motioned to restrict Article 44 and P. LaRoche seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 45:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,750.00 for the purpose of supporting Lakes Region Mental Health Center which provides mental health care to area residents, services for children, elders, along with other emergency services. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0) (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

A. Morse moved Article 45 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

A. Morse states this is another vital non-profit that helps the community.

No further discussion.

L. Roy motioned to restrict Article 45 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 46: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum \$3,000.00 for the purpose of supporting L.I.F.E. Ministries, Inc. which is a not-for-profit charity that provides food and staples to Alton residents. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 46 and was seconded by B. Mitchell.

R. Wentworth states this is another program that works in hand with the community pantry in town for some of the residents in East Alton as it is closer than in the village. They assisted 35 families this year from the Town of Alton.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 46 and R. Shea seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 47: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,575.00 for the purpose of supporting New Beginnings which provides 24-hour crisis support for domestic/sexual assault victims, operates a shelter and provides counseling. This is a special warrant article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00)

P. LaRoche moved Article 47 and was seconded by A. Morse.

No further discussion.

N. Schrider motioned to restrict Article 47 and D. Douglas seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 48: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500.00 for the purpose of supporting Waypoint formerly known as Child and Family Services of NH. This is a special warrant

article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (7-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.00)

R. Wentworth moved Article 48 and was seconded by B. Holt.

No further discussion.

R. Wentworth motioned to restrict Article 48 and A. Morse seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 49: To see if the Town will authorize the sum of \$10,000.00 for the purpose of a sign stating “Welcome to Alton”. To be placed at the appropriate area near the Alton Rotary (circle). Extra funds need to be put in a Capital Reserve Fund. **This is a petition article.** (The estimated tax impact is less than a penny \$0.00) Not recommended by the Board of Selectmen (0-5). Not recommended by the Budget Committee (2-5)

R. Wentworth moved Article 49 and was seconded by B. Holt.

K. Sullivan motioned to amend Article 49 to read as: “To see if the Town will authorize the sum of \$20,000.00 for the purpose of a sign stating “Welcome to Alton” to be placed in the area of the Alton Traffic Circle. This will be a non-lapsing appropriation per RSA 32:7, VI and will not lapse until the project is completed or by 12/31/2025, whichever is sooner.” And was seconded by N. Schrider.

K Sullivan states the Alton Business Association has done research to see how much the sign will be in the Alton Circle. After the research, a realization that \$20,000.00 was needed. Kelly served on the Community Profile and Master Plan committee, through surveys the townspeople responded they would love to see a “Welcome to Alton sign”.

R. Wentworth stated the article could not be supported by the Board of Selectmen because there is no specific verbiage in the article to specify to who the agents are to expend. R. Wentworth goes on to state this happened in previous years where monies were spent and unaccounted for with no agents to expend, and the selectmen had a mess on their hands.

K. Sullivan proposes to make an amendment to her original amendment. She asks if the Board of Selectman could be the agents to expend.

R. Wentworth states he believes because it is a petition article you cannot change the wording of the petition article. Defers to the Town Attorney for an official response.

Attorney S. Whitley states the amendment to the amendment K. Sullivan proposed is not valid for a slightly different reason than Selectman Wentworth stated. It is because you cannot add agents to expend from the floor as an amendment. The original amendment would accomplish the same purpose. It would allow the board members to expend the funds within five years or until the project is completed. Then he confirmed an amendment to this petition article could be made with the original amendment.

D. Douglas questions the justification of a \$20,000.00 dollar “Welcome to Alton” sign.

K. Sullivan states the purpose of a quality sign is because Alton is the gateway to the Lakes Region. A nicer sign is costly but is a nice welcome to all coming into the town.

Moderator Lane-Douglas then put the amendment to Article 49 to vote with a show of cards. The vote was too close to call.

Moderator Lane-Douglas asks for a standing vote for those in favor and those opposed.

Standing count in favor- 12

Standing count opposed- 12

Moderator Lane-Douglas asks for a standing recount, while raising cards.

Recount in favor- 16

Recount opposed- 12

With a standing recount, the amendment to Article 49 passed with a favorable vote.

R. Shea states that spending \$20,000.00 or even \$10,000.00 on a sign in this type of economy can be viewed as extravagant. Normally, he would have opposed this. If the Business Association supports this and the town wants to support its businesses then it is worth a second look. If this article is moved along then all the voters in the town can decide on this rather than the few that are here this evening.

R. Wentworth is speaking as a business owner and a citizen in the town of Alton, not as a Selectman, nor does his comments represent the board. He states the reason he voted no as a businessman here for over 38 years he believes its up to the business owners to build this sign. This would be one way to give back as a business owner to the towns people as a thank you for all of the support the community has provided instead of making the tax payers pay for it. He does not believe the money should be coming from the townspeople. The sign supports the town and the businesses.

J. Beaudoin motioned to restrict Article 49 and Pat O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as amended.

Article 50: Shall the Town vote to raise and appropriate the sum of Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00), for the purpose of supporting services provided to children in Alton experiencing alleged abuse? In FY 2021, six (6) children in Alton completed a forensic interview and received family support services from the Greater Lakes Child Advocacy Center in Laconia, a program of the Granite State Children's Alliance that serves all communities in Belknap County. Trauma-informed behavioral health services with a licensed clinician are also available and provided on-location. These combined services are valued at \$1,984 per child – and are provided at no cost to families. On average in the U.S., without the availability of a Child Advocacy Center, the cost to communities is \$3,949 per child, before the addition of behavioral health services. Child Advocacy Center Services reduce trauma for child victims by allowing them to only tell their story once in a supportive, comfortable, trauma-informed, and child-friendly environment, support children and their families in early stages of healing, and save the community money. **This is a petition article.** (The estimated tax impact is \$0.00) Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0-1)

No further discussion.

K. Sullivan motioned to restrict Article 50 and P. O'Brien seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 51:To hear reports of any committees, boards, trustees, commissions, officials, agents or concerns of voters; and vote to accept the same. Furthermore, to conduct any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

B. Mitchell made an announcement thanking all employees, volunteers and towns people. B. Mitchell goes on to thank R. Wentworth and B. Holt for their dedication towards working for the town.

Moderator Lane-Douglas asked for any closing remarks.

D. Douglas motioned to restrict Article 51 and J. Beaudoin seconded the motion. The motion was passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

K. Sullivan motioned to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by R. Shea.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:48pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Healey
Recording Secretary