

**TOWN OF ALTON
DELIBERATIVE SESSION
FEBRUARY 4, 2025
PROSPECT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL**

Town Moderator, Gene Young, welcomed 33 voters to the 2024 Deliberative Session at 6:04 pm.

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

Moderator Young reminded everyone voting to make sure they had a voters card. He stated, "Copies of the warrant and Moderator's Rules are available in the back of the room." He added that he would not be reading the rules since they are the same rules that have been followed for a number of years. He asked for any questions, hearing none he moved on to introduction of the head table.

Board of Selectmen:

Paul LaRochelle, Chairman
Nick Buonopane, Vice Chairman
Andrew Morse
Richard Shea
Drew Carter

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator
Stephen Whitley, Town Attorney
Laura Parker, Finance Manager

Budget Committee:

Elizabeth Varney, Vice Chairman
Priscilla Terry, Member
Greg Fuller, Member
Hal Shurtleff, Member
Christi Wood, Member

Jennifer Collins, Town Clerk
Carol Long, Recording Secretary

Supervisors of the Checklist:

Valerie Tarbell
Raymond Johnson
Lisa Keller

Paul LaRochelle read the Selectmen's Report of 2024.

Moderator Young explained in Alton the Town Meeting is a two-step process. The first step is the Deliberative Session and the second is the Election on Tuesday, March 11th at Prospect Mountain High School between 7:00 am and 7:00 pm. Voting at the election will decide the Town and School District warrant articles as well as electing the Town and School officials. The warrant article language will be decided upon at this Deliberative Session. Each article will be moved, seconded and read out in full. An official will comment on and offer an explanation on each item. The floor is then open for comments and questions. If the wording of the warrant article remains unchanged, that warrant articles language is placed on the ballot and no vote will be required. If there is a vote

to amend an article the successfully amended article will be placed on the ballot. This requires a simple majority vote. Any article can be restricted for reconsideration once it has been considered.

Moderator Young asked if there were any questions regarding the rules and procedures. Seeing none he read the 2025 Warrant as follows: You are hereby notified to meet at the Prospect Mountain High School, 242 Suncook Valley Road, on Tuesday the fourth (4th) of February in the year Two Thousand and Twenty Five, beginning at six o'clock (6:00) in the evening, for the purpose of deliberating upon the following warrant articles and further notified to meet for the Town Elections to approve the Warrant Articles by ballot vote on March 11, 2025 at Prospect Mountain High School 242 Suncook Valley Road from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm.

Moderator Young stated Article #1-7 cannot be amended due to their technical nature.

Article #8: Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be added to the Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund, previously established in 2000. 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 (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-1). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.02)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 8, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle stated the funds will be added to the existing capital reserve to pay for the accrued benefits owed to employees leaving employment with the town, consistent with the conditions laid out in the employee manual. The fund currently has a balance of \$44,171.78.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 8, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #9: Town Operating Budget

Shall the Town 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 \$10,407,350.00. Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be \$9,729,012.00, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town 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 voted separately. The operating budget appropriation shall be partially offset by \$531,303.00 of FEMA reimbursements received by the Town; this reimbursement does not apply to the Default Budget. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$4.41)

Greg Fuller moved Article 9, seconded by Elizabeth Varney.

Cydney Shapleigh stated that according to her calculations, if everything passes tonight, the tax impact would be \$5.70. She asked if the Town agrees with her calculations, which there was no response.

Cydney Shapleigh asked, "how much was taken from the fund reserve to offset taxes this year?"

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator, responded the Board chose to use \$531,303 of unanticipated income to offset the operating budget instead of buying down the tax rate.

Cydney Shapleigh asked what is the current fund balance.

Ryan Heath answered \$4.6 million.

Cydney Shapleigh asked what is the maximum required by the State.

Ryan Heath answered there is no requirement. However, the State's suggested maximum is 17% which would be \$5.5 million. The State recommends carrying 10-12% and not to go lower than 5% which is \$1.6 million. 10% would be \$3.2 million. The \$4.6 million includes the \$531,303 of unanticipated revenue we plan on using.

Cydney Shapleigh stated again we are looking at \$5.70 per 1,000 if everything passes. What would that make our tax rate?

Ryan Heath responded that a lot more goes into the tax rate such as anticipated revenues, education and county tax so he cannot say what the tax rate will be.

Cydney Shapleigh asked what the current Town portion of the rate is.

Paul LaRochelle answered \$3.70.

Cydney Shapleigh stated it would be over \$9.00.

No further discussion.

Article #10: Water Works Operating Budget

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$541,430.00 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 \$538,474.00, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law. This article does not affect the tax rate and is funded by the end users. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0)

Greg Fuller moved Article 10, seconded by Christi Wood.

No further discussion.

Elizabeth Varney made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 10, seconded by Christi Wood.

Paul LaRochelle made an amendment to the motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 9 and Article 10, seconded by Drew Carter. Elizabeth Varney and Christi Wood were in favor of the amendment. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #11: Capital Reserve Fund Appropriations

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$181,500.00 to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established:

Police Building Expansion CRF	\$10,000.00
Rock and Asphalt Crushing CRF	\$12,000.00
Building Department Vehicle CRF	\$3,500.00
Assessing Department Vehicle CRF	\$3,500.00
Highway Sand Shed CRF	\$10,000.00
Sidewalk CRF	\$15,000.00
Senior Center Building CRF	\$20,000.00
Town Owned Parking Area CRF	\$20,000.00
Environmental CRF	\$20,000.00
Transfer Station Building & Site Improvements CRF	\$20,000.00
Jones Field CRF	\$12,500.00
Milfoil Treatment Program CRF	\$10,000.00
Alton Bay Community Center CRF	\$20,000.00
Water Bandstand CRF	\$5,000.00

Said funds to be raised through taxation. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-1). (Majority vote required). (The estimated tax impact is \$.08)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 11, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle asked if the people wanted him to read the current fund balances in gray, nobody came forward. He stated that these articles were combined to reduce the total number of articles.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 11, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #12: Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$300,000.00 to be added to the Fire Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund as previously established in 1973. Recommended by the Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.13)

Andrew Morse moved Article 12, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this money will be used to continue the current capital improvement plan. The funds are needed to repair and replace all the apparatus and equipment used by the Fire Department. The fund currently has a balance of \$1,715,380.82.

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 12, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #13: Fire Stations Capital Reserve

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$300,000.00 to be added to the Fire Stations Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2005. This fund is utilized in conjunction with the capital improvement plan for the replacement of Fire Department buildings. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.13)

Richard Shea moved Article 13, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Richard Shea stated this capital reserve fund was established to add funds for future improvements and repairs to the Fire Department. The fund currently has a balance of \$343,723.08.

Ruth Larson asked where the numbers in this article come from.

Paul LaRochelle responded the numbers come from the Capital Improvement Plan which identifies what is needed for each department.

Cydney Shapleigh voiced concerns with capital reserve fund name discrepancy between the CRF worksheet and the warrant article. She stated this has been an issue in the past.

Ryan Heath responded that according to the DRA this is the correct name for this fund.

No further discussion.

Richard Shea made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 13, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #14: Fire Department Additional Personnel

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$318,000.00 for the purpose of hiring four (4) additional full-time firefighter/EMS providers. These funds will cover the balance of the current years' worth of wages and benefits for the four (4) full-time positions. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.14)

Nick Buonopane moved Article 14, seconded by Richard Shea.

Nick Buonopane stated this increased staffing capacity primarily ensures the safety of both firefighters and civilians by allowing for more effective and efficient operations in emergency situations; including faster response times, increased EMS services, better fire suppression capabilities, improved search and rescue efforts, and a reduced risk of firefighter injuries. This will also assist in the reduction of overtime hours and funding, help reduce mutual requests into Alton, all while minimizing property damage and potential casualties due to understaffing. Essentially, a higher staffing level translates to a greater ability to handle complex fire and EMS scenarios with adequate personnel to perform critical tasks simultaneously.

Kelly Sullivan spoke in support of the Fire Department and stated they are in desperate need of staffing.

No further discussion.

Nick Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 14, seconded by Richard Shea. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #15: Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be added to the Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2014. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.02)

Andrew Morse moved Article 15, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this capital reserve fund was established to add funds for future improvements and repairs to the highway garage. The fund currently has a balance of \$89,980.16.

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 15, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #16: Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,000.00 to be added to the Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1995. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.07)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 16, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle stated this capital reserve fund was established to assist with the cost of repair/replacement of town owned bridges. Currently the bridge in need of immediate attention is

the north side Roberts Cove Road bridge #193/289. The estimate to replace the bridge is \$350,000.00. The fund currently has a balance of \$175,339.30.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 16, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #17: Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$150,000.00 to be added to the Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1981. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.07)

Nick Buonopane moved Article 17, seconded by Richard Shea.

Nick Buonopane stated these funds will be used for the replacement of front-line fleet vehicles and equipment as outlined in the 2025 CIP plan. The fund currently has a balance of \$133,819.16.

No further discussion.

Nick Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 17, seconded by Richard Shea. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #18: Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000.00 to be added to the Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2018. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.03)

Andrew Morse moved Article 18, seconded by Drew Carter.

Andrew Morse stated the retaining rock wall from the public boat docks to the swim area needs extensive repair. The retaining wall is deteriorating at the water level due to age and wave action. The walls flanking the boat ramp also need to be stabilized and repaired. The town has repaired portions of the wall over the last few years, but a lot more work will need to be done. The cost of the repairs was approximately \$90,000. As time goes on the repair costs are increasing. The fund currently has a balance of \$78,584.39.

Desmond Douglas asked what kind of retaining wall will we have.

Paul LaRochelle responded that we will be repairing what is there and use the same material as the existing retaining wall.

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 18, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #19: Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$45,000.00 to be added to the Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2019. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.02)

Richard Shea moved Article 19, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Richard Shea stated the funds would be used to purchase replacement vehicles and equipment when needed for the Grounds and Maintenance Department, which maintains thirty-eight town properties. This department performs general maintenance of town properties and buildings, plowing, mowing, trash removal at all town buildings and public parks, turf management and custodial care of town buildings. The fund currently has a balance of \$34,121.48.

No further discussion.

Richard Shea made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 19, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #20: Town Hall Building Improvement Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 to be added to Town Hall Building Improvement Capital Reserve fund, as previously established in 2011. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.01)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 20, seconded by Andrew Morse.

Paul LaRochelle stated these funds will be added to the Capital Reserve fund for future improvements to the Town Hall Building; such as mechanical upgrades, interior improvements, and exterior enhancements or improvements. This year we are continuing with the painting and repairs to the first-floor offices, the repairs and shelving in the Heidke Room and the completion of the elevator shaft and landings. Projects for future consideration are the remodeling of the employee kitchen and break area, a bathroom in the second-floor meeting room, and the reclaiming of the stage area. The fund currently has a balance of \$33,169.06.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 20, seconded by Andrew Morse. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #21: Town Hall Part-time Personnel

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$28,600.00 for the purpose of hiring one part-time assistant in the Town Clerk's office and one part-time assistant in the Building Department to help with the current workload and cover leave time for the balance of the current year. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.01)

Drew Carter moved Article 21, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Drew Carter stated this article would fund a part-time person in the clerk's office and a separate part-time person in the building office for approximately 10 hours a week to help with the increased workload and leave time coverage for other employees.

No further discussion.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 21, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #22: New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum \$50,000.00 to be added to the New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund, previously established in 2023. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.02)

Andrew Morse moved Article 22, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this fund is used for the expansion and maintenance of the New Riverside Cemetery, located on Suncook Valley Highway. The expansion will include additional burial lots, and columbarium relocation and expansion. This will also include future expansion of the maintenance facilities at the cemetery. The fund currently has a balance of \$75,861.74.

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 22, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #23: Highway Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,450,000.00 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 \$205,233.00. This is an annual appropriation that provides for the Maintenance of existing roadways. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$.56)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 23, seconded by Richard Shea.

Paul LaRochelle stated this capital reserve fund was established to continue the pavement preservation and road rehabilitation practice, which aligns with our Road Surface Management System and manages costs to the town by performing these practices. The fund currently has a balance of \$115,532.33.

Ruth Larson asked if the highway block grant is from the federal or state government and is it already received or anticipated.

Paul LaRochelle responded it is anticipated and then deferred to the DPW Director, Seth Garland.

Seth Garland stated the block grant is anticipated funds coming from toll booths and registration costs from the State.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 23, seconded by Richard Shea. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #24: IT Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$35,000.00 to be added to the IT Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2020. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.02)

Drew Carter moved Article 24, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Drew Carter stated this capital reserve fund was established to fund large-scale IT hardware and software needs and emergencies over time. Thereby reducing any significant impact they would have on the annual budget. The fund currently has a balance of \$37,068.95.

No further discussion.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 24, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #25: Solar Exemption

To see if the Town will vote to amend pursuant to RSA 72:27-a the Solar Exemption adopted at the 1985 annual meeting to read as follows: "The Solar Exemption shall be equal to 100% of the Assessed Value of the installed solar energy system. The Solar Exemption shall apply to the Solar energy system owned by the applicant and shall not apply to rented or leased equipment nor on property not owned by the applicant." Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). (Majority vote required)

Nick Buonopane moved Article 25, seconded by Drew Carter.

Nick Buonopane stated the current solar exemption applies to 50% of the purchase cost and labor to install solar equipment, with no express disallowance for non-owned (leased/rented) equipment. Because the assessment of this equipment rarely equals the actual costs, even at half the cost, many qualified applicants receive an exemption that exceeds the assessment amount of their equipment, which was never the intention of the solar exemption. The intention is to incentivize solar electrical generation at a residential scale by providing an exemption that prevents the applicant from paying more taxes than they would without the solar equipment. Since the state mandates the valuation of real estate, which includes installed solar electrical generation equipment, the Assessing Office is obligated to list this equipment, and the Building Department is obligated to regulate this equipment through the building permit process. Therefore, it is not a recommended practice to not assess solar electrical generation equipment. The exemption is provided to property owners on solar electrical generation equipment that they purchase and own. There are circumstances where the equipment is owned by someone other than the property owner and the owner pays a rental fee. This exemption is not intended to cover leaseholds or rental fees.

No further discussion.

Nick Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 25, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #26: Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing, repairing, and replacing police equipment; and to raise and appropriate \$30,000.00 to be placed in this fund; and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend from this reserve fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.01)

N. Buonopane moved Article 26, seconded by R. Shea.

N. Buonopane stated this capital reserve is being established to raise funds for future Police Department equipment needs. This would include the purchasing, repairing, and replacing of items such as body worn cameras and the cloud storage costs associated with storing the footage.

No further discussion.

N. Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 26, seconded by R. Shea. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #27: Nonprofits

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$64,325.00 for the purpose of supporting the following nonprofits and their individual appropriations:

Alton Community Services	\$15,000.00
American Red Cross	\$2,000.00
Caregivers of Southern Carroll County & Vicinity, Inc.	\$2,000.00
Granite VNA & Hospice	\$12,000.00
Community Action Program (CAP)	\$10,000.00

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)	\$500.00
Lakes Region Mental Health Center fka Genesis	\$15,750.00
Life Ministries, Inc.	\$3,000.00
New Beginnings	\$1,575.00
Waypoint fka Child and Family Services	\$2,500.00

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-1).
(Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.03)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 27, seconded by Nick Buonopane.

Peter Bolster stated Alton Family Services was formed twenty five years ago and is run completely by 50-60 volunteers. They serve approximately 100 families per week and is available to anyone in Alton. They provide aide beyond food such as fuel and rental assistance. Looking to expand assistance in helping people maintain homes.

Desmond Douglas asked how the nonprofits are selected to be listed on the warrant article.

Paul LaRochelle responded that agencies request funding and the Selectmen review the requests.

Desmond Douglas asked to have the list broken down into separate articles so that they all don't get voted down because the people have an issue with a few of them.

Peter Bolster added that the requests from the agencies itemize what services they are currently providing to the residents of Alton. The donation is basically a reimbursement for the services they provide to the town.

Cydney Shapleigh stated that she supports every nonprofit organization on this list and that every one of them make a difference in our town.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 27, seconded by Nick Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #28: Welcome to Alton Sign

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). **This is a petition article.** Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-1). Not recommended by the Budget Committee (3-3). (Majority vote required)

Drew Carter moved Article 28, seconded by Andrew Morse.

Carol Diveny spoke on behalf of Ruth Arsenault who was unable to attend the meeting. She explained that this petition was started by a group of citizens who wanted to see a "Welcome to Alton" sign at the entrance to the town by the traffic circle. The vision for the sign is one that represents classic down home simplicity, that embodies the culture of honest, uncomplicated

living while creating a sense of community pride. The timing on the welcome sign couldn't be more appropriate as the town begins to act on various recommendations of the 2023 Master Plan.

Jill Houser spoke about the group potentially raising private donations to help with the cost of the sign.

Jill Houser proposed the following amendment: 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). Choices of the sign's size and style will be presented for a public hearing & selection prior to a final decision by the Board of Selectmen. This is a petition article. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-1). Not recommended by the Budget Committee (3-3). (Majority vote required). Robyn Mastellar seconded the amendment.

Hunter Taylor stated the people of Alton are not grandiose folk and he hopes that the sign represents who we are.

Robin Lane-Douglas asked where will the appropriate area be to place the sign since the State of NH owns the traffic circle.

Paul LaRoche responded that the state is going to allow us to put this sign up anywhere in the circle. The exact location would be a good question for the public hearing.

Moderator Young put the amendment to vote, with a show of cards, the amendment to Article 28 passed with a favorable vote.

Greg Fuller questioned what impact will privately raising money have on the \$10,000 raised in this article.

Ryan Heath responded that this petition article is to raise and appropriate \$10,000 no matter what was already raised.

Greg Fuller stated there is no one here assigned to expend the funds. Should the Selectmen be able to expend?

Attorney Whitley stated the town can expend the \$10,000 the way the amendment is crafted.

Peter Bolster stated that the town has done this in the past with the Pearson Community Center where private donations helped offset the cost.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 28, seconded by Andrew Morse. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as amended.

Article #29: Permanent & Total Disabled Veterans Property Tax Credit

To see if the Town will vote pursuant to RSA 72:35, 1-a, to increase the 100% Permanent and Total (P&T) Disabled Veterans property Tax credit from \$1,400 annually to \$3,500. The State of NH has already approved an increase to \$4,000, we are asking for \$3,500. It is now it is up to the individual towns. **This is a petition article.** (Majority vote required)

Nick Buonopane moved Article 29, seconded by Drew Carter.

Harold Shurtleff asked how many 100% permanent and total disabled veterans in Alton.

Ryan Heath responded that he's not sure. However, the Assessing Office has that information.

Nick Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 29, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 30: Reports of Committees

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.

No reports or concerns brought forward.

Moderator Young adjourned the meeting at 7:27 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Long
Recording Secretary