

ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
Minutes  
March 10, 2025  
*(Approved - April 1, 2025)*

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Chairman P. LaRochelle convened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

P. LaRochelle led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

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Paul LaRochelle, Chairman  
N. Buonopane, Vice-Chairman  
Andrew Morse, Selectman  
Richard Shea, Selectman  
Drew Carter, Selectmen  
Ryan Heath, Town Administrator

Agenda Approval

R. Shea would like to add under New Business #6 Election Review and under Old Business #1 Update on Swap Shop and Discussion. N. Buonopane made a motion to approve the agenda as amended and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Announcements

- The Public Participation Policy applies to all Selectmen meetings. A copy of it is on the back of each agenda, posted outside this meeting room, and on our website.
- The Alton Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office will be closed on Tuesday, March 11, 2025; the staff will be working at the local Town and School Election from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm at Prospect Mountain High School. The office will re-open on Wednesday, March 12 at 12 noon.

Public Input ! (limited to 3 minutes per person on agenda items only)

None

Appointments

None

New Business

1. Town Clerk/Tax Collector - Paperless Billing

R. Heath stated that there is a memo from J. Collins, Town Clerk/Tax Collector. She would like permission from the Board to offer paperless tax bills for any taxpayer who wants to sign up to receive them electronically. The taxpayer must sign up for electronic tax bills. This isn't something that she would institute, or the Town would institute and force people to go paperless. This is just another way that taxpayers can prefer to receive their tax bill. It would save money on time and postage. R. Shea asked if there was any risk as far as hacking. R. Heath stated that there hasn't been any as far as he is aware of.

R. Shea made a motion to authorize the Town Clerk/Tax Collector to proceed with the plan to offer as an option to taxpayers online tax bills and payment information and N. Buonopane seconded with all in favor of the motion

2. HHW & LRPC Discussion

R. Heath stated that a few meetings back R. Shea reported that the HHW Committee meeting took place after the unfortunate passing of S. Silk, the HHW Coordinator. As a result of that meeting, the determination was that they were going to go with LRPC (Lakes Region Planning Commission) to sub out because they already do HHW collections. The Town of Wolfeboro reached out to them to see what it would be to come in and take over our current program. The Town of Alton is not a member of LRPC. We would have to become a member of them. Before a decision is made by the HHW Committee, the Board of Selectmen need to talk about this because the annual subscription is \$9,368.00. That would be for the whole year. To be prorated for this year it would be \$3,123.00. He read a list of the services that are listed for membership. If Alton decides to do this, they would have to become a member and then they would have to pay the HHW appropriations which is \$9,841.00. They will use Alton as a satellite site. If a taxpayer misses one of the collections in Alton they can go to one of the other participating towns. Currently budgeted is \$31,300.00. If this route is used it will be approximately \$11,000.00 less than what was budgeted. Wolfeboro is leaning in this direction. This is where they want to go. If Alton decides to go this route there is really no need to keep the joint agreement intact. R. Shea asked if LRPC closely parallel the number of weekends where they provide the service. R. Heath stated that they

would. D. Carter stated that he understands what was budgeted but he would like to know what was expended last year. R. Heath stated that he did not bring the expenditure report with him. They were a little over. R. Shea stated that from past experience there has been some resistance to being part of the LRPC. How would we go about addressing that or should it go to the Planning Commission with a proposal and get input from them. R. Heath stated that he came to the Board first because originally the Planning Board was primarily paying for the membership. They were utilizing for planning assistance. HHW would be out of the prevue of the Planning Board. He could make that presentation to the Planning Board as well.

P. LaRochelle stated that it is the consensus of the Board to have the Town Administrator go to the Planning Board and go over some of the offerings and then come back to the Board of Selectmen with their recommendation. R. Heath stated that what he would like to do because they are on a time crunch is do just the first quarter just to get collections for this year. He asked if the Board would be in favor of moving forward for this year's two collections.

N. Buonopane made a motion to accept the Lakes Region Planning Commission end of the fiscal year for 2025 until July for the amount of \$3,123.00 with the Town Administrator being the agent to expend it and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

N. Buonopane made a motion to accept the Lakes Region Planning Commission Hazardous Waste appropriation for \$9,841.00 with the Town Administrator being the agent to expend and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

### 3. Police Department - K9 Acquisition Discussion

T. MacDougall, Police Chief, approached the table. He stated that there is a memo and agreement in front of them. He stated that as the Board already knows, they lost their K9, Timber in December. C. Johnson, the K9 officer, and his other handlers through the Working Dog Foundation have been keeping an eye out for an opportunity for another K9. There is a dog that was sent over for the company, Garda World Security. He was geared for a federal contract that is no longer available. This one-year-old is pretty well trained and available to the Alton Police Department. As has been done in the past with Officer Johnson, he is willing to purchase the dog and sell it to the Police Department for \$1. There is an agreement that if the dog goes out of service, he would be able to buy him back. T. MacDougall thinks it is a good opportunity to keep the service going. He is looking for the Board's authorization to execute the agreement. A. Morse asked if most of his training is done. T. MacDougall stated that they have seen some videos. He does have some things that they are looking for. D. Carter asked how much call they have for a K9 unit. T. MacDougall stated that since 2020 they have had 21 calls. They are a variety including search and rescue. The community likes to see the dog as well. They have used mutual aid for help from other towns with K9s and have supported mutual aid as well. D. Carter asked what the annual cost of the dog is. T. MacDougall stated that because Officer Johnson is particular about the diet he also has a great relationship with the vet, he covers the costs.

D. Carter made a motion to approve the purchase of the one-year-old German Shepard for \$1 from K9 Officer C. Johnson and authorize the Chief to expend and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

### 4. Fire Department - 2025 Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant

R. Heath stated that the Fire Chief brought this up. This is a 50/50 match grant. It was done in the past. It is similar to the Volunteer Assistance Grant. There is a list on the memo of purchase requests. There is a total projected cost of \$4,000.00. He stated that the Fire Chief is looking for the Board's support to accept the grant. The grant would cover \$2,000.00 of the \$4,000.00. He stated that he believes it is the plan to take it out of the equipment line. It is specifically for forestry equipment.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the Fire Chief to enter into a purchase for equipment for forestry in the sum of \$4,000.00 the offset of \$2,000.00 from reimbursement and \$2,000.00 from the equipment line of the operating budget and having the Town Administrator sign the contract and D. Carter seconded with all in favor of the motion.

### 5. DPW - Hidden Springs - Logging and Stump Grinding Discussion

S. Garland, DPW Director, approached the table. There have been a couple meetings back and forth with Tighe and Bond. This is in reference to the possible future location of the DPW Department at Hidden Springs. There is a brook that runs through the middle of the lot. He reached out to a couple of local contractors to get a price of what it would cost to log, stump it, and leave the stump grindings on site for erosion control purposes. That would total 28.5 acres to be logged. Approximately 10 acres around Hurd Brook would have a buffer on each side. There is a small road that crosses the brook. The contractors that he reached out to all possess the ability to do it all in house. The insurance for taking down trees is very different from the insurance for digging holes. R. Heath stated that this was a project that was started about two years ago. The Board had approved to contract Tighe and Bond to get them involved in site preparation. The only lot that could feasibly be used size and afford was the 57 acres that the Town already owned. The problem with that was that the Fire Department would be too long of a run. There are several steps in clearing land. R. Heath explained some of them. R. Shea asked if there were any other permits needed other than the one Tighe and Bond are working on. S. Garland wasn't aware of what else is needed. The Highway Building Improvements CRF would be used. It would still leave money in the fund. D. Carter asked if we know if the ARPA funds would be available. R. Heath stated that we have already received those monies. R. Heath explained what the possibilities are for use of the remaining land could be used for. There would be a natural buffer with the brook with future possibilities of recreational use. It has yet to be determined. The idea is to have the Public Works facility towards the back up against the Solid Waste Center and be able to connect through to the existing road. S. Garland stated that the existing trail would be respected. It will leave it intact. R. Heath stated that the reasoning why they have sought out price at this point is that it is ultimately up to the Board, and they have the right to go out to

bid is they see fit. There were several years leading up to this point. He just wants the Board to know what the options are and what the policy states. N. Buonopane stated that given the substantial amount of money we should probably give it a chance to contact a couple of more suppliers. N. Buonopane asked what the time frame was and when were they going to start. S. Garland stated that the logging portion of it would be beneficial in the wintertime as long as the ground is still pretty firm. They probably had a month's worth of logging at least. All of them were available to start right away. D. Carter stated that he agreed to put it out to bid for this amount of money and having Tighe and Bond draw up the bid documents so that we know everyone is apples to apples. N. Buonopane stated there should be a timeframe cap on it. P. LaRochelle asked if a month is a good amount of time to put the bid together. Let's stretch it to a maximum of 60 days.

It is the general consensus to take 30 days to put the bid together and 30 days to put it out for bid.

#### 6. Election Review

R. Shea wanted to check with the Board to see what the coverage will be for the Election. He wants to make sure there is always someone there. The Board discussed what times they were available and would be there. P. LaRochelle stated that he and A. Morse cannot help count the ballots. R. Heath stated that G. Young, the Town Moderator reached out to him today. They talked about the possibility of P. LaRochelle and A. Morse assigning a pro temp. They can step in for one of the Board members. That is even true when they get into ballot counting. That keeps them out of the process.

#### Old Business

##### 1. Swap Shop

R. Shea stated that he has a stack of paper for the Board. What he has is a list of restrictions, original estimate of total costs, a revised estimate, and a welcome letter from Mains Electric to provide the electric service that is needed with the exception of trenching. There are a couple of areas that need clarification on. One of them is what if anything that the Town may offer in terms of funding for the program. His estimate is came out to about \$6,300.00. When he made adjustments that were recommended the final estimate is \$4,480.00. They have not undertaken a significant fund raising effort. They have managed to raise some funds. He would like the Board to act on some amount of "not to exceed" appropriation. He would propose the amount of \$4,000.00 with the authorization for up to that amount to be expended. He would like the Public Works Director to be authorized to expend the funds and coordinate the efforts there of. He feels that the source of funds are the Recycling Center Capital Account. He believes that right now it has about \$174,000.00 in it. P. LaRochelle stated that he believes there is no question, we have had it in the past, had issues, it seems to be resolved. There has been a lot of effort.

N. Buonopane made a motion to approve up to \$4,000.00 coming from the Solid Waste Building Improvement Capital Reserve or the Solid Waste Operating Budget to be expended by the Public Works Director and R. Shea seconded with all in favor of the motion.

S. Garland, Public Works Director approached the table. He stated that he did hear talk that Alton Excavation was thinking about donating the work for trenching. Just need a copy of their insurance and a trench opening permit. He would not see an issue with it.

#### Selectmen Reports

D. Carter had nothing to report.

R. Shea had nothing to report.

A. Morse had nothing to report.

N. Buonopane stated that it has been brought to his attention and dealt directly with a couple of gentlemen here in town. He would like to formally go on the record as saying that we are a Board and by no means we try to do the best for the town. We do not always make the right decision but we try. Given that, he has the utmost respect for everyone he sits with and the taxpayers. He will not enjoy hearing and reading things on social media. He would like to formally invite C. Niland and K. Kinney up to any one of the Board of Selectmen's meetings to discuss any concerns and questions and any sort of shady dealings they think the Board does. He would love to hear from them.

P. LaRochelle stated that the ZBA met.

#### Town Administrator Report

R. Heath stated there is a notice from NH Electric Coop in their packets. It is to inform everyone that they are starting up their utility clearing. They are doing a 15 foot swath on either side of the lines.

R. Heath asked the Board if they were okay with holding a Public Hearing on March 25. It would be to accept the most currently received FEMA funds.

R. Heath stated that he received a request today from the Friends of Parks and Recreation. They were seeking Non-Profit status. They were fortunate enough to achieve that. They have requested that the money they raised up to this point which is \$1,146.92 that is in the Friends of Parks and Recreation escrow account be returned to them to put in their charitable bank account. They now need to do their own reporting's.

R. Shea made a motion to have a check be written to the Friends of Parks and Recreation in the amount of \$1,146.92 and N. Buonopane seconded with all in favor of the motion.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

None

#### **Consent Agenda Approval**

N. Buonopane made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for March 10, 2025 as presented and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

#### **1. Land Use Items - approval**

##### **Assessing Consent Items**

##### **Timber Tax**

Moore; Map 9 Lot 35; L/O Moore Farm Lane; \$8,488.44

##### **Administrative Abatements**

Christian Camps & Conference Center; Map 18 Lots 17-1/2/4; Chestnut Cove Road; \$5  
Turmel; Map 62-1-9; 73 Mauhaut Shores; \$524

#### **2. Alton Youth League**

Raffle Application

#### **3. New Hampshire Boat Museum**

Special Event Application, Alton Bay Boat Show, 8/9/2025

#### **4. Friends of Parks & Rec Committee**

Kristin Thomas, 3-year term  
Kelly Sullivan, 3-year term

#### **5. Conservation Commission**

Dana Rhodes, 3-year term  
David Mank, 3-year term  
Tara Lamper, 2-year term

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

None

#### **Public Input II** (limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)

J. Houser approached the table. She would like to thank the Board for letting them transfer that money. She would also like to thank the Board for freeing up funds for the Swap Shop. She stated that she does a lot of hiking at Hidden Springs and she suspects there may be a lot of endangered plants in there. She isn't sure if the Town needs to do an assessment of it.

L. Carr approached the table. He had questions on Article #9. He stated that if you look at RSA 40:13, he read what the wording shall be on the ballot question. He went on to explain what he feel is wrong. He asked if they have already decided that they are going to put a Public Works building at Hidden Springs.

M. Manning approached the table. He thinks that the Board should thank the rest of the people who were involved with the Swap Shop. They have been volunteering with their free time. The Meet and Greet needs to be advertised better. He had several questions for the Board on topics covered tonight.

F. Carr approached the table. She was confused about the Warrant Articles. She asked questions about the Operating Budget and Default Budget.

K. Sullivan approached the table. She thanked the Board for approving the Swap Shop. She also asked about Lakes Region Planning Commission.

J. Blackwood approached the table. She thanked the Board for supporting the Swap Shop.

L. Carr approached the table again. He stated that the voters voted to get rid of the Lakes Region Planning Commission.

#### Non-Public Session

P. LaRochelle moved at 7:54 pm to enter nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A: 3, II, I (legal advice). A. Morse seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle - yes	N. Buonopane III - yes	R. Shea - yes
D. Carter - yes	A. Morse - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously.</u>

At 6:45 pm Chairman LaRochelle convened the nonpublic session with the following people present:

P. LaRochelle, Chairman  
N. Buonopane III, Vice-chairman  
R. Shea, Selectmen  
A. Morse, Selectmen  
D. Carter, Selectmen  
R. Heath, Town Administrator

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:51 pm to exit the nonpublic session. N. Buonopane seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle - yes	N. Buonopane III - yes	R. Shea - yes
D. Carter - yes	A. Morse - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously.</u>

P. LaRochelle moved to 'not divulge' item two of the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board or render the proposed action of the board ineffective. N. Buonopane seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle - yes	N. Buonopane III - yes	R. Shea - yes
D. Carter - yes	A. Morse - yes	<u>Roll call vote carried unanimously.</u>

#### Adjournment

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:51 pm to adjourn. D. Carter seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy L. Bailey  
Recording Secretary