

TOWN OF ALTON

Alton Budget Committee
Public Minutes

(APPROVED 02/11/08)

February 2, 2008

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair
Richard MacDonald
Elizabeth Dominick
Karen Painter
Jeffrey St. Cyr, Alton School Board Representative
Peter Bolster, Alton Selectmen Representative

Members Absent: Gregory Fuller, Vice Chair

Others Present: Terri Noyes, Alton School Board Chair
Maureen Smith, Alton School Board Member

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 PM.

II. DISCUSSION

There was discussion about amendments made to Article II of the Warrant articles.

P. Bolster spoke about his concerns about bringing the raise in now, in this process of the budget. He felt they had set a precedence here that could be destructive. M. Smith stated that the School had decided not to do it in a meeting because they had felt the best process would be to do it at a Deliberative Session. S. Miller stated that Shirley Lane had given herself her own raise because she had enough friends here. P. Bolster spoke about the process of the Budget Committee's review. K. Painter felt there was ample opportunity for this to come up prior to the Deliberative Session and felt it was inappropriate. She stated she would vote against this change. S. Miller stated that if people knew this could push the budget into a default budget that they might not do this again. R. MacDonald stated he felt the Board deserved a raise because they did a lot of work but that they went about it the wrong way.

[Recorder's note: Underlined text was added per request of S. Miller and R. MacDonald from the 02/11/08 meeting.]

S. Miller stated that they didn't know how people who didn't vote but there might be some who were looking for an excuse to lower the budget and would vote against the school budget because of this. T. Noyes noted that everyone has a right to be here and that the voters had voted in favor of the raise. S. Miller asked T. Noyes if she would go before the public and state that she wouldn't accept a raise if it was given to her. T. Noyes stated she couldn't do that if the voters did vote in agreement of this change. She stated she wasn't living on \$1,400 but her concern was that if the Alton Budget Committee might vote against recommending the school budget. She stated that the whole community had the right to be present at the meeting but because they weren't,

\$6,100.00 was added to the budget. She stated that if adding \$6,100.00 was going to have the consequence of costing the school almost \$400,000.00 then that was not right. She noted that the people present at the Deliberative Session voted in the affirmative for the \$6,100.00.

[Recorder's note: The correct amount approved in the amendment of Article III is \$6,200.00. Please refer to the meeting minutes of the First Deliberative Session on 02/02/08.]

There was discussion about the attendance of the Deliberative Session. R. MacDonald noted that nine people were against the amendment and that five of those nine had been on the stage, as members of the Alton Budget Committee. He stated that the public chose not to come and felt it was a large cut to come out of the budget if the school went into a default budget.

P. Bolster stated they had a difficult political decision to make and that they had to swallow something they didn't like so to avoid something far greater. He spoke about some of the cuts that were made to the school budget and R. MacDonald agreed that they had presented a good budget.

There was discussion about how the vote might have turned out if there were more people in attendance. P. Bolster felt that there was a large group present who were supportive of the educational community. T. Noyes disagreed with P. Bolster and asked him where he was getting the count for the large group of educators in the attendance.

S. Miller motioned to approve the amendments made to Warrant Article III and P. Bolster seconded the motion.

P. Bolster stated he felt they had to vote for the bottom line of the budget and that he was uncomfortable with the process. M. Smith stated they could have just put the raise in the budget but they felt it wasn't the right thing to do and felt it was better coming from the people. P. Bolster stated that the legislature had always voted themselves a raise. T. Noyes reported that Dan LaCroix had made a motion back in October for a raise but they hadn't brought it forward in the budget process.

S. Miller stated they were being held hostage and stated that the Alton Budget Committee could go to the community to explain their reasoning for recommending the budget. E. Dominick felt that people wouldn't understand the reasoning. P. Bolster stated it was inside politics and people wouldn't get it. There was discussion about the justification for the School Board needing a raise.

S. Miller called the vote on Article III. The vote passed by unanimous vote. (SM, RM, ED, KP, JS, PB / absent – GF)

III. ADJOURNMENT

J. St. Cyr motioned to adjourn the meeting and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, RM, ED, KP, JS, PB / absent – GF)

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:56PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Recorder