

**TOWN OF ALTON  
BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**APPROVED 10/30/08  
MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2008**

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair  
Karen Painter, Vice Chair  
Gregory Fuller  
Terri Noyes, School Board Representative

Members Absent: Stephan McMahon, Selectmen's Representative  
Elizabeth Dominick  
Richard MacDonald

Others Present: Russ Bailey, Town Administrator  
Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Three committee members were absent at the time of roll call.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

There was a moment of silence for the heroes and victims of September 11, 2001.

IV. AGENDA

G. Fuller asked to add something under "Old Business". K. Painter asked to add something under "New Business".

The amended agenda was approved by consensus. (There was no motion for the first amendment of the minutes.)

S. Miller motioned to add the draft of the proposed department head meeting schedule and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, GF, TN / absent – ED, SMc, RM)

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

K. Painter motioned to approve the minutes of June 12, 2008 and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, GF / absent – ED, RM, SMc / abstain – TN)

VI. OLD BUSINESS

a. SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

G. Fuller asked T. Noyes if she was going to be the School Board representative to the Budget Committee. She confirmed that no one had come forward from the School Board as the representative to the Budget Committee but that she was the alternate for that night's meeting. He felt that because there was not an appointed School Board member that there was not a quorum present at the meeting for this night. There was a discussion about the RSA for the Budget Committee.

S. Miller spoke about the set up that the Selectmen have for representatives and alternates, noting that neither could be present at the meeting that night. He stated he did not have a problem with a different representative each evening, as long as there was representative present from the school.

T. Noyes spoke about the meeting commitments that the School Board members have and stated that when people run for school board that they do not also run for the Alton Budget Committee. She stated that no one had come forward as representative and felt that it should not be up to a junior member of the Board to be the representative because they would not be as familiar with policy, standards, etc.

There was discussion about how to interpret the RSA about the appointment of the school board representative. S. Miller stated he would check with the DRA about the question and get back to the Committee with the answer.

b. PAYMENT OF SCHOOL BOARD

G. Fuller spoke about the warrant article about the payment of the School Board members that had failed. He asked S. Miller what he was able to find out about it and S. Miller stated that Jamie Dowd had told him that they should still be paid. G. Fuller read from the meeting minutes of the 2003 School Deliberative Session from when the warrant article for the payment of the School Board was amended. T. Noyes asked if the meeting minutes that G. Fuller had read from had been amended and if those minutes were approved. G. Fuller stated that he did not know if they had been amended or not but that he would need to go back and check. S. Miller stated that according to Jamie Dowd they (the School Board) could be paid and offered to get a legal opinion about the situation.

T. Noyes stated that when the Board said they would not recommend the amended warrant article for the raise of the Board's salaries, that it meant that the moderator, clerk, etc., would not be paid and felt it wasn't fair to them. G. Fuller stated he was concerned about the law and wanted to make sure that since this was voted down that their being paid was still legal. K. Painter asked for clarification and asked if the Budget Committee had the authority on the payment or withholding payment. R. Bailey stated that the Budget Committee had no authority but was an advisory committee.

S. Miller stated he would get more information from the town's attorney about the question and would follow up with the people listed on the meeting minutes from 2003 to ask about amendments, approvals, etc.

VII. NEW BUSINESS  
a. BUDGET SCHEDULE

It was noted there may be a change on November 11 and December 4. This will be discussed again at a future meeting.

G. Fuller motioned to approve the Budget Committee Schedule for 2008-2009 and K. Painter seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, GF, TN / absent – ED, SM, RM)

b. RECOMMENDATIONS TO SELECTMEN OR ADMINISTRATOR

HIGHWAY CONTINGENCY FUND

S. Miller asked R. Bailey if any contingencies were being made in light of the issues with floods, tornadoes, etc. R. Bailey stated that he would need to increase the budget by about \$300,000, if he was going to do that. He spoke about some of the FEMA filings they have made and noted they had filed four times in two-and-a-half years. He stated that they could have a good year next year and felt he could not increase the budget. He spoke about the budget overages because of the excessive winter storms this year and other overages, such as legal issues, and the tornado. There was discussion about the Highway Department budget in the past and the possibility of considering a contingency fund.

PAINTER QUERIES (BANDSTAND)

S. Miller stated that K. Painter had questions about the under-budgeted amount for the painting of the bandstand. R. Bailey stated they would re-evaluated it because their main concern was that it was stable. He spoke about the bid history and reported that there were no local bids for the project but there were two bids from companies out of MA for about \$36,000, which were rejected.

UTILITY CONTINENCY FUNDS

S. Miller spoke about the uncertainty of fuel prices and asked what plans the town had for controlling costs and asked if there was consideration of a utility and emergency contingency fund.

R. Bailey stated the town had a surplus of \$2.4 million. He stated that the fuel prices were pretty much locked in right now. There are three buildings that are over now on their oil costs but they will be covered. He reported they paid \$2.42 for heating oil and about \$2.70 for kerosene.

S. Miller asked if he had considered regional bidding and R. Bailey stated that they would not do much better right now than the rack plus price they were paying now. R. Bailey reported they are doing energy reviews over three of their buildings, including the Town Hall.

S. Miller asked if there would be a breakdown of fuel prices for the Budget Committee and R. Bailey stated that the budget would be in the same format but there would be some spreadsheets with additional information. R. Bailey spoke about some of the actions they are taking for making changes to address the energy cost issue.

#### NON-BUDGETED GRANTS

There was discussion about how new grants or unanticipated grants are handled when the grants have not been planned for in the budget. R. Bailey spoke about the specific ways that grants have to be handled.

#### PROPOSED WARRANT ARTICLES

R. Bailey reported that it is pretty much a normal year and they would have more information about warrant articles at a later meeting.

#### c. BUDGET QUESTIONS (June, 2008 Report)

There was a brief question and answer about several budget overages. R. Bailey spoke about the justification for the overages.

#### d. SCHOOL BUDGET

#### NON-BUDGETED SCHOOL GRANTS

S. Miller asked what was done with grant money that was received during a school year that was not anticipated. T. Noyes responded that she would really need to check with the Superintendent for an answer but would have the information for the Committee at a future meeting.

#### SUPERINTENDENT

S. Miller noted that the Superintendent's budget line item was about \$65,000. He asked if any bills had been turned in yet. T. Noyes noted that she does not get mileage but that there were times when she had turned in a bill. S. Miller stated that she should be submitting a bill each month and felt this should be brought up to date.

S. Miller asked about a balance on a budget line item of SAU #72 and T. Noyes stated she would check into it. She stated she would email him the answer.

K. Painter asked if there had been consideration for the salary adjustment line would be altered to show exact amounts for increases. T. Noyes stated they were just getting into budgeting and reviewed the Board's meeting schedule. She stated there would be a discussion about it at the October 20 meeting and that she would discuss this with the Superintendent.

S. Miller stated that he felt the reports from PMHS had more complete information (more columns on the spreadsheet) than what he received from ACS. He asked if ACS reports could be made more like the reports from PMHS. He also asked for more complete revenue sheets and asked T. Noyes to email him with a "yea" or "nay" on that.

S. Miller requested that any binders from the previous years' budgets, if the binders and the tabs would be returned to the SAU office so they could re-use them. This is for cost savings.

#### VIII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

K. Painter motioned to adjourn and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, KP, GF, TN / absent – ED, SMc, RM)

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 PM.

Respectively Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis  
Recorder