

**TOWN OF ALTON
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
ALTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Members Present: Karen Painter, Chair
Greg Fuller, Vice Chair
Steve Miller
Marc DeCoff
Richard MacDonald

Others Present: Members of the Public

I. CALL TO ORDER

K. Painter called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Loring Carr, Selectmen's Representative, and a representative from the School Board were absent. It was noted that there was a meeting going on at the school at the same time.

IV. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

V. AGENDA

G. Fuller noted that the second "Old Business" should be corrected to say "New Business". K. Painter requested to go out of order a little on the agenda as the meeting minutes were waiting to be printed so that the Committee could review them prior to approval.

G. Fuller motioned to approve the agenda and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. There was no vote taken. The agenda was accepted by consensus.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTATIVE

K. Painter noted that there was not a School Board Representative present at the meeting and asked if anyone wished to speak about the Representative position. S. Miller stated that he felt the School Board was not present unless they were on the agenda or they had a need. He felt it was necessary that a letter should be sent to the School Board. K. Painter asked if anyone objected to her sending a letter to the School Board and there were no objections.

MEETING WITH ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN

K. Painter reported there had been a meeting scheduled for October 12 with the Board of Selectmen but that the meeting was cancelled. The meeting will be rescheduled.

SCHOOL'S DEFAULT BUDGET

K. Painter reported that Kathy Holt, Superintendent, SAU #72, had emailed her to offer to meet with the Committee but that there was a school committee meeting that same night. There was discussion on whether or not there would be a School Board Representative available at that night's meeting. G. Fuller felt that one representative from the Board could not answer the questions about the default budget and felt it was the Board's budget, not the Superintendent's budget or the Principal's budget. He felt it was important for the Board to be present when they were reviewing the default budget for the school.

JMA BUDGET COMMITTEE

K. Painter asked S. Miller to report on the JMA Budget Committee. S. Miller stated that he wanted to see if the members of the Barnstead would work together to have the same authority with the JMA budget as they had with their town's budget. S. Miller reported he had worked with the Local Government Center to work on the wording for a Warrant article that would give the JMA Budget Committee the same type of authority and power that the town budget committee had in each of the towns. There was discussion about working with the Barnstead Budget Committee

G. Fuller motioned to give Steve Miller the authority to contact the Barnstead Budget Committee to work with them on a petition warrant article to change the JMA Budget Committee to an RSA 32 budget committee. R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

SCHOOLS' REPORTS

The report of the School Board Representative and the ACS and PMHS Year End Encumbrances were tabled.

S. Miller requested that when K. Painter writes a letter to the SAU that she mention the need for a School Board Representative to be present when the Committee has requested specific documents for review. K. Painter stated that in all fairness, she was not able to make it into town to check the Committee's mailbox so that was why they were just now receiving the documents from the school.

STATEMENT TO BOARD OF SELECTMEN

S. Miller spoke about his statement made at the Board of Selectmen's meeting that was reported on in the local paper last week and noted for the record that his statement was his own, not as a representative of the Budget Committee. K. Painter felt it was clear that the statement was S. Miller's own statement from the way the newspaper article was written.

S. Miller spoke about the issues he had with the Board of Selectmen voting themselves a raise and reported he had spoken with the Attorney at the Local Government Center about the matter. He referred to two town articles that he felt were violated by the voting of themselves a raise. He felt that the Selectmen should have recused themselves from voting for their own raise. He spoke about a case law where a town's selectmen had voted themselves a raise but the difference with the Alton Selectmen was that they had a Conflict of Interest ordinance. G. Fuller felt it was not the position of the Budget Committee to review a conflict of interest and stated he disagreed with the pursuit of this issue. He felt it was S. Miller's own issue. R. MacDonald stated he disagreed with G. Fuller.

There was discussion about issue of the Selectmen voting themselves a raise and the possibility of having a petition warrant article to keep the Selectmen from voting themselves a raise in the future. K. Painter read the meeting minutes of September 17, 2009, concerning the conflict of interest policy and the Selectmen's raise. She stated that this was something discussed at a meeting and that it was her opinion that he was reporting back from that action item from the September 17 meeting. G. Fuller asked if what they (the Selectmen) did was legal and S. Miller responded that it was the Attorney's opinion that the Conflict of Interest ordinance was violated but that the vote for a raise would need to be reviewed by a court to determine if it was legal, since the Selectmen have the right to transfer the money that is in the town's budget. There was discussion about whether this was the Budget Committee's responsibility. K. Painter stated that it was the Selectmen's right to transfer the money and stated that if members of the Committee had questions about the conflict of interest that they now had the information to take forward and to do something on their own.

S. Miller motioned to recommend to the BOS to give back any and all COLA money received after the vote taken on April 14, 2009, because it was not done on good faith on the acceptance of the default budget and the BOS should decline to accept any additional COLAs in the upcoming fiscal year. R. MacDonald seconded the motion. G. Fuller stated that if that was the case then all employees who received a COLA should give it back.

G. Fuller amended S. Miller's motion to request all employees who received a COLA to give it back to the town. R. MacDonald seconded the amendment to the motion. There was discussion about re viewing the conflict of interest and G. Fuller felt it was not in the Budget Committee's business that they look into conflicts of interest. He felt that if they were going to "pick on the Selectmen that they should then pick on everybody". G. Fuller felt that because the town was in a default budget that no one should receive a raise. S. Miller stated he disagreed with G. Fuller and spoke further about the violations of the conflict of interest that he felt the Board of Selectmen had made.

The vote was called on the amendment to the motion and the amendment passed by a vote of three to two. (Yes – MD, GF, RM / No – SM, KP). S. Miller called a point of order and stated that G. Fuller should recuse himself from voting because there was a Conflict of Interest. G. Fuller stated he disagreed with S. Miller's statement.

The vote was called on the motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (Yes – SM, KP, RM, MD / abstain – GF). S. Miller stated point of order and felt that G. Fuller should not be voting. G. Fuller stated he would change his vote to "abstain", but had voted yes to the motion.

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCIES

Social Service Agencies – Year-To-Date Expenditures was tabled.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT LAPTOP COMPUTER

Planning Department Computer was tabled.

FLAG & FIRE WORKS ACCOUNT

Flag & Fire Works was tabled.

BUDGET CALENDAR

The Committee reviewed the Budget Committee Calendar for 2009-2010:

Tuesday, October 20, 2009	Solid Waste Center, Water Department, Welfare, Patriotic Purposes, Street Lights
Thursday, October 22, 2009	Planning, Police Department, Animal Control
Tuesday, October 27, 2009	Assessing Department, Town Clerk, Elections, Fire Department
Thursday, October 29, 2009	Tax Collector, Library, Conservation
Tuesday, November 3, 2009	Cemetery, Code Enforcement, Highway
Thursday, November 5, 2009	General Government, Legal Insurance, Benefits, Gilman Museum, Parks & Recreation, Building & Grounds
Tuesday, November 10, 2009	School
Thursday, November 12, 2009	School
Thursday, November 17, 2009	CIP
Tuesday, November 19, 2009	School
Tuesday, December 1, 2009	Open
Thursday, December 3, 2009	School
Tuesday, December 8, 2009	Work/Review Session
Tuesday, January 12, 2010	Public Hearing
Thursday, January 14, 2010	Public Hearing
Tuesday, January 19, 2010	Snow Date

There was discussion about having a review session on December 8, 2009. Meetings will begin at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall. The meetings will be held in the upstairs meeting room or in the Heidke Room. Budget reviews with department managers will begin at approximately 6:50 p.m.

K. Painter reviewed a document titled "*Budget Review Process Guidelines to Department Heads*" and asked if the Budget Committee supported the document. This guideline is designed to review and highlight the objectives of the budget, expenditure increases/decreases by object, and other standards. K. Painter motioned to adopt the document and to give it to the Town Administrator to give to the department heads. R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

K. Painter spoke about the Budget Committee putting out a press release announcing the dates of meeting and to invite the public to attend the meetings. K. Painter motioned to have the press releases sent out to the local papers and to have them posted around town. R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

BUDGET BOOKS

K. Painter noted that the budget books were available for the Committee. She noted that some of the numbers, such as for insurance and for fuel, were variables and subject to change. She reported on some of the items that were pending for report for the next meeting. S. Miller suggested that K. Painter should review the Budget Committee's budget and make any changes she felt were necessary and let R. Bailey know of the changes.

S. Miller asked if the recommendation to the Board of Selectmen that was made in a motion should be put in writing and submitted to them. He stated he would like to see the Selectmen read the recommendation into their minutes at their (the BOS's) next meeting. It was the consensus of the Committee to have L. Carr read the statement into the minutes. The Committee requested this recorder to send a letter to the BOS and to include the motion made earlier in this evening's meeting concerning the COLA's.

VIII. MEETING MINUTES

M. DeCoff motioned to approve the meeting minutes of September 17, 2009 and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five with one abstaining. (KP, GF, MD, SM / abstain – RM)

IX. CORRESPONDENCE

K. Painter reported on correspondence she had received concerning upcoming workshops and meetings.

X. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

S. Miller reported that he had purchased three documents at the Local Government Center and had them billed to the Budget Committee's budget. He stated he wanted to read the documents and then he would bring them in to the next meeting in case anyone wanted to read them. He recommended the book "The Basic Law of Budgeting".

XII. ADJOURNMENT

G. Fuller motioned to adjourn and M. DeCoff seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder