

**TOWN OF ALTON
ALTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
(Approved 12/16/08)
November 13, 2008
MEETING MINUTES**

Members Present: Steve Miller, Chair
Elizabeth Dominick
Greg Fuller
Richard MacDonald
Lynda Goossens, School Board Representative
Stephen McMahon, Selectmen's Representative

Members Absent: Karen Painter, Vice Chair

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

I. CALL TO ORDER

S. Miller called the meeting to order at 6:33 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

L. Goossens and S. McMahon were absent at the time of roll call but arrived after the meeting convened.

K. Painter was unable to attend.

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

G. Fuller motioned to approve the agenda, as amended, and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

V. HOUSEKEEPING

S. Miller spoke about confirming the dates the school board wished to present the school budget and stated he was willing to accommodate them. The school board representative was not present at this time to discuss the schedule.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

R. MacDonald motioned to approve the meeting minutes of October 28, 2008 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with one abstaining. (SM, GF, ED, RM / abstain – GF / absent – KP, LG, SMc)

[L. Goossens arrived at 6:40 PM and S. McMahon arrived at 6:42 PM.]

G. Fuller motioned to approve the meeting minutes of October 30, 2008 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with two abstaining. (SM, GF, ED, RM / abstain – LG, SMc / absent – KP)

R. MacDonald motioned to approve the meeting minutes of November 6, 2008 and G. Fuller seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of four with two abstaining. (SM, GF, ED, RM / abstain – LG, SMc / absent – KP)

VII. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

R. Bailey explained that the missing data on the Animal Control Officer's Activity Log submitted on 11/06/08 were the months prior to the start of the ACO. He reported that the calls were not telephone calls but calls that involved a visit to a home.

R. Bailey reported that he had the budget request from the local access channel. The Committee reviewed the request. R. MacDonald motioned to approve the requested budget amount for 2009 for Public Channel PEG (4199) at \$12,732.00 and S. McMahon seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

R. Bailey reported that the oil bid was awarded to Eastern Oil and Propane and that the rates would be at a rack plus rate. He reported that bids had been received from Stafford Oil, Eastern Propane and Oil, and Irving Oil. The rack price for propane, at the time of this meeting, was reported to be \$1.858/gal, the price for oil is \$2.48/gal, and the price for kerosene is \$3.24/gal. R. Bailey stated that the prices to be used for budgeting purposes would be \$2.15/gal for propane, \$3.00/gal for oil, and \$4.00/gal for kerosene. He spoke about the state price for gasoline and noted it was \$2.85/gal at the state price. The retail price is \$2.07/gal and the departments have been advised to use the retail prices until the state price has caught up with the drop in price. There was discussion about the price of fuel and the recent trend of declining prices. R. Bailey stated that the Board realized that the price most likely will not stay at this price so that was why a high budgeting price would be used to estimate the budget and the budget would not be based on the November, 2008 prices. S. Miller suggested that R. Bailey should check with a couple of gas stations in the area that might have underground tanks available for rental where fuel could be stored at the current pricing. He suggested going in with another town, such as New Durham or Pittsfield on the rental and fuel.

IX. TOWN CLERK – 4132

Lisa Noyes, Alton Town Clerk, presented the proposed budget for 2009. The Selectmen's approved budget for 2009 is \$84,194.00 and the approved budget for 2008 was \$80,507.00. L. Noyes noted that the increase was only for cost of living.

L. Goossens asked about the budgeting for Postage. L. Noyes explained the justification for the increase because of some of the new criteria for paperwork that the state requires. There was discussion about some of the revenue that the Department brings in and L. Noyes listed some of the year-to-date revenues.

G. Fuller motioned to accept the Selectmen's recommendations for the 2009 budget for Town Clerk (4132) at \$84,194.00 and R. MacDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

X. ELECTIONS & REGISTRATIONS – 4140

L. Noyes presented the 2009 budget for Elections and Registrations. The budget for 2008 was \$14,452.00 and the Selectmen's recommended budget for 2009 is \$8,195.00. L. Noyes reported that the budget has decreased because there will only be one election in 2009.

L. Goossens motioned to accept the Selectmen's recommendations for the 2009 budget for Elections and Registrations (4140) and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

XI. PARKS & REC – 4520

K. Troendle, Director of Parks and Recreation Department presented the proposed budget for 2009. She noted that there has been an increase in activities over the past year. She reported that the budget was level funded other than pay increases, but that the budget had actually decreased from 2008.

There was discussion of the town's step program. K. Troendle reported she was at step ten and had been employed by the town for fifteen years. It was noted that the Director's salary was cut because the Board of Selectmen are trying to figure out how to deal with several other town employees' who have also reached the highest step level.

L. Goossens motioned to approve the Department Head's requested budget for 2009 for Parks & Recreation (4520). There was no second to the motion. There was discussion about the requested budget and the Selectmen's approved budget.

L. Goossens motioned to approve the Selectmen's approved budget for 2009 at \$80,246 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. There was discussion about review of the budget by the directory. K. Troendle noted that the budget line item for Electricity would not be spent because it was for the ice rink area, by the basketball courts, and those were not being used. There was discussion about the justification for the requested amounts for Computer, Office Supplies, and New Equipment. G. Fuller motioned to amend the original motion, to cut budget line item 4520-303, Electricity \$240.00, to \$1.00, making the approved budget for 2009 \$80,007.00. L. Goossens

seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of five. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – K P / abstain - SMc)

XII. GROUNDS & MAINTENANCE – 4194

K. Troendle presented the requested budget for 2009 for Grounds and Maintenance (4194). The Selectmen's approved budget for 2009 is \$207,745.00. The budget for 2008 was \$205,913.00. It was noted that Fuel was over budget and Portable Toilets were also over budget.

S. Miller motioned to accept the Selectmen's recommendations for the 2009 budget for Grounds and Maintenance (4194) at \$207,745.00 and L. Goossens seconded the motion. R. MacDonald asked about the justification for the Vehicle Maintenance (4194-207) at \$2,200.00 and R. Bailey noted that it covered the maintenance for four vehicles. He noted that this was for routine maintenance. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

XIII. GENERAL GOVERNMENT – 4130

R. Bailey, Town Administrator, presented the proposed budget for 2009 for General Government. He noted that the budget line item for the audit might change because of the audit required from the FEMA grant that was given to the town. The audit is mandatory and there are special criteria that have to be met, as terms of the grant.

L. Goossens asked about the budget line item for Contract Services and R. Bailey responded that it was for the recording of meetings, consultants, etc.

There was discussion about the FEMA reimbursement which will be about \$120,000.00 to \$130,000.00. The reimbursement amount will go to Fire Department, Highway Department, etc. R. Bailey spoke about some of the overages that various department budgets have had because of the tornado, forest fire, and other unforeseen events. There was discussion about CIP and R. Bailey noted that there were issues with some of the buildings and the Selectmen were working on a plan for maintenance. He stated that the 2008 would come in at about 1% under budget.

G. Fuller spoke about Computer (4130-162) and R. Bailey reported he could get the actual cost for 2008. G. Fuller asked about the budget line item for Telephone (4130-175) and R. Bailey spoke about the plans the town had for cutting about 50% of the landlines and using voice over internet protocol. He spoke about the benefits of using an internet based fax service and other cost-savings that will be implemented. He stated he expected to make savings and that the bid for telephone was for Police and Fire as well.

S. Miller asked if the Selectmen's Contingency Fund would be used and R. Bailey explained that it would be used. He spoke about the recent purchase of defibrillators and the storage cabinets that were needed for storing the units. S. Miller asked if there would be any transfers between departments and R. Bailey explained that there would be some later in the year and listed some of the departments, such as Legal, that would need coverage.

R. MacDonald motioned to accept the Selectmen's recommendations for the 2009 budget for General Government (4130) at \$328,728.00 and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

R. Bailey reported that the Selectmen have approved to move the Fire Hydrants budget to the Fire Department budget. He reported that the Code Enforcement Secretary, who worked 25% of the time for the Conservation Department, and there would be a change to the budget.

R. Bailey reported that the mileage for the Police Chief has been increased by \$1,500.00 for six months. He stated that the change was by the Selectmen and not a request by the police chief. R. Bailey noted that the decision was made during a workshop. R. MacDonald stated he thought that any vote taken had to be taped. R. Bailey noted that the action will be in the meeting minutes but that the taping of meetings is not mandatory.

R. Bailey asked the Committee to move the review of the Conservation budget to 12/04/08, along with Benefits and Fuel.

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

There was no public input.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

R. MacDonald motioned to adjourn and E. Dominick seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous vote. (SM, GF, ED, RM, LG, SMc / absent – KP)

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Argiropolis
Recorder