

Budget Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 30th, 2021 – 6:00 PM
Town Hall
1 Monument Square
Alton, NH 03809

1. Call to Order: 6:00 PM
2. Roll Call: D Hershey - Chairs meeting in RP absence, J Bemis, L Laplante, R Johnson - School Board Representative, E Dionne - Town Administrator, L Parker - Finance Manager, J Monaco – IT Director B Holt - Selectman’s Representative (absent: R Parker – Chairman)
3. Approval of Agenda: DH moves to accept agenda, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
4. New Business: Budget Presentations and Approvals
 - a. IT (4145) \$161,203.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. Fire dept access control line item(s) moved from Budget to CIP per BoS. DH asks JM if there is a plan to streamline security platforms across town buildings. JM advises that he is already moving surveillance to one platform and that he intends to do the same with access control.
 - ii. DH ask JM if there were any opportunities to move away from dated forms of software regarding town business. JM advises that there may be some areas where the Town of Alton could benefit from newer types of software, but a new line item would need to be created in the budget to support such updates.
 - b. Administration (4130) \$384,335.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. DH asks ED if there were any furloughs or layoffs during the COVID emergency period. ED advises that there were not any furloughs or layoffs and that staff members were able to carry on with their work remotely if they were not in their respective offices. DH asks if the line item for remote meeting software was an increase due to COVID. ED advises that it was an increase due to COVID.
 - ii. DH asks if the Unexpected Expenses line item was based on a “normal” year or on a COVID emergency year. ED advises that the number is based on a “normal” year.
 - iii. DH asks what happens to any unused funds from the Remote Meeting or Unexpected Expenses lines. ED advises that the funds would be moved to the General Fund.
 - c. Audio/Visual Meeting Equipment (4199) \$3,500.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. Written justification of funds is sufficient.
 - d. Interest Short Term (4723) \$1.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by RJ, all were in favor.
 - e. Legal (4153) \$137,894.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. DH asks if the town anticipates any litigation this year. ED advises that the town anticipates substantial litigation this year due to property abatement issues. DH asks if the town makes an effort to recover legal fees. Both ED and BH advise that it is town policy to attempt to recover legal fees whenever the law allows.
 - f. Patriotic Purposes (4583) \$24,729.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. DH asks where the funds for the cancelled fireworks went from 2020. ED advises that the company that the town uses for fireworks, Atlas Fireworks, allowed the town to apply the \$6,000.00 deposit from 2020 to fireworks shows in 2021. ED further advises that the 2021 4th of July fireworks were cancelled due to uncertainty

about the COVID emergency, and that the 2020 deposit held by Atlas Fireworks was applied to the 2021 Old Home Week fireworks show.

- g. Streetlights (4316) \$33,500.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. DH asks for background on the town streetlights. ED advises that the town has 170 streetlights total which land on the territorial grids of three separate electric companies: NHEC, Wolfeboro Electric, and Eversource. BH advises that it has been the intention of the BoS to conduct a survey of existing streetlights and see if all lights are necessary, but the survey has not yet taken place. JB asks if the electric companies maintain records as to what type of bulb each light currently has installed. ED advises that the electric companies do have records and that the lights are currently a mixture of incandescent and fluorescent bulbs. JB asks if the electric companies would help us compile a list of LED bulbs that would fit each streetlight. ED advises that they would.
 - h. Welfare Department (4442) \$50,000.00: DH moves to approve, 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
 - i. DH asks for some background on the welfare department. ED advises that general assistance fund and Heidke fund are cover separate needs of residents and that the Heidke fund operates largely from an established trust fund. For auditing purposes, the town covers the costs of Heidke fund recipients throughout the year and then the Heidke fund reimburses the town at year-end. Heidke fund exists specifically to help elderly residents stay in their homes by providing in-home assistance to said residents. The town has 2 part-time employees dedicated to the welfare department who process claims for assistance. The approval process is based on state criteria and the welfare department staffers receive annual training from the state. The town is required by the state to provide assistance to all residents who file a claim and meet the criteria to receive it. DH requests copies of the criteria that the town uses for qualifying welfare assistance claims. DH asks if the town covers the payroll for any of the Heidke fund workers. ED advises that part of lines 831 and 832 goes towards the FICA and Medicare taxes of the Heidke fund workers and that the Heidke fund workers are technically employees of the town. DH asks if the town holds the workers compensation coverage for the Heidke fund workers or if it is held by the trust itself. ED advises that she would need to get that answer for DH.
 - ii. RJ comments on the amount of unused welfare funds from the previous year. ED advises that the criteria for receiving welfare assistance is quite strict. The BoS voted to reduce the general assistance line item 801 from \$26,000.00 to \$18,286.00 for 2022.
5. Old Business:
- a. DH asks ED and LP to look over his proposed copy of a standard purchase order agreement, which he had sent to them via email, and to let him know if they have any questions.
 - b. Regarding a previous inquiry by DH into a survey of business uses for the Mt Major Community Center and the West Alton Fire Station; BH advises that the West Alton Fire Station is still active and in use.
6. Approval of Minutes: DH moves to approve 9/16/2021 and 9/23/2021 meeting minutes. 2nd by JB, all were in favor.
7. Other Business: None.
8. Motion to Adjourn: DH motions to adjourn, 2nd by JB, all were in favor. 7:01 PM.