ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
April 14, 2026
(Approved – April 28, 2026)

Chairman P. LaRochelle convened the meeting at 6:00 PM.

P. LaRochelle led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and a Moment of Silence. The following staff members were present:

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Paul LaRochelle, Chairman
Drew Carter, Vice-Chairman
Andrew Morse, Selectman
Richard Shea, Selectman
Jack Sleeper, Selectmen
Ryan Heath, Town Administrator

Agenda Approval

R. Shea approved the agenda as presented and D. Carter seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Announcements

- The Public Participation Policy applies to all Selectmen meetings. A copy of it is on the back of each agenda, posted outside this meeting room, and on our website.
- A rabies vaccination clinic for dogs and cats will be held on Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Aubuchon Hardware, 7 Main Street, Alton.
  - Rabies vaccination: $25.00 per animal
  - Microchipping: $40.00 per animal

  Dog Licensing: Dog licenses will be available for Alton and New Durham residents, as representatives from both Town Clerks' offices will be in attendance.

  Residents are encouraged to take advantage of this convenient opportunity to vaccinate and license their pets.

Public Hearing – Proposed Water Rate Changes – 6:03 pm

P. LaRochelle opened the Public Hearing at 6:03 pm.

C. Mitchell, Water Superintendent, approached the table. She stated that the purpose of tonight's public hearing to discuss proposed adjustments to the rates for the Water Department. This is an enterprise fund therefore they do not run off of any tax money. Everything is based off of user rates. It is completely self-funded by the users of the system. We have to generate enough revenue through the rates to cover our operating expenses. The past few years, the cost of the Water Department running, the system has increased significantly. Thankfully, the Water Department they have been able to do a lot of repairs and maintenance in house to keep the cost low. There are some things that they cannot do themselves. That is why they had Tighe and Bond come in. They have someone that is familiar with water rates. The summer residents lead the charge for strain on the system. There is an influx of people, air bnb, rentals, etc. The summer water is going to go up significantly. That is the largest jump in rates. It is going to go from $410 to $656 for summer water. Those people sometimes have 10 to 15 people at their house for a whole week using the water unmetered. We do have summer meters that tell us the overall areas are doing on East Side Drive and Mount Major Highway. That is where a lot of our repairs take place. They are not winterized the best and they are older lines and above ground. They put a huge strain on the system and a huge financial burden. J. Sleeper asked if those who are serviced via Town water that don't have meters is their flat charge different than any others. C. Mitchell stated that there is a flat rate that is $110. That will go up to $143. That is until they can get meters into those places. J. Sleeper asked why these houses are not metered. C. Mitchell stated that some of them have been plumbed since 1953. Any new construction they try and make it a point to put in a new meter. Not every house was built for a meter. Some of them need to get a plumber in there to even get a meter in. R. Shea asked if she was confident that these rates will help build a reserve. C. Mitchell stated that she is confident that they will help. The rates were done by someone who specializes in them. She fought the 30%

raise for the longest time. P. LaRochelle asked if over the next four years she is looking for an approximate raise of about $80. C. Mitchell stated that it is about $40.

C. Mitchell stated that when she worked in Meredith there were Impact Fees. Impact Fees are established to help pay for the system when someone wants to develop or build for future maintenance of the system. She would like to add Impact Fees for new developments building on the water system. Her proposal is to come out and inspect it and get the water line to them at a cost and after that is done there is nothing protecting the water system for the future. She would like to establish Impact Fees in the water system. It would be a $4,000 Impact Fee to tie into the water system for a two bedroom house. It goes up from there. She wanted to run it by the Board because it another way to get future money for the water system. It doesn't need to be answered now. It is another way to collect money for the Capital Reserves. D. Carter stated that you need to be careful when you are starting to think about Impact Fees. You need to have good support as to why you picked an arbitrary number. C. Mitchell stated that it is not an arbitrary number. That is the number that Meredith uses. D. Carter stated that he has been involved with something like this in other towns and states and there is usually a formula used.

P. LaRochelle opened the Public Hearing to public comment.

K. Sullivan approached the table. She was at the meeting where Tighe and Bond did their presentation. Rates need to go up she is okay with that. She is concerned with the overall water infrastructure of the Town. The report from Tighe and Bond was not pretty. What is our reserve and do we have a reserve that we add to every year. C. Mitchell stated that they have just under $200,000 in the Water Main Replacement Capital Reserve. K. Sullivan asked if the infrastructure is a Town wide thing. She feels like they need a CIP or to do something to for our infrastructure.

J. Sleeper asked if she had a rough idea percentage wise of what number of houses in Alton are on the water system versus what is not. C. Mitchell stated she can tell him how many customers she has. She has 497 metered accounts. That goes up to 692 in the summer.

R. Finethy approached the table. He asked if the water district had a different tax rate than the rest of the Town. He asked if that would be something that they consider.

K. Sullivan approached the table again. She understands not everyone wants to pay someone else's share. We are all in this Town together. She is not looking to increase anyone's taxes she is thinking about what is right for the town. There is a town in southern Massachusetts right now that is a wealthier town and they have no water. They have to buy their water from a town next door.

P. LaRochelle closes the Public Hearing at 6:44 pm.

D. Carter made a motion to increase the water rates based on the presentation received tonight reference the spreadsheet provided in the package and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

<u>Public Input I</u> ***(limited to 3 minutes per person on agenda items only)***

None

<u>Appointments</u>

None

<u>New Business</u>

None

<u>Old Business</u>

1. <u>DPW – Purchasing Policy Waiver – Rubber Asphalt Chip Sealing</u>

S. Garland, DPW Director, approached the table. He is before the Board to ask that they waive the purchasing policy. He would like to utilize All States Construction for the rubber asphalt chip sealing project that he has proposed for the summer. It is a proprietary product that they provide and are the only ones in the area that do this. The roads that he had intended are: Pheasant Lane, Mallard Lane, Range Road, Reed Road, Rollins Road, Loon Cove Road (including Bell Hill Road), Kent Locke Circle, Hamwoods Road, and Hollywood Beach Road. It is just about 5.02 miles of road. These road are in good condition for this type of pavement preservation. They do estimate to give us another 7-10 years of road life. They have the ability to re-crack but it is less likely to with the rubber chip seal. J. Sleeper asked if it would be wise to get quotes from the other companies rather than waiving it. S. Garland stated that there is only one other company and they get the product from All State.

R. Shea made a motion to authorize the Public Works Director to enter into a contract with All State Construction in the amount not to exceed $400,000 with the payment coming from the Highway Road Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund and further that they waive the requirement for three bid on the grounds that there is no other supplier that is able to do this in this area and J. Sleeper seconded with all in favor of the motion.

2. Revised Budget

R. Heath stated that he is bringing the Revised Proposed Operating Budget back to the Board this evening because the Budget Committee held a Public Hearing. At that hearing, the Budget Committee made the decision to add a total of $90,000 for the purpose of retaining one of the third positions of the full-time fire fighters. We had four that were voted on in a singular warrant article. We have two that are filled right now and two vacancies. After discussion and hearing from members of the public, the Budget Committee chose to vote in favor of adding $90,000 back in to be broken up between full time wages and the necessary benefits and insurances. That brings the grand total of the modified proposed budget to $10,222,064.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to accept the Budget Committee's Revised Town Budget for 2026 at $10,222,064 and D. Carter seconded with all in favor of the motion.

3. Voting Hours

R. Heath stated that at the last meeting the Board voted on the proposed timeline. He is bringing it back to the Board on the chance that they have any indication that they want to revisit that. There were comments at the Budget Committee hearing about the days and times. A Saturday was chosen because the school does not have us on the calendar for a Teacher Conference to be able to utilize the gymnasium. It would be tough for them to work around that. The other fact is that we are reducing the entire warrant to one question ballot. The idea of staying open 7 am to 7 pm was trying to staff of volunteers, Supervisor's, and the Moderator, etc. P. LaRochelle thinks that 7-3 pm is reasonable. He thinks it is fine to keep it where it is. J. Sleeper was wondering how the Board felt to keep the Saturday date but extending to the full 7-7 pm. R. Shea stated that he would like to see it carry the same hours that the public is used to. He thinks that there is an undercurrent in the country as well as in the Town that anything out of the ordinary is going to allow people to think we are pulling a fast one on the voters. D. Carter feels that we should be running the 7-7 pm hours. It gives everyone a reasonable opportunity. P. LaRochelle is fine with that.

D. Carter made a motion to change the hours for voting on Saturday June 6 from 7 am to 3 pm to 7 am to 7 pm and R. Shea seconded with all in favor of the motion.

4. Mount Washington Update

R. Heath stated that after the last meeting it was put out to the public from the Mount Washington social media page that they are working on getting the Mount Washington dock fixed or repaired. We further followed up with a phone call to the Mount Washington and got confirmation that the broken shard from the clusters that broke off are no longer a danger to hurting the ship. They are going to go back out and do some more testing and inspecting. They expressed that they can come into Alton but at this point, the trips would be weather dependent. If the water or wind is rough it will push the boat into the dock. They are receiving a lot of pressure from both internally and externally.

5. Swap Shop Update

R. Shea stated that the Swap Shop plans to start prep work on May 1. They are operating on authorization from the Board to conduct a 6-month trial period in order to determine how successful things might be. Their success rate is very high. He would like to get the Board's authorization to operate for at least another year perhaps longer. The planned opening would be Friday, May 15 with the standard schedule. They would like to obtain some increase to the parking in order to make things a little less hectic. They do not need any additional funding.

R. Shea made a motion to authorize the Swap Shop to operate commencing May 15 through the middle of October and D. Carter seconded stating that it is based on a one year extension with all in favor of the motion.

Town Administrator Report

R. Heath stated that the only thing that he has is that the chairlift that was authorized at the last meeting to be scrapped was and with a total of $104.47 that was put back into the General Fund.

Selectmen Reports/Questions

J. Sleeper had nothing to report.

R. Shea stated that they will be opening up the Swap Shop shortly.

A. Morse had nothing to report.

D. Carter stated that the Conservation Committee met last week. One of the things that came up was the Hidden Springs DPW clearing site. This Board had voted on September 9 to allow up to 14 acres to be cleared. It appears that it is closer to about23 acres that have been cleared. There was also flagging that was done but some of the cutting were done beyond the limits of the flagging. How did this happen. S. Garland, DPW Director approached the table again. He stated that the orange flagging that is out there was laid out by the logger himself. D. Carter stated that we need to take a pretty hard stance with this logger. He has way over stepped his boundaries. He would like to see a copy of the AoT permit and feels that we need to look into the logger's permit as well as his authorization to do flagging and surveying.

P. LaRochelle had nothing to report.

Approval of Minutes

February 18, 2026 – Public Session

P. LaRochelle made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, 2026 – Public Session and A. Morse seconded with 3 in favor and 2 abstentions (RS, JS).

March 18, 2026 – Public Session

D. Carter made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2026 – Public Session and R. Shea seconded with 3 in favor and 2 abstentions (AM, JS)

Consent Agenda Approval

D. Carter made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda for April 14, 2026 as presented and A. Morse seconded with all in favor of the motion.

1. **Assessing Consent Items**

Military Service Credit

Pake; Map 6 Lot 16-4; 651 Suncook Valley Road; $750

Elderly Exemption (80+)

Brown; Map 6 Lot 22; 595 Stockbridge Corner Road; $80,000

Discretionary Preservation Easement Renewal (Barn)

Barnet; Map 12 Lot 1; 128 Old Wolfeboro Road; N/A

Timber & Gravel Taxes

Boy Scouts of America; Map 13 Lot 1; L/O Alton Mountain Road; $1,354.15
Roberts; Map 21 Lot 7-3; 43 Hopewell Road; $394.05
Williams; Map 8 Lot 3-2; Frank C. Gilman Highway; $171.64

Excavation Intent

Williams; Map 8 Lot 3-2; Frank C. Gilman Highway; N/A
Green Oak Realty; Map 5 Lot 72; 398 Suncook Valley Road; N/A

2. Police Department

Peaslee, Joshua, Fulltime to Parttime, Effective April 18, 2026

3. Fire Department

St. Germain, Timothy, Out of State Training, April 18, 2026, Portland, ME, $60.00

4. Conservation Commission

Rossiter, Bree, 3-year term, Expires March 2029
Lamper, Tara, 3-year term, Expires March 2029
Young, Gene, 3-year term, Expires March 2029

5. Levey Park

Houser, Jill, 3-year term, Expires March 2029

Discretionary Action on Requests for Appointments (No discussion, majority vote required to allow/not allow appointment)

None

Public Input II ***(limited to 5 minutes per person on any Governmental/Town Business)***

J. Houser approached the table. She wanted to thank the Board for their vote for the EMT.

L. Carr approached the table. He stated that his road, Dudley Road, has large birdbaths. He would like to make sure that they are patching before they do the chip seal.

S. McKnight approached the table. He thanked P. LaRochelle for all of the work that he has done with the airport. He works in aviation and hears people from all over the USA about the seaplane base. He encourages the Town to continue to support it. He would like the Town to think about painting the lines on Alton Mountain Road. It gets very foggy up there.

R. Finethy approached the table. He asked if the timber tax on the Hidden Springs property offset that much of the stumping. R. Heath stated that the Board voted to waive the Timber Tax. He stated that they did file an Intent to Cut and it is on file down in Assessing.

K. Sullivan approached the table. She has seen the Garden Club out at several locations and when DPW go by and see them they always stop and ask them if they can help. She wants to thank the Board on the vote for the revised budget. She stated that it is very important to have the additional EMT personnel down at the Fire Station. She appreciates the update on the Mount Washington. She thanked R. Shea for his time and effort for the Swap Shop. The surprise of the evening was the clear cut on Hidden Springs. She is horrified. It is unacceptable.

Non-Public Session

P. LaRochelle moved at 7:39 pm to enter nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A: 3, II, a (personnel). D. Carter seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle – yes	J. Sleeper – yes	R. Shea – yes
D. Carter – yes	A. Morse – yes	Roll call vote carried unanimously.

At 7:39 pm Chairman P. LaRochelle convened the nonpublic session with the following people present:

P. LaRochelle, Chairman
D. Carter, Vice-chairman
A. Morse, Selectmen
R. Shea, Selectmen
J. Sleeper, Selectmen
R. Heath, Town Administrator
A. Painchaud, Det. Sgt. Alton PD

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:16 pm to exit the nonpublic session. J. Sleeper seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle – yes	J. Sleeper – yes	R. Shea – yes
D. Carter – yes	A. Morse – yes	Roll call vote carried unanimously.

P. LaRochelle moved to 'not divulge' item two of the minutes because divulgence of the information likely would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of this board or render the proposed action of the board ineffective. D. Carter seconded. Roll call vote:

P. LaRochelle – yes	J. Sleeper – yes	R. Shea – yes
D. Carter – yes	A. Morse –yes	Roll call vote carried unanimously.

Public actions

P. LaRochelle made a motion to appoint A. Painchaud as the new Police Chief effective May 1st ,2026 with a starting salary of $115,000. A. Morse seconded. **Motion carried.**

Adjournment

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:21 pm to adjourn. R. Shea seconded. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Stacy Bailey
Recording Secretary