ALTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
Minutes
August 11, 2026
(Approved – September 9, 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, Excused
Richard Shea, Selectman
Jack Sleeper, Selectmen
Ryan Heath, Town Administrator

Agenda Approval

P. LaRochelle would like to add #2 under Old Business IT Department – Purchase Request and remove the minutes of July 28, 2026 – Public Session and move Public Input after Old Business #1. D. Carter made a motion to approve the agenda for August 11, 2026 as amended and J. Sleeper 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.
- The New Hampshire State Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Gymnasium at Prospect Mountain High School, 242 Suncook Valley Road.
  Absentee ballots are now available from the Town Clerk's Office for eligible voters who wish to vote absentee.
  Please note that the Town Clerk/Tax Collector's Office will remain open during normal business hours on Election Day.
  The staff members in the office will only be able to assist residents with: Motor vehicle transactions, property tax transactions, and vital records.

Public Hearing – Acceptance of Funds – Interlocal Trust 6:03 pm

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

P. LaRochelle stated that the purpose of this meeting is per RSA 31:95-b II-IV to receive public input in order to accept funds returned by the New Hampshire Interlocal Trust Inc. R. Heath stated that the Town received a check from the New Hampshire Interlocal Trust. A while back, New Hampshire Interlocal Trust was the health insurance pool that the Town belonged to. They had financial problems and collapsed, forcing us and many other communities to seek health insurance through different providers. We were fortunate to get back with Anthem. This represents the money that was left in the pool between communities for anticipated claims that needed to be paid out after things had shut down. That time period has ended, and all the claims have been dealt with. These are monies that were left over for the pool and being sent back to the communities as a reimbursement. This is one of more checks that are anticipated. We anticipate at least another one if not two. This check is for $13,251.00. We are looking to accept these unanticipated funds tonight.

R. Finethy asked where the funds would be put. R. Heath stated that they will be put in the General Fund.

P. LaRochelle closed the Public Hearing at 6:05 pm.

P. LaRochelle made a motion to accept $13,251.00 from New Hampshire Interlocal Trust to go into the General Fund for Alton and R. Shea seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Old Business

1. NHDES – Alton Power Dam Drawdown

C. Clark, Chief Engineer at the Dam Bureau at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, approached the table. He is here tonight to discuss the postponed draw down. He was here in the Spring discussing the draw down of Wentworth Pond behind the Alton Power Dam to help with data collection and get some passive restoration information. They did sediment testing. They also became concerned with the downstream drinking wells for Alton Waterworks. They wanted to come up with a scheme to see if those two wells are going to be impacted. They have collected additional sediment sampling that is at the lab right now being reviewed. They have also done additional wildlife studies and that report is under review. They also two wells down by the dam monitored. That data is currently being collected down there. There is another well down by Public Works that is being instrumented to be monitored as well. The drawdown is going to occur September 2. That will be different than what they proposed in the Spring. They were going to be removing two and a half feet of stop logs across the top of the spillway. Now

they will be completely lowering the impoundment. They will be removing the stoplogs to start and then will be opening the low-level gate after that to bring the impoundment down completely. It will be approximately 1 – 2 weeks for things to settle down. They hope to collect some good data in the monitoring wells. He explained the areas that they will be looking at and monitoring while the draw down occurs. After the 2 week period they will be closing the gate and allow it to come back to the 2 ½ feet. It will allow for passive restoration at that point. There will be noticeable impacts on the drawing down the impoundment through September and into October with things settling back out into October and November.
Bringing the pond back up will be contingent on natural runoff. He is willing to come Back to the Board towards the end of the year and try to present some of the findings at that time. One thing he forgot to mention is that the contract with their consultant expires at the end of the calendar year and the funding is also expiring at that time. After the end of this year there will probably be a little bit of a delay until they can get some capital appropriation money through the State Legislature for continuing additional studies and design and going to construction.

J. Sleeper mentioned that going back to Route 28 that there will be an impact to Route 11 in New Durham and beyond. He asked if the testing scope only goes back to Route 28. C. Clark stated that the testing scope has been looking at Route 28 and moving down. J. Sleeper asked with taking it down to the full 12 feet how long it will take to get down to the bottom of the impoundment. C. Clark stated that it will likely take a week or two.

D. Carter asked if they were still waiting on the test results for the sediment testing that has already been done. C. Clark stated that the results from the preliminary tests show there are some low levels of contamination down stream. It is nothing uncommon for industrial areas. D. Carter asked if they had all of the data back. C. Clark stated that he reached out to the consultant and it is actually under internal review right now. They will have it back before the start of the draw down. D. Carter asked if that data was available to the public. C. Clark stated that he can provide it to the Board once they get it back in draft form. D. Carter asked what the plans are for testing during the drawdown. C. Clark stated that in the spring they will keep and eye on turbidity moving through and making sure any significant rainfall wouldn't create turbulence withing the impoundment. It will be a daily check between DES staff and Fish and Game staff throughout the drawdown.

R. Shea asked if there are any negative impacts on the Bay and the lake that can be foreseen. C. Clark stated that there will not be any from the drawdown.

J. Sleeper asked if they anticipated any sediment flow as the drawdown occurs. C. Clark stated they do not.

P. LaRochelle asked what the marine life effect will be. C. Clark stated that based on other projects and the consultation with Fish and Game it will be minimal. It will be refilled before the cold weather sets in.

D. Carter asked what made them want to do a full drawdown. C. Clark stated that it was based on the concerns of the drinking water supply. Regardless if the dam gets reconstructed the pond is still going to be drawn down during that time period.

P. LaRochelle asked if they will be working with the Water Department during the draw down in reference to the wells. C. Clark stated that they will be.

R. Shea asked if the funds were available to completely reconstruct the dam so it meets a thousand-year storm would there be any downside other than the cost. C. Clark stated that it really is just a cost game. The funding just isn't sufficient to repair all of the Stated high hazard dams.

C. Mitchell, Water Superintendent, approached the table. She stated that on the basis of this being a rushed project, from someone who deals with infrastructure and failing infrastructure and missing opportunities for funding, we all have to keep up with our infrastructure. Clearly the State has dropped the ball. It doesn't constitute everyone in this room tonight to jump because the money is running out. It is the State's job to keep up with their infrastructure. To push this through because the money is running out is a sad response and an excuse. She thinks it is inappropriate.

P. LaRochelle asked what process do they use when they are determining what dams need to be looked at. C. Clark went over the process that they use. They do not just use financials but look at the risk as well.

R. Shea asked if the ARPA funds were not available what would the situation be. C. Clark stated that the situation would be that they wouldn't be where they are today. They wouldn't be able to do the studying, the sampling to get where they are today.

J. Sleeper stated that all the way to New Durham in various areas there are dry hydrants. He asked what the fallback plan for fire departments to cover that water that will not longer be there. C. Clark stated that other than the Town setting up a pump or cistern or setting up other means to do it there is nothing they will do.

P. LaRochelle stated that he thinks this process is going to fast and too quickly. It is being shoved down our throats.

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

S. Esposito approached the table. She has lived on Pine Street for 26 years. She thinks that they are trying to scare them. She doesn't believe a lot of what she heard today. There are so many negative things that can happen and the State doesn't care.

C. Derocher approached the table. She has lived on School Street for the last 34 years. The most frightening thing she heard tonight is that it could contaminate their water lines. She wants to know what their plan of action is.

R. Bardwell, from Dover, approached the table. He is looking to move to Alton. He has been watching the situation with the dam. He read a letter.

R. Weldon approached the table. He grew up in Alton. He moved to Merrymeeting Lake. They are at the headwater of all of this. He doesn't know how New Hampshire went from a 250-year threshold to 1,000-year threshold.

J. Atcheson approached the table. He agrees with everyone's sentiment. We need to be tactical if we want to stop this. He is pretty good at AI. It looks like what can be done as a town is file a formal demand for stay with NHDES to create an administrative paper trail. If they do not stop the drawdown seeing that it seems rushed and we do not have test results. It looks like we need to file an injunction.

M. DeRoy approached the table. He explained what happened in Berwick when he was growing up.

J. Desmarais approached the table. She asked if wee can get our own consultants. Can we also get some legal advice. She thanked the Board for how hard they are fighting for this.

J. Parandes approached the table. He explained that he has been a contractor for years. He asked about a permit that he has applied for.

R. Rogers approached the table. He lives on Mill pond on Letter S Road. If it is drawn down 2 ½ feet it probably will end the water put into Mill Pond.

B. Holmes approached the table. He previously submitted a letter to the Board with items of importance.

C. Mitchell, Water Superintendent, approached the table. Given the proximity of the public water supply to the wells and the three water lines that go underneath the river at different depths. She is constantly faced with emerging contamination that comes down the lines that they need to start monitoring. She would be interested in seeing the results that NHDES has showing several different metal contaminants.

D. White approached the table. He thanked the Board for all of their concerns and efforts.

B. Mitchell approached the table. He stated that it seems that they are coming to the end of the year and are going to lose their funding. His question is are they trying to cram this through because any money left in December of 2026 has to go back to the Federal government. He thinks the money isn't there and they are using the dams to cover it up.

B. Dorrick approached the table. She stated that she just kayaked the area and it was beautiful. She has worked on contracts with the Federal Government. That is how things work.

R. Finethy approached the table. He had questions about the dam. There were several aimed at Fish and Game. He would like to know the motivation behind this project.

J. Houser approached the table. She is here to thank Mr. Shea for the communication efforts he continues to make with the Town.

C. Clark approached the table. He wanted to say thank you to the Board and thank you to everyone who spoke tonight. He has been taking notes throughout the meeting.

J. Kenney, Executive Councilor District 1, approached the table. He wanted to compliment the citizens of Alton and the Board of Selectmen and C. Clark for conducting themselves in a civil matter. He wanted to thank the White family who brought him up and down the river today.

Appointments

None

New Business

None

Old Business

2. IT Department – Purchase Request

R. Heath stated that this is a proposal that was brought to them at a previous meeting by J. Monaco, IT Director. The Board asked that he get three proposals. He has received the three proposals and is asking the Board to approve the purchase now. The original request was for $60,000.00 out of the Capital Reserve. He has received two more quotes and other options for purchasing. He is now asking for $10,000.00 less than his original proposal. He discovered purchasing the Surface Pro for $3370.00 each, he can get those for roughly $2400.00 each. Some of the things he can get direct from the manufacturers.

D. Carter made a motion to approve the IT Department's expenditure for up to $50,000.00 from the IT Capital Reserve through the purchases SHI and through Microsoft direct consumer purchasing for the scheduled Microsoft Surface Pro Surface Pro kits, Dell

Pro rugged laptop, micro cyst delro microsystems and the two laptops for flexible use and D. Shea seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Town Administrator Report

R. Heath stated that there will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, August 14 1-4 pm for Sandy Point Resort. The Board has been invited to attend the event.

R. Heath stated that there will be a presentation by the Forest Society on Thursday August 13 5-6:30 pm at the Gilman Library. This event is to go over the Mount Major survey that was done last summer and fall. The Board is invited to attend.

R. Heath stated that the last thing that he has is an email from T. Wood of Epic Seaplane Adventures. He is looking for approval from the Board to start the process for applying for a NHDES Dock Permit.

It is the consensus of the Board to not allow this. He is not at the stage for this. He needs to do a Petition Warrant Article for the March ballot in order to see if the Town residents would want to approve this.

Selectmen Reports/Questions

J. Sleeper had nothing to report.

R. Shea stated that Milfoil is coming along. The Swap Shop has been doing remarkably well. He would also like to thank the DPW for their efforts in removing the sign pollution.

D. Carter had nothing to report.

P. LaRochelle stated that he had a ZBA meeting. Tim Morgan, a long time member of the ZBA is going to be retiring. The Water Ski Show is happening in less than 2 weeks.

Approval of Minutes

~~July 28, 2026 - Public Session~~

July 28, 2026 – Non-Public Session

D. Carter made a motion to approve the minutes of July 28, 2026 – Non-Public Session releasing none and J. Sleeper seconded with all in favor of the motion.

Consent Agenda Approval

None

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)***

R. Finethy approached the table. He stated that with all of the stuff that is going on in Town he thought it was very humorous for the Board to talk about the dam situation being shoved down their throats.

J. Atcheson approached the table. The public would like some action from the Board at this meeting or right afterward. He is concerned about the drinking water. He would like to volunteer to assist with anything possible.

B. Rossiter, Lake Winnipesaukee Alliance, approached the table. She is a resident of Alton. She is requesting the results that the Town will receive from NHDES.

Non-Public Session

P. LaRochelle moved at 8:15 pm to enter nonpublic Session under RSA 91-A: 3, II, a (personnel) and e (litigation). D. Carter seconded. Roll call vote:

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

At 8:15 pm Chairman P. LaRochelle convened the nonpublic session with the following people present:

P. LaRochelle, Chairman
D. Carter, Vice Chairman

R. Shea, Selectmen
J. Sleeper, Selectmen
R. Heath, Town Administrator

P. LaRochelle moved at 9:10 pm to exit the nonpublic session. D. Carter seconded. Roll call vote:

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

Public actions

D. Carter motioned to contact legal and seek a civil injunction to stop or postpone the Alton Power Dam drawdown. P. LaRochelle seconded. **Motion Carried.**

P. LaRochelle motioned to make Planner Cameron Armstrong the new Land Use Coordinator with a $10,000 annual pay increase. D. Carter seconded. **Motion Carried.**

P. LaRochelle motioned to give Planning and Zoning Assistant, Robin McClain, a $1.50 per hour pay increase for all the extra work put in while we were down a Planner and Zoning Officer. D. Carter seconded. **Motion Carried.**

Adjournment

D. Carter moved at 9:12 pm to adjourn. P. LaRochelle seconded. **Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Stacy L. Bailey

Recording Secretary