

**TOWN OF ALTON**  
**BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING**  
**January 14, 2026 at 6:00 PM**  
**Alton Town Hall**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Elizabeth Varney, Committee Chair  
Priscilla Terry, Committee Member  
Greg Fuller, Committee Member  
Hal Shurtleff, Committee Member  
Christi Wood, School Board Representative  
Drew Carter - Selectmen's Representative  
*Jill Houser - Absent*

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator  
Laura Parker, Finance Manager  
Tim Broadrick, Superintendent  
Seth Garland, DPW Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Varney called the meeting & public hearing to order at 6:03 PM.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**MOTION: To approve the agenda as presented. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed unanimously.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**NEW BUSINESS**

Public Hearing for Town and School Budget

Ms. Varney read the Town Operating Budget Warrant Article as follows:  
Shall the Town raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$10,791,640.00. Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be \$9,795,561.00, which is the same as last year with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law.

Ms. Varney opened the floor for questions.

Loring Carr questioned the process the committee is following for the Public Hearing. Ms. Varney explained the process will be to read and open the floor for public input on the town, school and water for both the proposed operating budget and default budget.

Loring Carr asked whether the committee would be reviewing the other warrant articles for the purpose of this public hearing.

Ryan Heath explained that the committee will only be reading and reviewing the operating budgets, however the public could provide input on any of the warrant articles and the committee could revisit them if they choose to.

Loring Carr asked about Article 9 Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund. He questioned the amount of \$30,000 and if that was a sufficient amount.

Mr. Fuller answered that he voted against that article because he felt there was enough money in the fund and there wasn't a need for an additional \$30,000, especially due to the overall increase of the budget.

Loring Carr asked what percent increase in Article 10 Town Operating Budget.

Ms. Wood responded 11%.

Loring Carr asked what caused the increase.

Ms. Varney explained the increase. The four additional firefighters approved the prior year via warrant article will now be absorbed into the operating budget, which accounts for approximately \$400,000. Additionally, prior year warrant article added two part time positions, one in building department and one in town clerks office. This also includes a 4% increase for employees who have not had a raise due to the past two years in default.

Loring Carr asked if the committee had an opinion as to why the voters approved all warrant articles except for the operating budget the past two years.

Ms. Varney answered when speaking with people it seems they are not understanding what they are voting on. They do not understand the warrant articles are over and above the budget.

Loring Carr questioned what the differences are in Article 12 Capital Reserve Fund Appropriations.

Ms. Varney responded they are the same amount as last year.

Loring Carr asked if Article 13 Fire Station Capital Reserve request of \$300,000 came from the CIP.

Ms. Varney answered yes.

Loring Carr asked why some members voted against Article 16 Retaining Wall Capital Reserve. Ms. Terry responded she felt there was enough money in the fund to cover the planned expenditures.

Mr. Fuller added there is \$79,000 in the fund and he felt that was enough.

Seth Garland responded there is currently \$60,000 in the fund. The work planned for the upcoming year would be more than the current balance.

Loring Carr added his opinion that the boat ramp needs to be widened and slope changed so it is not as steep.

Loring Carr asked if Article 27 Town Hall Roof money is in addition to what the town already has in the fund.

Ryan Heath responded the money is currently available with the Clough-Morrill Trust and Town Hall Capital Reserve. The Selectmen wanted input from the voters prior to spending the money.

Richard Shea spoke as a fiscally responsible individual. He explained this budget represents a reasonable effort to provide the town with badly needed items without going to any extremes regarding expenditures. He commended the department heads for their cost savings efforts. He encouraged the voters to show support for this budget.

Ms. Varney asked if anyone else had questions regarding the town budget. Seeing none she closed the town portion of the public hearing.

Ms. Varney read the Water Operating Budget Warrant Article as follows:

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$600,916.00 for the operation and maintenance of the Water Distribution system for the ensuing year, said sum is to be fully offset by users' fees. Should this article be defeated, the Default Budget shall be \$590,653.00, which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the Town or by law.

Ms. Varney opened the floor for questions.

Loring Carr asked what the increase represents.

Ryan Heath responded the increase represents wages and benefits.

Ms. Varney asked if anyone else had questions regarding the water budget. Seeing none she closed the water portion of the public hearing.

Ms. Varney read the School Operating Budget Warrant Article as follows:

Article 2 Operating Budget for fiscal year 2026-27 in the amount of \$18,792,042 with a default budget amount of \$18,654,357.

Ms. Varney opened the floor for questions.

Loring Carr asked what percentage of an increase this budget represents.

Ms. Wood responded 3.84% increase.

Ms. Varney asked if anyone else had questions regarding the school budget. Seeing none she closed the public hearing at 6:26 PM.

Loring Carr stated by law the committee should be providing the revenues at the public hearing as well. He stated RSA 32 states the revenues must be disclosed.

Ryan Heath said they are printed in the annual report and given out at deliberative session.

Mr. Carter read RSA 32:4 “shall submit such statements to their respective governing bodies at such times and in such detail as the governing body may require”.

Ryan Heath provided the board and audience with the Department of Revenue’s Tax Rate Breakdown form which gives projected 2026 revenues. These figures are estimates used to set the tax rate.

Ms. Varney said in recent years the revenues are given out at deliberative session and not at the public hearing. She questioned if this was done prior to the town moving to SB-2.

Ryan Heath read off the municipal accounting overview as follows:

Total Appropriations .....	\$13,577,867
Net Revenues .....	\$3,545,575
Actual Overlay Used.....	\$5,812
War Service Credits .....	\$410,750
Net Required Local Tax Effort.....	\$10,448,854

Education Overview

Net Local School Appropriations .....	\$17,824,186
Locally Retained State Education Tax.....	\$4,189,966
Net Required Local Education Tax Effort .....	\$13,634,220
State Education Tax .....	\$4,189,966
Net Required State Education Tax Effort .....	\$4,189,966

MS-1 Municipal Valuation

Total Assessment Valuation with Utilities .....	\$2,256,966,420
Total Assessment Valuation without Utilities .....	\$2,247,247,620
Total Assessment Valuation with Utilities less Commercial/ Industrial Construction Exemption.....	\$2,256,966,420

Loring Carr stated the increase in the cost of dump stickers from \$1 to \$20 is going to make people angry. He feels the increase should have come after the vote.

PMSH JMA (SAU 301) Proposed Warrant Articles related to Collective Bargaining. Superintendent Tim Broadrick presented the two articles related to collective bargaining. These two articles bring the pay and benefits at the Prospect Mountain High School in line with the pay and benefits at Alton Central School.

**MOTION: To approve the Prospect Mountain Teachers Association (PMTA) Bargaining Agreement for 2026-27 fiscal year in the amount of \$78,056 with a total additional cost of \$171,362. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

**MOTION: To approve the Prospect Mountain Education Support Professionals Association (PESPA) Bargaining Agreement for 2026-27 fiscal year in the amount of \$45,200 with a total additional cost of \$99,450. Motion by Mr. Carter. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Broadrick offered follow-up to the question asked at the last meeting regarding whether or not the Budget Committee should make a recommendation on non-fiduciary articles. Legal has advised it is allowed as long as the School Committee is willing to print the Budget Committee recommendations.

Ryan Heath made a correction for public record to previously stated increase of 27% in the proposed budget. He stated that if everything passes there will be an overall decrease of 2%.

Mr. Fuller stated that the increase of 27% was in regard to the tax rate, not the budget.

Mr. Heath responded that there are many contributing factors to the tax rate. Revenues decreased by almost a million dollars from the previous year. Last year the revenues offset the tax rate due to \$741,000 in FEMA reimbursements for the flood repairs. Also, last year, even in default, with all the warrant articles passing, the total appropriations were \$13,577,867. This year, if everything passes, the total appropriations will be \$13,342,765, which is a 2% decrease. He reminded the board not to include water appropriations since that is user funded.

Loring Carr questioned if the school district was charging other school districts interest on monies owed to them.

Ms. Wood responded that option is being explored.

Ms. Varney added there is an ongoing court case regarding this issue.

Mr. Fuller asked if the committee wanted to revisit any of their votes on warrant articles.

Ms. Terry asked to vote on Article 16 Retaining Wall due to new information regarding the remaining balance.

**MOTION: To approve Article 16: Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$75,000. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed 6-0.**

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

December 18, 2025

Mr. Fuller expressed a desire to have the minutes state how each member voted.

Recording Secretary Carol Long read the votes for each warrant article that was not a unanimous vote:

Article 9: Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund in the amount of \$30,000. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed 4-1 (Nay-Mr. Fuller).

Article 10: Town Operating Budget in the amount of \$10,791,640 with the default budget amount of \$9,795,561 should this article be defeated. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed 4-0-1 (Abstain-Mr. Fuller).

Article 12: Capital Reserve Fund Appropriations in the amount of \$179,500. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed 3-1-1 (Nay-Mr. Fuller, Abstain-Ms. Terry).

Article 13: Fire Stations Capital Reserve in the amount of \$300,000. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Shurtleff. Motion passed 4-1 (Nay-Ms. Terry).

Article 14: Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$20,000. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion failed 2-3 (Nay-Ms. Terry, Mr. Shurtleff, Mr. Fuller).

Article 15: Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$100,000. Motion by Mr. Fuller. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed 4-1 (Nay-Ms. Terry).

Article 16: Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$75,000. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed 3-2 (Nay-Mr. Fuller, Ms. Terry).

Article 17: Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$25,000. Motion by Ms. Terry. Second by Ms. Wood. Motion passed 4-1 (Nay-Mr. Fuller).

Article 19: New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$50,000. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Varney. Motion passed 3-2 (Nay-Mr. Fuller, Mr. Shurtleff).

**MOTION: To approve the December 18, 2025 minutes amended to include how the members voted . Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Mr. Fuller. Motion passed 4-0-2 (Abstain-Mr. Carter, Ms. Terry).**

**MOTION: To approve the December 18, 2025 minutes as presented. Motion by Ms. Wood. Second by Ms. Terry. Motion passed 4-1-1 (Nay-Mr. Fuller, Abstain-Mr. Carter).**

## OTHER BUSINESS

None

**Future Meeting Dates:**

Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:00 PM (*Deliberative Session @ PMHS*)

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 6:00 PM (*Deliberative Session - Snow Date*)

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Carol Long*

Carol Long, Budget Committee Secretary