

**TOWN OF ALTON
DELIBERATIVE SESSION
FEBRUARY 3, 2026
PROSPECT MOUNTAIN HIGH SCHOOL**

Town Moderator, Gene Young, welcomed 54 voters to the 2026 Deliberative Session at 6:04 pm.

All in attendance rose to Pledge Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and observed a moment of silence.

Moderator Young reminded everyone voting to make sure they had a voters card. He stated copies of the warrant and Moderator's Rules are available in the back of the room and noted he would not be reading the rules since they are the same rules that have been followed for a number of years. He asked for any questions about the rules, hearing none he moved on to the introduction of the head table.

Board of Selectmen:

Nicholas Buonopane, Chairman
Paul LaRochelle, Vice Chairman
Andrew Morse, Selectman
Drew Carter, Selectman

Ryan Heath, Town Administrator
Stephen Whitley, Town Attorney
Laura Parker, Finance Manager

Budget Committee:

Elizabeth Varney, Chairman
Christi Wood, Member
Greg Fuller, Vice Chairman
Hal Shurtleff, Member
Jill Houser, Member
Priscilla Terry, Member

Jennifer Collins, Town Clerk
Carol Long, Recording Secretary

Supervisors of the Checklist:

Valerie Tarbell
Raymond Johnson
Lisa Keller

Sam Taber, High School Sound Engineer

Moderator Young acknowledged the Alton Police and Fire Department members in attendance in case of emergency.

Nicholas Buonopane read the Selectmen's Report of 2025.

Moderator Young explained Town Meeting in Alton is a two-step process. The inhabitants of the Town of Alton in the County of Belknap in the state of New Hampshire qualified to vote in the Town affairs are hereby notified that the Annual Town Meeting will be held as follows:

First session of Annual Meeting (Deliberative session) will be held on February 3rd at 6:00 pm in the Prospect Mountain High School auditorium at 242 Suncook Valley Road. The second session of the Annual Meeting (official ballot voting), will be held on March 10th from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm in the Prospect Mountain High School gymnasium at 242 Suncook Valley Road.

Voting at the election on March 10th will decide the Town and School District warrant articles as well as electing the Town and School officials. The warrant article language will be decided upon at this Deliberative Session. Each article will be read out in full, moved, and seconded. An official will comment on and offer an explanation on each item as appropriate. The floor is then open for comments and questions. If the wording of the warrant article remains unchanged, that warrant article's language is placed on the ballot and no vote will be required. If there is a vote to amend an article the successfully amended article will be placed on the ballot. This requires a simple majority vote. Any article can be restricted from reconsideration once it has been considered.

Articles one through eight cannot be amended due to the technical nature of their language.

Article # 9: Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 to be added to the Benefit Pay Capital Reserve Trust Fund, previously established in 2000. Said funds are recommended by the Town Auditors to be used to pay for benefits accrued by Town employees and redeemed when they leave employment with the Town of Alton, in accordance with the Town Personnel Policy. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (4-1-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 9, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle stated the funds will be added to the existing capital reserve to pay for the accrued benefits owed to employees leaving employment with the Town, consistent with the conditions laid out in the employee manual. The fund currently has a balance of \$80,070.54.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 9, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #10: Town Operating Budget

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; or the governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised Operating Budget only. This article does not include special or individual articles voted separately. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (4-0-1). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$4.78)

Elizabeth Varney moved Article 10, seconded by Greg Fuller.

Christi Wood stated the proposed operating budget is the aggregated amount established during the budgeting process that is needed to operate Town functions and services for the year.

Loring Carr stated the MS-737, on page 11 of 14, under interfund operating transfers from revolving funds has zero value. The end of year CRF worksheet provided shows the Recycling Revolving Fund had \$380,180 beginning balance with expenditures of \$69,669 and the Ambulance Revolving Fund had \$417,711 in expenditures. He questioned why the expenditures are disclosed on the MS-737. He added the proposed solid waste budget shows plastics and tin cans with a zero budget with a notation it is being removed from the expense line. However, looking at the 2025 expense report, there was \$469 spent on one and \$5,078 on the other line. He questioned why we are spending this money but it isn't showing up on the state form. On page 46 of the proposed budget it states these items are being paid from the Recycling Revolving Fund however the budget states zero. He expresses is displeasure with the lack of

transparency and lack of gross budgeting. He explains the State requires gross budgeting which should show all revenue and expenses. He has questions about what the money being spent out of the ambulance revolving and not being able to see what it is being spent on.

Ryan Heath explains during the budget process the Fire Department presents a line item budget for the Ambulance Revolving Fund. Throughout the year, they submit invoices to Finance to be paid out of the fund which are all preapproved through the budget process. At the end of the year, the money is reconciled from the revolving funds to the general fund. This is zero based budgeting where the funds are recuperated through reconciliation at the end of the year. The same is true of the Recycling Revolving Fund.

Loring Carr states there is a big problem with the expenses not being listed for the people to see. He does not believe the Town is correctly gross budgeting as required by RSA. He explained the gross budgeting process should be to raise the money and show the revenues on the MS form. He questioned why there is no money showing under ambulance on the MS-737 on page 2 of 14. This is appropriating not giving permission to spend, stating you can't subtract before you put it in the appropriations lines.

Ryan Heath responded our ambulance cost is included with fire since it is all one department in Alton. The 4220-15 line is for towns with a separate ambulance service.

Loring Carr clarified the taxpayers cannot see what is being spent on the ambulance.

Drew Carter responded that is correct since our fire and rescue is one department and we do not use separate contracted ambulance services.

Loring Carr goes back to the issue of not gross budgeting.

Ryan Heath answered the budget has been done this way for many years.

Moderator Young asked Mr. Carr to sit down to allow others to speak.

Cydney Shapleigh stated as one of five former selectmen in the audience today, she has never seen everything put together as one the way it is being presented. The process should be to raise, appropriate and list revenue from ambulance coming in. None of that is being shown in these documents.

Reuben Wentworth questions spending \$417,711 from the Ambulance Revolving Fund and whether a new ambulance was purchased.

Nicholas Buonopane responded no new ambulance was purchased in 2025; a payment came out.

Reuben Wentworth asked if there is a line item for ambulance salaries in the Fire Department budget.

Nicholas Buonopane answered no, there is one line for all fire department salaries.

Reuben Wentworth questioned whether money was taken from the Ambulance Revolving Fund to cover overtime, as he was told in the last meeting there was.

Nicholas Buonopane responded not in 2025.

Reuben Wentworth stated in 2017 when the Ambulance Revolving Fund was setup to be used for ambulance maintenance and replacement, adding the fund could not sustain salaries. He expressed displeasure with the \$417,000 spent from the fund in 2025.

Chief James Reinert explained in 2025 the second payment for the ambulance ordered in 2023 in the amount of \$285,000 came out of the fund. There was \$30,000 earmarked for potential overtime, however none of the \$30,000 was spent out of the ambulance revolving fund. The rest was used on ancillary

equipment, medical supplies, trainings and uniforms. We did not spend any money on wages.

Reuben Wentworth requested the selectmen list what came out of the fund in the Summary Assets Report in the Annual Town Report, as was done prior to 2021. This would make it easier for the taxpayers to follow.

Loring Carr asked what the consequences are if the DRA determines the Town did not follow gross budgeting.

Attorney Stephen Whitley stated his understanding of the DRA process is they have already reviewed and approved how the budget was put together. At this point, the voters need to vote yes or no on the budget and individual articles and then a final report of what is appropriated at the meeting will be sent to the DRA. The DRA has already done their review of the budget and the way it was put together and approved it to go to the voters.

Cydney Shapleigh questioned how much of the \$11,000 budgeted for emergency management was for salaries and how much represents supplies. Also, how much was spent in 2025 for emergency management salaries or stipends.

Ryan Heath responded there has been nothing spent or budgeted for salaries for emergency management. He has held that role since he was police chief and has never received extra pay for it. The budget contains \$10,000 for response and preparedness and \$1,000 for EMPG grant matching funds.

Cydney Shapleigh encouraged the voters to support this budget, stating the need for the additional fire, rescue and police positions that will be lost if the budget fails. The numbers dictate we do need these additional positions, our town is not what it was twenty years ago.

Robin Lane-Douglas asked about the location of the porta-potties in the cemetery budget.

Seth Garland, DPW Director, responded there is one located in the Old Riverside Cemetery where there is no running water for both the public and employee use. It is in the back by the shed that houses the mowers. He added there are porta-potties at many of the other parks in town.

No further discussion.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 10, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #11: Water Works Operating Budget

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. This article does not affect the tax rate and is funded by the end users. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0)

Elizabeth Varney moved Article 11, seconded by Greg Fuller.

Christi Wood stated the proposed water works operating budget is the aggregated amount established during the budgeting process that is needed to operate Town's municipal water system for the year.

No further discussion.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 11, seconded by Andrew Morse. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #12: Capital Reserve Fund Appropriations

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$179,500.00 to be added to the following capital reserve funds previously established:

Rock and Asphalt Crushing CRF	\$12,000.00	<i>\$79,300.47</i>
Sidewalk CRF	\$15,000.00	<i>\$41,025.74</i>
Senior Center Building CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$40,786.00</i>
Town Owned Parking Area CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$89,547.82</i>
Environmental CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$54,869.87</i>
Transfer Station Building & Site Improvements CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$192,439.01</i>
Jones Field CRF	\$12,500.00	<i>\$39,361.71</i>
Milfoil Treatment Program CRF	\$15,000.00	<i>\$27,158.50</i>
Alton Bay Community Center CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$67,177.13</i>
Water Bandstand CRF	\$5,000.00	<i>\$5,150.04</i>
Landfill Closure CRF	\$20,000.00	<i>\$32,333.51</i>

Said funds to be raised through taxation. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (3-1-1). (Majority vote required). (The estimated tax impact is \$0.08)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 12, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle read current fund balances listed above in gray.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 12, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #13: Fire Stations Capital Reserve

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$300,000.00 to be added to the Fire Stations Capital Reserve Fund previously established in 2005. This fund is utilized in conjunction with the capital improvement plan for the replacement of Fire Department buildings. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-1-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (4-1-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.13)

Andrew Morse moved Article 13, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this capital reserve fund was established to add funds for future improvements and repairs to the fire department. The fund currently has a balance of \$644,363.25

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 13, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #14: Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to be added to the Highway Building Improvements/Repairs Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2014. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0) Not recommended by the Budget Committee (2-3-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01.)

Andrew Morse moved Article 14, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this capital reserve fund was established to add funds for future improvements and repairs to the highway garage. The fund currently has a balance of \$137,042.55

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 14, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #15: Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to be added to the Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1995. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (4-1-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.04)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 15, seconded by Drew Carter.

Paul LaRochelle stated this capital reserve fund was established to assist with the cost of repair/replacement of Town owned bridges. Currently the bridge in need of the most immediate attention is the north side Roberts Cove Road bridge #193/289. The estimate to replace the bridge is \$350,000.00. The fund currently has a balance of \$327,415.01. In September, an updated estimate was received for \$375,000.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 15, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #16: Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$75,000.00 to be added to the Retaining Wall Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2018. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (6-0-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.03)

Andrew Morse moved Article 16, seconded by Drew Carter.

Andrew Morse stated the retaining rock wall from the public boat docks to the swim area needs extensive repair. The retaining wall is deteriorating at the water level due to age and wave action. The Town has repaired portions of the wall over the last few years, but a lot more work will need to be done. The fund currently has a balance of \$85,760.25

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 16, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #17: Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$25,000.00 to be added to the Grounds & Maintenance Vehicle and Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2019. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0) Recommended by the Budget Committee (4-1-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

Drew Carter moved Article 17, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Drew Carter stated the funds would be used to purchase replacement vehicles and equipment when needed for the Grounds and Maintenance Department, which maintains thirty-eight Town properties. Department performs general maintenance of Town properties and buildings; plowing; mowing; trash removal at all Town buildings and public parks; turf management and custodial care of Town buildings. The fund currently has a balance of \$79,531.37

Priscilla Terry asked is the rationale for each article could be printed on the ballot in order to educate the voters.

Stephen Whitley responded by law only certain information is allowed to be printed on the ballot, unfortunately the rationale is not allowed.

Ryan Heath added once deliberative is concluded, there will be a voter guide mailed to all taxpayers to help educate them on each article.

Robin Lane-Douglas questioned the intent of this reserve and whether maintenance of the vehicles should be covered in the public works operating budget.

Nicholas Buonopane explained the word maintenance is referring to the department Grounds and Maintenance, not vehicle maintenance. This reserve fund is for capital purchases, not regular maintenance.

No further discussion.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 17, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #18: Town Hall Building Improvement Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$30,000.00 to be added to Town Hall Building Improvement Capital Reserve fund, as previously established in 2011. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.01)

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 18, seconded by Andrew Morse.

Paul LaRochelle stated these funds will be added to the Capital Reserve fund for future improvements to the Town Hall Building, such as mechanical upgrades, interior improvements, and exterior enhancements or improvements. This year we are continuing with the painting and repairs to the first-floor offices, the repairs and shelving in the Heidke Room and the completion of the elevator shaft and landings. Projects for future consideration are the remodeling of the employee kitchen and break area, a bathroom in the second-floor meeting room, and the reclaiming of the stage area. The fund currently has a balance of \$63,601.98

Reuben Wentworth questioned why the Clough-Morrill Trust Fund isn't being utilized instead of asking taxpayers for more money; we can use the interest not the principal.

No further discussion.

Paul LaRochelle made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 18, seconded by Andrew Morse. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #19: New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$50,000.00 to be added to the New Riverside Cemetery Capital Reserve Fund, previously established in 2023. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (3-2-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.02)

Andrew Morse moved Article 19, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated this fund is used for the expansion and maintenance of the New Riverside Cemetery, Located on Suncook Valley Highway. The expansion will include additional burial lots, and

columbarium relocation and expansion. This will also include future expansion of the maintenance facilities at the cemetery. The fund currently has a balance of \$126,851.85

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 19, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #20: Highway Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$1,450,000.00 to be added to the Highway Reconstruction Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 1998. Said amount is partially offset by revenues from the Highway Block Grant Fund estimated to be \$211,773.00. This is an annual appropriation that provides for the Maintenance of existing roadways. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required.) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.64.)

Nicholas Buonopane moved Article 20, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Nicholas Buonopane stated this capital reserve fund was established to continue the pavement preservation and road rehabilitation practice which aligns with our Road Surface Management System and manages costs to the town by performing these practices. The fund currently has a balance of \$182,275.88

Seth Garland, DPW Director, explained in detail how the money would be spent in the 2026 season. For 2026, he is proposing a combination of full paving, chip sealing, and a fog seal pavement preservation treatment to maximize use of our funds while improving overall road conditions. On the paving side, he is looking to reclaim 7,317' and shim and overlay 7,683' of Avery Hill Road, overlay Hermit Road, overlay Bachelor Road, shim and overlay Smith Point Road, shim and overlay Old Wolfeboro Road from Misty Lane to Route 28 (south side), shim and overlay Youngtown Road, and overlay Riverlake Road. That totals 7.112 miles of roadway, with an estimated cost of \$848,142. For rubber asphalt chip sealing, which is a proven pavement preservation method, he is proposing work on Pheasant Lane and Mallard Drive, Range Road, Reed Road, Rollins Road, Loon Cove Road, Kent Locke Circle, Hamwoods, and Hollywood Beach, at an estimated cost of \$400,065 covering roughly 5.92 miles. He is also proposing to reserve \$100,000 toward the Mill Pond project, which includes reworking the parking lot across from the Fire Department and reconstructing the intersection of Letter S Road including drainage improvements. In addition, they still need to complete the ongoing Hermit Road drainage project. The pipe has already been purchased, trees have been cut, and they are currently waiting on permits to proceed with installation. He is budgeting an additional \$50,000 to complete that work once permitting is finalized. These items bring the total planned investment to approximately \$1.398 million. He is also proposing to add a fog seal treatment to New Durham Road and Roberts Cove Road, both of which were paved recently. Fog sealing is a preventative treatment that addresses early raveling and can extend the life of a new road by up to 10 additional years. That treatment is estimated to cost \$109,346, bringing the total highway road reconstruction budget to \$1,507,553. After these planned projects, there would be approximately \$124,700 remaining for additional culvert replacements, underdrain, gravel, and other incidental materials. Currently, the Town's average road service life is a little over 11 years. By using pavement preservation techniques like chip sealing and fog sealing, they are able to hold the funding request steady while still adding approximately two years to our overall road service life index. By utilizing a "top-down, bottom-up" approach, they are able to preserve the good roads we already have while still addressing roads that are at or near failure. This balanced strategy improves our overall road service life and helps us avoid significantly more costly repairs in the future. These funds represent the core of the Highway Department's work and are essential to maintaining one of the Town's most critical infrastructure systems, our roads and drainage.

Kelly Sullivan commended the department heads for the amount of work they have put in to this budget. She stated her appreciation to Seth Garland for his detailed explanation of how this money will be spent.

No further discussion.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 20, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #21: IT Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$20,000.00 to be added to the IT Capital Reserve Fund, as previously established in 2020. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Not recommended by the Budget Committee (0-5-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.0.01)

Drew Carter moved Article 21, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Drew Carter stated this capital reserve fund was established to fund large-scale IT hardware and software needs and emergencies over time, thereby reducing any significant impact they would have on the annual budget. The fund currently has a balance of \$72,524.00

Loring Carr asked why the budget committee did not recommend this article.

Christi Wood responded the committee felt there are sufficient funds currently available to cover the capital projects planned for the coming year.

No further discussion.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 21, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #22: Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$35,000.00 to be added to the Police Department Equipment Capital Reserve Fund, previously established in 2025. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.02)

Nicholas Buonopane moved Article 22, seconded by Drew Carter.

Nicholas Buonopane stated this capital reserve fund was established to fund future Police Department equipment needs. This would include the purchasing, repairing, and replacing of items such as body worn cameras and the cloud storage costs associated with storing the footage. The fund currently has a balance of \$30,000.00

No further discussion.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 22, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #23: Police Department Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Police Department Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of purchasing, equipping, repairing, and replacing police vehicles; and to raise and appropriate \$40,000.00 to be placed in this fund; and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend from this reserve fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.02.)

Nicholas Buonopane moved Article 23, seconded by Drew Carter.

Nicholas Buonopane stated this fund is being established to augment the funding of the police department fleet and emergency equipment. Since 2014, the police department has utilized the Police Detail Revolving Account to fully fund its fleet. Due to the increased costs of both police vehicles and emergency equipment upfitting, the Police Detail Revolving Account does not produce enough revenue to sustain the entire fleet. This fund will be used in conjunction with the Police Detail Revolving Account to purchase vehicles and emergency equipment.

Reuben Wentworth questioned if state law prohibits putting money into the revolving fund directly.

Ryan Heath answered the Board of Selectmen can not move money from a capital reserve fund to a revolving fund.

Reuben Wentworth clarified his question, could the voters put money into a revolving fund instead of establishing another new capital reserve fund.

Attorney Stephen Whitley responded the voters cannot raise and appropriate money into a detail fund.

No further discussion.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 23, seconded by Drew Carter. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #24: Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Town Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of performing a statistical update revaluation of the Town every five years pursuant to RSA 75:8-a. and to raise and appropriate \$126,000.00 to be placed in this fund; and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend from this reserve fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.06.)

Andrew Morse moved Article 24, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated RSA 75:8-a requires the Town to conduct a property revaluation at least every five years. Establishing a Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) for Revaluation allows the Town to distribute this recurring cost over the full revaluation cycle rather than funding it entirely in the revaluation year. The estimated cost for the 2026 revaluation is \$110,000, up from \$85,000 in 2021, and future increases should be expected. The \$126,000.00 being recommended will cover this years estimated cost of evaluation, the remaining funds raised (approximately 16,000.00) will be left in the newly established CRF to begin saving for the next evaluation.

No further discussion.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 24, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #25: Fire Department Occupational Health Screenings Capital Reserve Fund

To see if the Town will vote to establish a Fire Department Occupational Health Screenings Capital Reserve Fund under the provisions of RSA 35:1 for the purpose of providing fire department personnel with comprehensive job related medical examinations and early detection health screenings and to raise and appropriate \$10,000.00 to be placed in this fund; and to appoint the Board of Selectmen as Agents to expend from this reserve fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.00.)

Nicholas Buonopane moved Article 25, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Nicholas Buonopane stated firefighters face higher rates of cancer because of repeated exposure to carcinogens in smoke, soot, gear and fireground environments. Cancer screenings are essential to detect disease before symptoms develop. Annual exams help firefighters stay fit for duty while also identifying chronic and acute health issues early, especially cancers, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory illness. Because cancer is the leading cause of occupational death among firefighters, these annual exams are critical checkpoints.

No further discussion.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 25, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Attorney Stephen Whitley made a correction to an earlier response to Article #23 he had given regarding revolving funds. He stated that voters can raise and appropriate money into a revolving fund. This cannot be done at this meeting tonight but can be done moving forward.

Article #26: Nonprofits

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$60,625.00 for the purpose of supporting the following nonprofits and their individual appropriations:

Alton Community Services	\$18,000.00
American Red Cross	\$2,000.00
Caregivers of Southern Carroll County & Vicinity, Inc.	\$2,000.00
Granite VNA & Hospice	\$12,000.00
Community Action Program (CAP)	\$3,300.00 **** (10k requested reduced for rent owed) ***
Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)	\$500.00
Lakes Region Mental Health Center fka Genesis	\$15,750.00
Life Ministries, Inc.	\$3,000.00
New Beginnings	\$1,575.00
Waypoint fka Child and Family Services	\$2,500.00

Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (4-1-0). Not recommended by the Budget Committee (0-5-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$0.03)

Andrew Morse moved Article 26, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Andrew Morse stated these non-profits were grouped together in one article to reduce the number of articles.

Andrew Morse made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 26, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #27: Town Hall Metal Roof

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate the sum of \$100,000.00 to purchase and install a new metal roof on the Town Hall and prevent further water damage. Said metal roof shall be consistent with the style and era of the Town Hall. \$55,000.00 to come from the Clough-Morrill Trust and the remaining \$45,000.00 to come from the Town Hall Capital Reserve Fund. Recommended by the Board of Selectmen (5-0-0). Recommended by the Budget Committee (5-0-0). (Majority vote required) (The estimated tax impact is \$.0)

Drew Carter moved Article 27, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane.

Drew Carter stated over that last several years, the Town Hall roof has suffered damage from wind and rain. We have invested approximately \$18,000.00 in repairs to the ridge cap, replacing shingles, repairing holes, and repairing the lead flashing. These storms have caused water stains and damage to areas in the
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building, most noticeably on the large meeting room ceiling. This area has already been repaired, primed, and painted once. Unfortunately, another storm came through last year blowing shingles off and causing more water damage. We are asking the taxpayers to allow the purchase and installation of a metal roof. \$55,000.00 to come from the Clough-Morrill Trust and the remaining \$45,000.00 to come from the Town Hall Capital Reserve.

Kelly Sullivan asked why metal roof instead of asphalt shingles.

Drew Carter responded metal roofing has twice the life expectancy of asphalt shingles.

Kelly Sullivan shared her concern with the fasteners, referring to the fasteners at the high school roof not lasting long.

Drew Carter explained there would be two warranties, one for the materials and one for labor with the installer.

Kelly Sullivan stated there is no question the roof needs to be repaired.

Loring Carr stated the Selectmen are agents to expend both the Town Hall Capital Reserve and the Clough-Morrill Trust. He questioned if no means no if this article does not pass.

Ryan Heath responded yes, in this case no means no.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 27, seconded by Nicholas Buonopane. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #28:

New Hampshire communities value strong public schools and responsible use of public funds for education. Therefore, the voters of Alton, New Hampshire, are asked: Shall we call on our legislators to protect taxpayers by requiring the Education Freedom Account program to provide fiscal and educational performance reports comparable to those required of public schools, and by limiting eligibility to families with demonstrated financial need? This is a petition article.

Drew Carter moved Article 28, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Moderator Young announced that a petitioner would be allowed up to ten minutes to speak to the article.

Beverly Murdough spoke to the article. She explained the request would be to protect taxpayers and have a demonstrated financial need for the Education Freedom Account users. To renew our town commitment to a strong, well funded public school.

Greg Fuller asked what this article means and if it is against vouchers.

Beverly Murdough responded that this is against vouchers. This article is to have a voice from our town in Concord to eliminate what is going on with school funding; against vouchers.

Christi Painchaud stated she home schools her special needs student and relies heavily on EFA funds. She questioned what amount of money the Alton taxpayers contributed to the state run EFA funds.

Moderator Young responded that would be a question for the school.

Christi Painchaud responded that this article seems like more of a legislative issue and questioned the relevance of this article to Alton taxpayers.

Ruth Larsen stated this article is not pro or against voucher. It is asking both sides to come together and ask for accountability with the voucher system.

Courtney Mitchell stated that she has a special needs son who does not meet the requirements for EFA funds. There is a waiting list and an extensive vetting process and not handed out without stipulations.

Hal Shurtleff stated that every family could demonstrate a financial need.

Priscilla Terry added that she believes this is irrelevant to the Alton taxpayers and the Town budget. This should be addressed with your state representative.

Christi Painchaud reiterated that the funds are well controlled, only released quarterly and documentation is required in order to get reimbursement. The reimbursement does not get released to you, it goes to the private school. She added that annual testing is required as well.

Loring Carr expressed confusion regarding the wording of the article. He stated it is asking for reports and then demonstrating financial need, although it is not clear what the need is in regard to.

Drew Carter made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 28, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article #29:

New Hampshire thrives when state funding fairly supports local communities. Therefore, the residents of Alton are asked: Do we call on the New Hampshire Legislature to protect local taxpayers by ensuring adequate state revenues for essential services, and by avoiding policies that shift costs onto local property taxpayer? This is a petition article.

Paul LaRochelle moved Article 29, seconded by Andrew Morse.

No discussion.

Article #30: Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the provisions of NH RSA Chapter 79-E "Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive". The Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive (RSA 79-E) is a New Hampshire state law that encourages investment in downtowns and village centers and allow cities and towns to offer temporary property tax relief to owners who undertake substantial rehabilitation of buildings in designated areas, primarily downtowns, town centers, or village centers. The goal is to encourage investment in these areas, revitalize underutilized buildings, and promote economic vitality. This is a petition article.

Nicholas Buonopane moved Article 30, seconded by Paul LaRochelle.

Christi Painchaud explained this tool is to help people who invest in downtowns. This would provide tax relief on the value of improvements up to thirteen years, not complete tax relief. Currently 65 of the 235 towns in New Hampshire have adopted this.

Christi Painchaud asked if there could be zero tax impact at the bottom so that voters are clear there is no tax impact if the article passes.

Attorney Stephen Whitley responded there is no appropriation in the article, therefore there is no tax impact printed.

Richele Glidden commended Christi Painchaud for her improvements to her Main Street property and spoke in favor of this article.

Hal Shurtleff asked for clarification of the word substantial.

Attorney Stephen Whitley explained the wording of this article is statutory and there is a definition of substantial rehabilitation in RSA 79-E:2,IV.

Christi Painchaud added a taxpayer could only apply for tax relief if the building is located in the downtown and the rehabilitation costs are at least 15% of the buildings prehab assessed value or \$75,000, whichever is less and the rehabilitation must also be consistent with the town's Master Plan.

Nicholas Buonopane made a motion to restrict reconsideration of Article 30, seconded by Paul LaRochelle. The motion passed with a favorable vote and will go to the official ballot as written.

Article 31: Reports of Committees

To hear reports of any committees, boards, trustees, commissions, officials, agents or concerns of any voters and vote to accept the same. Furthermore, to conduct any other business to come legally before said meeting.

Loring Carr questioned last year's Article 25 regarding Solar Exemption established in 1985, which did not exist.

Nicholas Buonopane stated they are still looking into it.

Loring Carr expressed concern that town employees will not receive a raise for a third year if this budget does not pass. He questioned if it was time to have a petition article for just the salaries so the employees may get a raise. Cost of living is going up and the employees deserve a raise.

Ryan Heath responded yes we could do that.

Kelly Sullivan stated there are concerns with this budget. She praised the school and the way they explain their budget with detailed information regarding salaries. She urged the Town to follow the school's lead with transparency of line items versus lumping everything together. The people do not appreciate everything being lumped together.

Moderator Young adjourned the meeting at 7:51 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Long
Recording Secretary