

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Town of Alford
Annual Town Meeting Minutes
May 11, 2021**

The Moderator, Mr. Michael Wilcox, called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM. Mr. Wilcox reviewed the rules and procedures of this meeting. Mr. Wilcox reviewed a land acknowledgment which he has prepared and is on the Town's website. Mr. Wilcox swore in Ms. Kathy Chretien in as Assistant Town Clerk.

Moderator Mr. Wilcox stated the warrant was duly posted by the Town Constable. Mr. Wilcox also expressed gratitude to all the people who served assisting with preparing for the meeting. Mr. Wilcox also mentioned that voters were given two colored voting cards: yellow to cast vote, red to vote no. Mr. Wilcox stated if voters wanted to speak they would have to state their name and address. It was announced that the Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday, May 18th from noon – 6PM at the Town Hall.

That the following is a true copy of the vote taken at the Alford Annual Town Meeting, held on May 11, 2021, as certified by me. There were 43 registered voters present. I, Peggy R. Henden-Wilson, hereby certify that I hold the office of Town Clerk of the Town of Alford in the county of Berkshire and:

ARTICLE 1. To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health to appoint any member of the Board of Selectmen, or Board of Health, respectively, to another office or position for the term provided by law, if any, otherwise for a term not to exceed one year, in accordance with Section 4A of Chapter 41 of the General Laws or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded and so vote unanimously to approve Article #1 as presented.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will vote to accept any and all funds being provided by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Transportation (Mass DOT), under the provisions of Chapter 90 of the General Laws, to pay for such costs as allowed by appropriate legislation in connection with the maintenance, repair, and construction of Town ways and bridges, or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted unanimously to approve Article #2 as presented.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will vote to fix the maximum amount that may be spent during fiscal year 2022, beginning on July 1, 2021, for the revolving funds established in the Town’s by-laws for certain departments, boards, committees, agencies and officers in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 44, Section 53E1/2, as follows, or take any other action relative thereto.

Revolving Fund	Department, Board, Committee, Agency or Officer	FY 2022 Spending Limit
Inspectional Services		
	Fire Inspector	\$10,000
	Sanitation Inspector	\$10,000
	Electrical Inspector	\$10,000
	Plumbing Inspector	\$10,000

A motion was made, seconded. A voter inquired why is there an increase in the inspector’s fees. Ms. Joan Rogers, Chair of the Finance Committee, stated that there has been an increase of activity this past year and per Massachusetts General Laws each Town must have revolving funds for inspectors. Ms. Roxanne Germain, Treasurer, mentioned that an example would be if the Fire Chief completes an inspection and the fee is \$90.00 then the

Town would receive \$10.00 and the Fire Chief would receive \$90.00 after the explanation so voted unanimously to approve Article #3 as presented.

ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate \$150,000.00, or any other sum of money, to pay cost of repairs and improvements to Alford Highways and to determine whether this appropriation shall be raised by taxation, transferred from available funds or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded. A voter inquired on what road projects would be completed with this sum of money, and is there any State Funds. Mr. TJ Horrigan, Assistant Highway Superintendent mentioned that Chapter 90 will pay for half of the road project and the road being done is Green Valley River Rd - resurfacing the whole road. Another voter inquired if there's funds already in the budget for this. Mr. Horrigan mentioned that the money that is in the other article is for everyday small projects. After discussion so voted unanimously to raise and appropriate Article #4 as presented in the Booklet of Motions provided by the Moderator.

ARTICLE 5. 1a To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Stabilization Fund to Free Cash the sum of One hundred thousand and 00/100 (\$100,000) **A motion was made, seconded. A voter inquired on how much is the Stabilization Fund. Ms. Joan Rogers stated that there's currently \$307,000.00 and if the Town uses \$100,000.00 the amount left will be \$207,000.00. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve transferring \$100,000.00 from stabilization to free cash for Article 5 1a.**

2b. To see if the Town will vote to authorize spending of \$195,000.00 from Free Cash to purchase a Single Axle Dump Truck and Snow Plowing Equipment, or take any other action relative thereto. **A motion was made, seconded. A voter mentioned that they felt the cost was high for a dump truck, why not buy a used one. Mr. Horrigan mentioned that the current truck is ten years old and there is a capital plan in place, and why buy someone else's issues when purchasing used dump truck. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve Article 5 2b that \$195,000.00 from free cash to purchase a new DPW highway truck.**

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from free cash funds, \$ 50,300.00 to the pay the cost of debt service on the 9 Alford Road Property or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded. A voter inquired on how much is the current debt amount. Mrs. Roxanne Germain mentioned that \$235,000 was the beginning amount and the principle amount is \$188,000.00. Ms. Germain also stated that the Town uses State notes, and the interest is less than 1%. Ms. Joan Rogers mentioned that the Town pays for items as much as possible, but for big amounts State notes are the way to go and be debt free. After discussion Article #6 was approved by a vote of 41 yes votes to 2 no votes to take monies from free cash according to the Booklet of Motions provided by the Moderator.

ARTICLE 7. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate up to \$3,500.00 for Emergency Medical Services or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded. A voter inquired on what medical services is this amount used for. Ms. Joan Rogers mentioned that this amount is used to provide ambulance service to Town's people. Another voter inquired on how is this amount figured. Ms. Rogers stated that the Town usually receives a quote from Southern Berkshire Ambulance Squad, but haven't received the quote as of yet and this amount is a place holder. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve Article #7 as presented.

ARTICLE 8. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from Retained Earnings of the Alford Link Enterprise Fund, \$ 30,000.00 to the Alford Link Enterprise Stabilization Fund in accordance with the provisions of Section 5B of Chapter 40 of the General Laws or to take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve Article #7 as presented.

ARTICLE 9. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$17,000 to pay the cost of debt service on the Alford Link Broadband borrowing and to transfer the amount from the Retained Earnings of the Alford Link Enterprise or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to unanimously approve Article #9 as presented.

ARTICLE 10. To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from receipts of Alford Link the following sums to operate the Alford Link Enterprise fund.

	Alford Link Enterprise Fund	FY 2021	FY 2022
1	ISP Subscription Fees	150,000	160,000
2	Salaries	10,000	10,000
3	Repairs, Maintenance	40,000	40,000
4	Contracted Services	32,400	32,400
5	CAF II Fees	1,500	1,500
6	Poles Fees	10,000	10,000
7	Insurance	10,000	10,000
8	Debt Service	90,000	110,000
9	Capital Replacement/Improvements	14,000	14,000
10	Reserve Fund	20,000	20,000
	TOTAL EXPENSES	377,900	407,900

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve Article #10 as presented.

ARTICLE 11. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate to defray the charges and Expenses of the Town described in the Feature Accounts on these Pages, including the salaries of the Town Officers and Employees for FY 2022

		FY2021	FY2022
1	SBRSD-Operating/Transp.	444,966	430,713
2	SBRSD-Capital	9,490	8,873
3	SBRSD-bond	9,677	8,952
4	Insurance	39,910	40,000
5	Community Health Program	1,000	1,000
6	Berkshire Mental Health	177	177
7	Visiting Nurse Association	600	625
8	Debt Service	117,000	122,000
9	Veteran's Service	1,894	1,880
10	Berkshire Regional Retirement	45,423	44,004
11	Berkshire Regional Planning	904	894
12	Veteran's Benefits	4,800	4,800
13	Insect Pest Control	1,000	1,000
14	Emergency Reserve	16,000	16,000
15	Town Buildings	60,000	60,000
16	Street Lighting	350	450
17	Sanitation	58,000	60,000
18	Overtime-Highway	12,500	15,000
19	Public Works Highway	60,000	65,000
20	Rd. Superintendent Salary (1)	72,007	74,167
21	Employee Benefits	72,640	114,115
22	Public Works Employee (2)	52,164	53,729
23	Public Works Employee (3)	37,584	45,760
24	Public Works Snow & Ice	60,000	60,000
25	Machinery & Maintenance	15,000	15,000
26	Fire Department	15,500	15,500
27	Alford firefighter stipends	17,200	18,000
28	Fire Chief Expense	300	300
29	Police Department	31,000	31,000
30	Emergency MGMT Coordinator	1,000	1,000
31	Board of Health Agent	3,000	5,760
32	911	9,224	9,501
33	Reverse 911	2,500	2,500

34	Medicare	4,500	5,500
35	Division of Employment	3,500	4,000
36	Eagle Fund	1,000	1,000
37	Grant Writer	2,000	2,000
	TOTAL	1,283,810	1,340,200
		FY 2021	FY 2022
	GENERAL GOVERNMENT		
38	Assessor's Expense	23,230	22,815
39	Assessor's Clerk Salary	10,292	10,600
40	Selectmen's Expense	5,000	5,000
41	Admin Assts. Salaries	30,170	31,076
42	Accountant's Expense	1,000	1,000
43	Tax Collector's Expense	3,400	3,000
44	Town Clerk's Expense	2,000	2,200
45	Treasurer Expense	2,000	2,000
46	Board of Registration Expense	2,900	2,000
47	Board of Appeals Expense	250	300
48	Planning Board Expense	2,000	2,000
49	Moderator's Expense	50	50
50	SBRSD-Rep Expense	800	800
51	Council on Aging Expense	950	950
52	Building Inspector Expense	2,455	2,470
53	Conservation Commission expense	2,000	2,000
54	Library Trustee's Expense	700	700
55	Hazardous Waste Center	1,002	1,070
56	Town Counsel Expense	1,500	1,500
57	Town Counsel Salary	11,000	11,000
58	Animal Control Officer Salary	3,000	3,000
59	Animal Control Officer Expense	500	500
60	Finance Committee	150	150
61	Tree Warden's Expense	10,000	10,000
62	Historic Commission	4,000	8,050
63	GB-Library	1,500	1,700
64	IT Support Salary	3,480	-
65	IT Maintenance	20,500	26,285
66	Senior Services	5,136	5,136
	TOTAL	150,965	157,352
		FY 2021	FY 2022
	TOWN OFFICER'S SALARY		
67	Assessor	2,800	2,800
68	Assessor	2,800	2,800
69	Assessor	2,800	2,800
70	Animal Inspector	2,000	2,000
71	Building Inspector Salary	14,907	15,355
71A	Alternate Building Insp.	500	500
72	Constable	250	250
73	Librarian Salary	815	815
74	Moderator's Salary	200	200
75	Clerk of Registrars Salary	200	200
76	Selectmen. Chairman	4,000	4,000
77	Selectmen	2,200	2,200
78	Selectmen	2,200	2,200
79	Accountant's Salary	11,062	11,395

80	Tax Collector	8,387	9,600
81	Treasurer	8,387	9,600
82	Town Clerk	8,387	9,600
82A	Asst. Town Clerk	2,000	1,400
83	Police Chief	3,343	3,445
	TOTAL	77,238	81,160
	TOTALS	1,512,013	1,578,712

A motion was made, seconded for lines #1 - #3. Ms. Beth Regulbuto, Superintendent of the SBRSD stated they are worked hard on the budget that only has a 1.73% increase and that the school committee is working best on how to use the funds received from the State. Ms. Regulbuto also mentioned that they are trying to be mindful on using funds so the five (5) Towns don't have to borrow funds. A voter inquired on if the funds will include supplies for COVID 19. Ms. Regulbuto stated that the District already has air follow systems in each class room. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve lines #1 - #3 as presented.

A motion was made, seconded for lines 3 - 83. A hold was placed for line #21 & #62. Line #21 a voter inquired on the amount. Mrs. Roxanne Germain stated that if Mr. Green hasn't taken the health insurance, but this year Mr. Green requested to take the Town health insurance. Mrs. German also mentioned that is Mr. Green retires the Town doesn't know if the employee that will be hired will need a single or family plan, and if Mr. Green happens not to retire the amount will go into Free Cash. Line #62 A voter inquired why the amount has doubled. Ms. Alice Halsted, Chair Alford Historical District Commission mentioned that last year the Commission requested this amount but due to COVID they were asked to lower the amount last year and the funds are used for the event is September that includes the tent, etc. for the square dance. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve lines 3 – 83 as presented.

ARTICLE 12. To see if the Town will vote to change to position of Town Clerk from an elected positon to an appointed under M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 1B.

A motion was made, seconded. A voter mentioned that they thought the Town voted on this Article last year. Mrs. Roxanne Germain stated that this Article was going to be on the warrant but the Select board wanted to keep last year warrant small so they removed the Article. A voter mentioned that if this Article passes then all the power goes to the Board of Selectmen. Mrs. Peggy Henden-Wilson, Town Clerk stated that it is becoming more and more difficult to fill positions and no one runs for the elected offices, and that everyone wants to have elected officers, but we are lucky to have an assistant from another town. Mrs. Henden-Wilson also mentioned that a lot of clerks left their positions due to the fact they weren't getting enough pay and this article, if passed, will allow the clerk to get paid for all hours worked. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve Article #12 as presented.

ARTICLE 13 To see if the Town will vote to combine the positions of the Treasurer and Tax Collector and make said position an appointed position under M.G.L Chapter 41, Section 1B.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve Article #13 as presented.

ARTICLE 14. I move that the Town amend the Alford Center Historic District By-law,

Section 5, Commission Membership, to read as follows: 5.1 The commission shall consist of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Where possible, nominees submitted by the Berkshire Historical Society, Massachusetts Chapter of the American Institute of Architects and Board of Realtors shall be considered. Nominees, where possible, should be residents of Alford.

5.2 When the commission is first established, one member shall be appointed for a term of one year, three shall be appointed for a term of two years, and three shall be appointed in like manner for a term of three years. Each successive appointment is to be made for three years.

5.3 The Selectmen may appoint one alternate member for a term of one year and two alternate members may be appointed for a term of three years. Their successors shall be appointed in like manner for terms of three years.

5.4 Each member and alternate member shall continue to serve in office after the expiration date of his or her term until a successor is duly appointed.

5.5 Meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the Chairperson, at the request of two members, and in such other manner as the Commission shall determine. **A motion was made, seconded. Ms. Alice Halsted mentioned that the Alford Historic District Commission was established in 1995 and re-established in 2014, and that the Commission reviewed the current by-laws which were done in 1975. Ms. Halsted also mentioned that the Commission has completed some projects to the Town buildings and they also hope to host the square dance in September. A voter inquired if the Commission meetings have to follow the Open Meeting Law. Ms. Halsted stated yes they have to follow the Open Meeting Law. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve Article #14 as presented.**

ARTICLE 15 I move that the Town amend the Alford Center Historic District By-law, to change the title of the By-law to be "Alford Historic District By-law" and, further, to amend Section 3, Historic District, to add three properties to the historic district, as follows:

3. Historic District. Pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 40C of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, as amended, an Historic District was established in 1975 as shown on a plan entitled Alford Historic District, dated February 13, 1975, and comprising properties labeled on said plan, "Church", "Town Hall" and "School House". This Historic District as amended in 2021 includes three additional properties: #7 Alford Center Road, also known as the Parsonage; Botham Park, abutting the Alford Union Church; and "The Triangle," a grassy open area located at the junction of East Road and Alford Road and in front of Botham Park. Boundaries are noted on the attached map labeled "Exhibit A Map of the Alford Historic District, Alford, Massachusetts" and are on file in the office of the Town Clerk. **A motion was made, seconded. A voter stated that they respect all the work the Historic District has done, but what is the purpose of extending the area to include buildings that are not historical. Ms. Shirley Mueller mentioned that information is on the website regarding the parsonage which is almost 100 years old. Ms. Mueller stated that the State asked the District to extend the area and include the parsonage. Ms. Halsted mentioned that the cemetery will not be included per Massachusetts Historical Commission. Ms. Halsted also stated that the Commission wants to protect the area for future use. After discussion so voted to approve Article #15 by a vote of 42 yes to 1 no.**

ARTICLE 16. To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the amount of Eight Thousand Dollars (\$8,000) for the purpose of supporting the work of the Regional School District Planning Board in its study of the financial and educational advisability of options for consolidating the Southern Berkshire Regional School District and the Berkshire Hills Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto.

A motion was made, seconded. Ms. Lucy Prashker, a member of the SBRSD Planning Board, mentioned that this year the Board had worked on applying for a grant, which they received. Ms. Prashker also mentioned that there looks like there's a decline in enrollment in students, and that is why the Board is looking at other options has to combine K-12 and shared services. Ms. Prashker mentioned that the Board is requesting funds from all Eight (8) Towns. Ms. Prashker thanked both the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen for all of their working on preparing the warrant. After discussion so voted unanimously to approve Article #16 as presented.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to dissolve at 7:18PM.

Attest A True Copy,

Peggy Rae Henden-Wilson, Town Clerk

Katherine Chretien, Assistant Town Clerk

