

**ALBURGH SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting time & date:** May 28th, 2025, at 6:00PM

**Meeting location:** Alburgh Town Office (Conference Room) - 1 N Main Street

**Public Officials Present:** Elliot Knight (Chair), Alex McCracken (Vice-Chair), Jim Hokenberg (Selectman), Damien Henry (Selectman), Russell Duchaine (Selectman), Josie Henry (Interim Town Administrator)

**Public Present:** George Hakey (Highway Department), Danielle Choiniere (Town Clerk), Donna Boumil (Lister), Herbie Durham, Michel and Kathy Rochedieu, Terry Tatro, Loretta Knight, Eric Gravel

**Present on Zoom:** Mathew Lavigne (Green Mountain Fireworks)

* **Call to Order** – Elliot Knight called the meeting to order at 6:07PM.
* **Adjustments to the Agenda** – Elliot Knight requested adding a new item: policy regarding town administrator engagement with the town attorney. Damien moved to omit the highway department driveway issue because it had been resolved. Without objection, the board proceeded with the amended agenda.
* **Minutes from May 12th** – Alex McCracken moved to accept the minutes as written, Russell Duchaine seconded, all were in favor and the minutes were approved.
* **Public Comments** –
	1. Eric Gravel read a statement to the board declaring his intent to expose their collective corruption.
	2. Josie Henry presented a request to the board asking for the defamatory material on the Town of Alburgh Facebook page concerning her be removed immediately (Enclosure 1).
* **Lister Update –** Donna Boumil presented a Grand List extension request to the board members for approval. Elliot Knight motioned to approve the request, Alex McCracken seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried.
* **Town Surveillance Cameras** – Elliot Knight briefed the board on the surveillance cameras the town bought last year. They need to be recharged regularly, so he suggested getting a quote on hardwiring them. Board members agreed to pursue a quote.
* **Highway Equipment Inventory** – Damien walked the board through photos of highway equipment to discuss the way ahead with older pieces, no longer in use. He recommended the board think about having an auction or brainstorm other ways to dispose of the used pieces. The board decided to move forward with a loader sale immediately, via Facebook.
	1. Damien Henry motioned to list the loader, Alex McCracken seconded, all were in favor and motion carried.
	2. Damien also motioned to advertise the 60-inch snowblower and dual tire set, Alex McCracken seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried.
* Russell Duchaine asked about the storm water permit self-inspection. The town administrator agreed to get them a copy of the self-inspection form to review and provide answers to be fed back to the state.
* Elliot Knight introduced the topic of a town administrator attorney policy, stating he thought one was necessary after it had come to his attention the town administrator was having, what he believed to be, unauthorized communications with the town attorney.
	1. Jim Hokenberg informed Elliot Knight that he, not the administrator, reached out to the attorney.
	2. Josie Henry explained that Jim had reached out and asked her to schedule a call, which she did, and took notes during the discussion that were later fed back to the rest of the board.
	3. Elliot Knight then accused Jim Hokenberg, Josie Henry, and Damien Henry of unauthorized discussions with the attorney.
	4. Josie Henry explained the topic was Eric Gravel, and the selectboard had already authorized the town clerk and administrator to engage on the matter.
	5. Josie Henry stated that if the board was no longer authorizing town employees access to the attorney about the Eric Gravel emails, they needed revised guidance.
	6. Elliot Knight and Alex McCracken then both expressed their position that the Eric Gravel emails to the town office and Facebook posts about Alburgh officials, should be handled with personal, not municipal resources.
	7. Next, Elliot Knight accused Josie Henry of unauthorized communication with the attorney handling her HR contract. Josie Henry stated her interaction was an inquiry on the status of the contract, and also explained that she was previously directed by the town’s legal counsel to bring questions and requests to him on the contract.
	8. A debate broke out about Elliot Knight’s statement read at a previous meeting.
	9. Josie Henry asked for redactions on the portions that were not true.
	10. Board members then debated whether the town’s Facebook page was an “official” page.
	11. Elliot Knight then requested all emails from the town administrator with the town attorney.
	12. Josie Henry stated she would be happy to provide them and asked the board to stop falsely accusing her of wrongdoing.
	13. Argument continued and Elliot Knight stated he saw no role for the Town of Alburgh testifying on the matter of overwhelming public records requests, as requested by the Vermont House of Representatives previously in the month.
	14. Damien Henry and Jim Hokenberg emphasized their position that the town Facebook page was official, and that the town employees should be protected.
	15. Kathy R. asked if the town was insured and recommended researching if insurance coverage could help in this situation. Board members agreed it was something to investigate.
	16. Alex McCracken asked if the board had ever consulted with a public records specialist on the requests, and recommended the town administrator and board talk to someone who specializes in these issues.
		+ Alex McCracken recommended the board investigate options by reaching out first to VLCT, Damien Henry seconded, all were in favor and the motion carried.
	17. Green Mountain Fireworks briefed a cost estimate to the board for the 4th of July fireworks.
* **Free/Discount Dump Day** – Russell Duchaine briefed the board on final discussions he had with the Northwest Solid Waste District regarding free dump day. The board discussed highway department support and final logistics.
* **Delinquent Tax Collection Policy** – Board members agreed to continue reviewing and to take up at a future meeting.
* **Town Administrator Contract** –
	1. Josie Henry asked the board to clarify how many hours they wanted her to work and asked for the same hourly wage the previous administrator was getting. She noted the other benefits are mandated by state law, depending on the hours worked weekly. She noted she would decline any benefits package because she is covered by the Veterans Administration.
	2. Elliot Knight noted there was a list of benefit issues they needed to go over as a board.
	3. Russell Duchaine calculated the rough estimate salary using Alex Goddard’s hourly rate.
	4. Josie Henry asked for clarification on vacation time.
* Alex McCracken motioned to enterExecutive Session per 1 V.S.A. 313 (a)(1), to continue discussion on the town administrator contract, Russell Duchaine seconded, all were in favor, and the board entered Executive Session.
* The board excited Executive Session, and Elliot Knight announced there would be a follow-on meeting on Monday, June 2nd at 6PM, on the town administrator contract.
* **Adjournment** – Alex McCracken motioned to adjourn, Russell Duchaine seconded, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.