

TOWN MEETING
Monday, March 2nd, 2026
School 6:00pm Town 7:00pm
Alburgh Community Education Center
45 Champlain St Alburgh, VT 05440

Public Officials:

Town - Elliot Knight, Selectboard Chair; Alex McCracken, Vice-Chair; Russell Duchaine, Selectboard Member; Jim Hokenberg, Selectboard Member; Danielle James-Choiniere, Town Clerk; Amanda Costello, Town Administrator; Margret Brescia, Town Treasurer

Attendees – See Sign In Sheet

Virtual Attendees – Kim McCracken, Meredith Henry, Paul Ballentine, George Boutah

Moderator – Terry Tatro School and Town Moderator

Terry Tatro, moderator called the Town portion of the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
(Video Recording starts at 20:50)

Terry Tatro read through the Town of Alburgh Annual Town Warning and reviewed the articles.

ARTICLE #1: TO ELECT BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS. (BALLOT ITEM) – NOT UP FOR DISCUSSION WILL BE VOTED ON FOLLOWING DAY

ARTICLE #2: SHALL THE VOTERS OF THE TOWN OF ALBURGH CONSIDER THE REPORTS OF THE TOWN OFFICERS AS PRESENTED.

ARTICLE #3: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE A BUDGET OF \$1,074,002.46 WITH \$917,352.46 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION, TO BE USED FOR GENERAL TOWN PURPOSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #4: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE A BUDGET OF \$949,896.08 WITH \$775,735.39 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION, TO BE USED FOR YEAR-ROUND MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN HIGHWAYS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #5: SHALL THE VOTERS AUTHORIZE THE TOWN TO BORROW IN ANTICIPATION OF TAXES.

ARTICLE #6: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE THE SUM OF \$20,000 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION ANNUALLY FOR COMMUNITY RECREATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR GENERAL EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #7: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE THE ADDITIONAL SUM OF \$53,537.12 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION TO INCREASE THE GRAND ISLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S CONTRACT HOURS FROM 30 TO 44 HOURS WEEKLY FOR SERVICES AT THE RATE OF \$73.54 PER HOUR, FOR PUBLIC SAFETY EXPENSES FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #8: SHALL THE VOTERS AUTHORIZE PAYMENT OF CURRENT TAXES ON APRIL 12, 2027, AND REQUIRE ALL PAYMENT METHODS: IN PERSON, ONLINE, BY TELEPHONE, AND THROUGH THE MAIL BE COLLECTED AT OR BEFORE 5:00 PM EST AND SHALL NOT INCLUDE POSTMARKS RECEIVED THEREAFTER AS ACCEPTABLE TIMELY PAYMENT (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #9: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE A BUDGET OF \$300,000 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION FOR THE ALBURGH RESCUE INCORPORATED FOR GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #10: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE A SUM OF \$78,000 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION FOR ALBURGH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INCORPORATED, FOR GENERAL OPERATING EXPENSES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #11: SHALL THE VOTERS APPROVE A SUM OF \$36,000 TO BE RAISED BY TAXATION FOR ALBURGH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INCORPORATED, TO BE USED TO PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 (BALLOT ITEM).

ARTICLE #12: TO TRANSACT ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT MAY PROPERLY COME BEFORE THIS MEETING.

Floor opened for Article #2.

No questions.

Motion made by Cheryl Dunn to accept the reports as presented by the Town Officers at 7:06pm with a second by Jedd Ladd Jr. Motion carried.

Floor opened for Article #3.

Amanda Costello, Town Administrator, presented a brief presentation on the Town Budget, Ballot Article overview and potential tax rates. Margret Brescia, Town Treasurer, provided an explanation on the Highway surplus and how it affects the FY27 budget.

Noah Vincelette asked about the \$728,054.20 delinquent taxes reported in the Town Report and how those delinquencies will affect Town operations.

Amanda Costello advised that the Tax Collection Policy was approved in September 2025 which outlines guidelines of taxes and collections. Agreements can be made by the

Delinquent Collector to plan paying off delinquent taxes. The delinquent amount of \$728,054.20 was clarified to explain the amount reported is what was rolled over as delinquent after the day tax bills were due. It is not the actual amount of delinquencies owned currently. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #4.

Jim Magner asked if there is a plan to pave this year. Yes, the plan is to rebase a section of Lake Street and pave it. Alternative areas require more in depth rebasing. The board is also seeking to construct a long-term paving plan. Kevin Allen asked about Route 2 paving after waterline project, but not Town related. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #5.

Stacey Ladd asked if the Town has considered changing the tax bills to be paid quarterly instead of all at once. Russell Duchaine advised there has been past discussion about giving an incentive or discount to pay early, which would require a vote. Margert Brescia advises that the Town has not needed to borrow in years.

Motion made by Adam Vincelette to authorize the Town to borrow in anticipation of taxes at 7:24pm with a second by Herbie Durham. Motion carried.

Floor opened for Article #6.

Alex McCracken spoke to article emphasizing the importance of infrastructure improvements for recreational purposes. Jedd Ladd Jr. asked what this budget line could be used on. Options include improvements to the playground such as a new swing set, improvements to the multi-use court by installing lighting, and improvements to the warming shed. Josie Henry asked if this budget could be used for recreational grant fund matching, answer is yes. Adam Vincelette asked if the budget could be used for improvements to the Alburgh parks & beaches, answer is yes. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #7.

Russell Duchaine advised that the proposed general budget includes the current 30-hour contract with the new hourly rate, the article is for the requested increase back to previously contracted 44-hours weekly requested by the Sheriff's Department. Kevin Allen about why the GICSD requested an increase in hours. The contract was reduced last year

due to short staffing at GICSD which affected the Town coverage and budget in prior years. The GICSD has reported they are fully staffed and operating at full hours and are requesting the coverage hours be increased to match prior years. Phil Knight asked if the GICSD is willing to negotiate what services are offered. Noah Vincelette stated that Alburgh is low priority for Vermont State Police and notes difficulty in getting timely response from them for calls and agency assists. Discussion of if the Selectboard can have conversations with the sheriff's department about the type of coverage they provide to Alburgh. Noah Vincelette and Stacey Ladd spoke to agency assists for rescue/fire services and their witnessed support from GICSD. Josie Henry stated she works as the Grand Isle County Assistant Judge whose role is also to help facilitate the Grand Isle County budget. Josie Henry spoke to the municipal budget which only pays for the GICSD to patrol, but the Grand Isle County tax assists in paying the operations of the GICSD. Josie Henry also spoke to certifications of GICSD and additions of their night hours, she also reiterated the sheriff states 30 hours is not sustainable for the number of calls and the Town may run out of hours on the current contract. Ron Kumetz referred to Burlington and their policing concerns as well as how the lack of the sheriff's presence effects rescue & fire operations negatively. Loretta Knight asked about available patrol hours. Russell Duchaine advised that GICSD historical was available until 11pm on certain days. Elliot Knight spoke to the potential failure to respond and lack of resources on the current contract, and states it is the same situation the Town would face on Sundays when the GICSD is not available. Leonard James asked about hourly rates in comparison to previous years. Alex McCracken answered stating each year the hourly rate increases but the Town is not seeing the services change. Josie Henry advised the increased rate is also attributed to increases in healthcare costs. Amanda Costello advised the hourly rate is a 3% cost of living increase, the last few year hourly rates can be provided by the Town upon request. Elliot Knight advised the new rate is built into the proposed budget at the previously approved 30-hour contract. Josie Henry asked if there was any progress in the alternative law enforcement options that were discussed by the Town last year after the approved hourly cut. Elliot Knight advised that there was no significant interest in participation of the alternative safety options nor were any significant complaints of public safety concerns or increases reported. Ron Kumetz asked what improvements they are looking for from the sheriff's department. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #8.

Loretta Knight asked about postmarks. Postmarks are not considered to be in the hands of tax collector. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #9.

Josie Henry asked for an update from Rescue. Mathieu Gour stated Rescue separated from Fire in 2022 due to grant opportunities for the Fire Department. Mathieu Gour spoke about potentially raising the fee for transport mileage. Surrounding Towns are charging up to \$40-45 per mile, Alburgh charges \$15 per mile currently. Even if Alburgh Rescue increases their mileage transport, Medicare/Medicaid will only pay \$9 per mile. Mathieu Gour spoke about the difficulty of estimating the number of calls each year for the budget. Mathieu also spoke about interest in providing the overnight staff with a facility space to properly accommodate overnight crews. Rescue is working on putting aside funds for this purpose. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #10.

No comments or questions.

Floor opened for Article #11.

Herbie Durham asked why articles 10 & 11 are not combined into one article. Noah Vincelette understands that the articles are separate being they represent different budget aspects and noted that AVFD is non-profit. No further questions.

Floor opened for Article #12.

Alex McCracken thanked Town Administrator and Town Treasurer for their work, additionally Alex McCracken thanked Damien Henry for his work on the board and as Road Commissioner and Elliot Knight for his steady leadership and devotion to the board. Martha Goodsell noted that this year is the 250th Anniversary and would like to promote and expand the 4th of July parade this year, flyers available and recommendations and participation are welcome. Paul Fortin asked about ambulance purchase. Mathieu Gour advised the ambulance would arrive next year. Funds are set aside for future equipment purchases. No further comments or questions.

***Motion to adjourn by Herbie Durham at 8:02pm with a second by Adam Vincelette.
Motion carried.***

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Costello

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Attendees Noted – Kayla Patnode, Mallory Ovitt, Herbie Durham, Martha Goodsell, Leonard James, Paul Fortin, John Goodrich, Ed Bonsquet, Nicholas Smith, Ashley Bowen, Kaitlin Pease, Brian Markwell, Jed Ladd Jr., Jed Ladd Sr., Lorraine Bruso, Julie Pease, Chuck Pease, Charity Darby, Cheryl Dunn, Dick Ernist, Loretta Knight, Amanda Ellison, Chuck Blair, Adam Vincelette, Phil Knight, Josie Henry, Walter Kane, Noah Vincelette, Mathieu Gour, Ron Kumetz, Stacey Ladd, Alton Bruso, Kevin Allen, Jim Magner, Heather Darby

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