Town of Alexander Selectmen's Meeting

3 July 2025

Attendance:
Skip Colson
Carl Oakes
Beth Johnson
David Davis
David Sanford

Kristy Crawford
Rhonda Oakes

Meeting called to order at 6:01 PM.
Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

Beth asked that it be said more clearly that she wanted the verbiage of the warrant article for the new DBU loan to be changed to be worded like the 2020 warrant article: that it would say that the users of the internet service would pay down the debt.

Motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of 5 June 2025, as amended, by Carl and 2nd by David D.
Voting: Unanimous

Discussion of the Town's New Loan with the Downeast Broadband Utility
•The difference in the wording between the new and old (2020) loan vote had never really been touched upon in the June 31st town meeting.
•The old warrant article had specifically said that the internet subscribers would pay down the debt. But the new one did not say this at all.
•The written loan document was not available to look at before the vote.
•The new loan does not seem designed with the goal of paying it off in full.

Skip and David D. brought up that Alexander will be paying the loans of other towns. Although the subscribers are paying down the combined debt, the question is, how much is Alexander paying Calais's portion of the debt? Alexander has a higher percentage of subscribers and/or a lower amount of debt than some other towns.

Kristy has gotten varying answers on where the money from Alexander's Downeast Broadband subscribers will go. Crystal Gallina definitely keeps track of each town's income and expenses separately. At least one Baileyville official has said that he is not interested in being part of the new DBU three-town loan, but that Baileyville wanted to pay off its own loan. Danny Sullivan said that all the towns help each other out with paying off each others' expenses, as needed.

J.R. Gibson signed the first construction loan on the town's behalf. (He was authorized by the selectmen.) Ted will sign the new loan on behalf of the town.

Discussion of the June Town Meeting, Part 1
Kristy said that around 40 people were voting during the school budget portion of the meeting, then a lot of people left and it was down to about 16 voters by the end. Skip said that school employees and their family members had "stacked the deck." The school budget is very high. For the most part, it seemed to pass surprisingly quickly, considering how much the taxpayers will have to pay.

Skip again expressed concern that the school board has been voted to have unlimited spending of money from one line item in any other line item. (This is how they got the money for the new van.) Superintendent MaryEllen Day had said that this was simply an auditor technicality thing that would be fixed in the annual audit. Skip had expressed concern about the process by which the new van was purchased: Executive session discussion, then a vote in favor of the van, with Ted abstaining and Amanda McDonough voting against. Too little of the discussion was made public, yet it was a large and unplanned expenditure. Skip and others felt like they weren't getting the complete truth on that.

Beth said that at least Skip had spoken up fully in the meeting. She has done federal budgets in the past. For them, spending 5% from one line item to one or more line items in the budget is fine [this is also allowed by Maine law for the school board]. And if they find that they need to spend more than expected, then they have to go get permission.

The big increase in the AOS 77 budget was in travel and training. Kristy said that there will be probably an increase in the mill rate for the town.
Skip said that he doesn't want to lose local control of the town's schooling.

Kristy told what would happen if one of the school budget warrant articles were voted down. Kristy explained that if one portion fails, the whole school budget fails. Then, (1) a motion to adjourn the meeting would then be needed along with (2) deciding a date and time for the next meeting and (3) what will happen at that next meeting: either to

resume the vote, or restart voting on the whole budget.

Cemetery:
Rhonda said that she took pictures. Joe and Albert Staehle worked on a gravestone that was "a mess".

Skip said he can't go deep enough with the auger on his tractor in order to put up the new cemetery sign. But let him know if they need more gravel.

Assessors
Amy Dunn came to do some weekend training.
Someone had called Rhonda in error about the property tax commitment book.
Kristy said that somebody came in to ask about cemetery book.
Skip said that a lady that called about a dump sticker, but never called Kristy.

Town Income and Expense Report
(Not yet reconciled for June).
The town will have received around $26,000 in checking interest for the just-ended fiscal year.
The money for the County Tax will be held until it's due in October since the town gains interest money from that.
The auto excise tax income ended at about $150,000, not just the anticipated $140,000. If that happens again next year, then more could be allocated to the Road Account.

The town office will be closed this week.

FEMA sent an email to Kristy about the Pokey Lake boat landing and the side of the Pokey Road. They are sending the second amount of money. At the landing, the dirt gets washed down to the lake, so it needs to be stabilized. It's supposed to be completed by September 30, 2025.

There was discussion about whether FEMA money could be spent on cutting back roadside branches.
Beth thought it could be for roadside trees and other brush if they might come down in a storm and block the road.
Kristy said that unused FEMA money should be given back.

The last part of the ARPA money that is left over is $823. It can pay part of the new sign or work on the cemetery by Carl, Skip and/or Scott Morris.

Discussion of the June Town Meeting, Part 2
Beth said some townspeople complained that there had not been enough notice about the June town meeting. Could the town have a Facebook page?
Kristy said that this has been discussed before. It was originally voted against. Greg Cody said that instead there should be an email newsletter for the town. J.R. Gibson, Foster Carlow Jr. and Kevin Dean had said that electronics are not needed for this. Also the idea was voted down since it was recently after Karen Poor had been the town clerk. There were things they didn't like about how she had done things, including Facebook-related things.
Kristy has referred people to Rhonda's Randy's Variety Facebook page for updates about the town.

Kristy said that if the town did choose to have a Facebook page, that she can't do it. "Armchair warriors" were extremely hurtful when Kristy first became the town clerk. Beth said if there were a town Facebook page, that comments should be turned off.

Skip pointed out that the dates for the two town meetings don't change they are always on the last Mondays of March and June.
Beth pointed out that the complainers didn't come to the meeting.
David D. proposed an electronic sign by the side of the road.
Rhonda said if there were such a Facebook account, that perhaps only residents should be able to see it.
Beth said that Facebook pages should have an administrator.
Perhaps Beth could be the administrator for a town Facebook page?
Skip asked Beth to look into the town having a Facebook page and and to let the rest of the selectmen know what she finds out.

Beth also said that the June town meeting was very long. Could there be water or coffee available?
Skip said that when he cleaned up, he found 5 makeshift fans at the back.
Rhonda pointed out that the town meetings used to be all-day events.

Town-wide Text Messages
Skip said that he has received emails from a Dakota Pierce [senior account executive for UpAhead®] who is selling the service of a town-wide text alert system for the town to pay for. Dakota provided a link to a video that shows what the service could do.
Kristy said that the school already has this. Would it be cost effective? She can disseminate the video to the selectmen. Skip said to table the issue for now, after people have the chance to see the video.

Motion to go into executive session to
consider 1 concealed weapons permit
per 1 M.R.S.A § 405(6)(F) and consider a personnel
issue per 1 M.R.S.A § 405(6)(A)
by Beth and 2nd by David S. at 6:45 PM.
Voting: Unanimous

Out of executive session at 7:11 PM.

Motion to table the paperwork for 1 concealed
weapons permit by Skip and 2nd by Beth
Voting: Unanimous

Motion to adjourn by David D. and 2nd by David S.
Voting: Unanimous