

**MINUTES  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**April 24, 2025, 9:00 AM**

Alta Community Center, 10351 E. Highway 210, Alta, Utah

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Roger Bourke (attended virtually)  
Chris Cawley  
Jen Clancy  
Craig Heimark (attended virtually)  
Dan Schilling (attended virtually)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Mike Morey, Town Marshal  
Molly Austin, Assistant Town Administrator  
Brooke Boone, Deputy Town Clerk

**1. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER**

Jen Clancy called the April 24, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting to order.

**2. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION TO ADOPT THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 12, 2025  
BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MOTION:** Chris Cawley motioned to adopt the budget committee meeting minutes of March 12, 2024, and Dan Schilling seconded.

**VOTE:** All in favor. The meeting minutes of March 12, 2025 were approved.

**3. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT FY 2026 BUDGETS**

Craig Heimark acknowledged not completing an assigned task and suggested meeting with Jen Clancy to prepare for the next meeting.

Clancy and Chris Cawley presented the financial overview, outlining long-range planning objectives including capital master planning, wage studies, and Alta Marshal's Office improvements. The draft budget proposes a \$100,000 property tax increase in line with the council's truth-in-taxation guidance while maintaining current sales tax projections. The budget also includes the use of \$225,000 from the unreserved fund balance, a practice not employed in recent years. Sales tax remains the largest revenue contributor, accounting for 44% of combined fund revenue in FY26. The committee reviewed timing issues with sales tax collection and noted the implementation of an additional resort tax from October 2023.

The proposed property tax increase would result in a projected tax rate of 0.001260, translating to a \$47 increase per \$100,000 in assessed property value. Mayor Bourke suggested presenting this impact per \$1 million in value for better context in future presentations. Cawley and Dan Schilling emphasized the importance of comparing Alta with similar communities like Brighton and unincorporated Salt Lake County, noting that even with the increase, Alta remains more affordable than alternative service providers.

The committee also discussed implementing a 1% municipal transient room tax, potentially generating around \$200,000 annually. Comparison with other jurisdictions indicated Alta would rank among higher-taxed areas, similar to Moab. However, feedback from the committee suggested not proceeding with this tax for the FY 2026 budget.

Regarding staffing, payroll continues to be the largest portion of the town's budget. The town uses the TechNet framework for benchmarking compensation, with a wage study showing most town positions fall within established market ranges. The budget includes a 2.5% cost of living adjustment and plans for adding a fifth law enforcement officer in the final quarter of FY 2025. The committee is considering compensation increases for town council members, the Treasurer, and the Planning Commission, whose pay has remained unchanged for over a decade. The Marshal's Office staffing model includes 48-hour work weeks (40 regular hours plus 8 hours of scheduled overtime), which officers confirmed was comparable to county compensation but required overtime to achieve that level. The longer shifts, while limiting the candidate pool, were noted as attractive to many applicants due to additional days off.

Capital projects discussion focused on several initiatives. The committee budgeted \$25,000 for facilities planning phase two, reduced from a previous \$75,000 allocation. Cawley outlined necessary preparations for building replacement, including as-built surveys, civil studies, and geotechnical analysis. The building replacement estimate increased from \$7.5 million to \$9 million for fiscal year 28, with the Firehouse site prioritized due to its critical structural deficiencies, greater accessibility, and reduced avalanche exposure. Cost estimates ranged from \$6.2 million (to replace current programming) to \$12.5 million (for all identified functional space plus renovations).

The committee also discussed the potential purchase of Our Lady of the Snows for \$1 million, with additional costs for closing (\$50,000) and repairs (\$100,000). Schilling noted this purchase would affect replacement building requirements, potentially reducing needed square footage by approximately 2,000 square feet.

For water and sewer projects, the waterline project is proceeding with Newman contracted and materials ordered, with excavation expected to begin in late June at a total estimated cost of \$650,000. The remote meter project has completed most residential installations, with an estimated 90% completion rate expected by the end of FY26. Proposed utility rate increases include a 10% increase for water customers (raising single-family residence bills from \$135 to \$152 monthly) and a larger increase for sewer from \$103 to \$124 monthly. The sewer increase was deemed necessary as rates had not been adjusted for approximately ten years.

Financial projections indicated that the capital fund would go negative in FY28 without additional funding mechanisms. With all planned projects including the OLS purchase, the fund balance would drop to approximately \$498,678 by the end of fiscal year 26, with an \$8 million deficit projected by fiscal year 28. Without the OLS purchase, the deficit would be \$7 million, representing a 12% difference overall.

Heimark suggested pursuing bond issuance sooner rather than later while the town's financial position remained strong, recommending a half-day budget committee meeting in late summer or early fall to make decisions about building replacement priorities. Councilmember Byrne joined the meeting and

raised concerns about interest payments on a potential \$9 million bond, estimating \$450,000-\$500,000 in annual interest that would significantly impact the general fund budget. Cawley explained the difference between revenue bonds (against sales tax) and general obligation bonds (against property taxes), noting the latter would require voter approval.

Additional concerns discussed included potential staff growth, continued wage pressures, upcoming retirements (three of four deputies likely retiring in the next five years), and extensive water and sewer program needs. Mayor Bourke cautioned against triggering a property tax revolt similar to California's Proposition 13, which had significantly underfunded community services.

The committee agreed on pursuing only the \$100,000 truth and taxation proposal rather than including the transient room tax. Heimark emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach, including aligning on numbers and then conducting a town hearing to present long-term financial plans. Schilling argued they owed the community an open dialogue about infrastructure needs, even if voters ultimately rejected a bond measure, and supported pursuing partnerships to achieve infrastructure goals at a more reasonable cost with lower taxation.

#### 4. **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION:** Dan Schilling motioned to adjourn, and Roger Bourke seconded.

**VOTE:** All in favor. The meeting was adjourned unanimously.

**RESULT: APPROVED**

Passed this 7<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025

  
Jen Clancy, Town Clerk