

Orford Budget Advisory Committee

Work Session – GoToMeeting Minutes

November 19, 2020

Attending Members: Ruth Hook, Chair; Lawrence Hibbard; Bob Palifka; William Paxton, Tim Surpernant; Tom Thomson; Ken Wiren
Public: Mark Burger, Tim Cole

Meeting called to order 5:40

Employee:

- Employee Raises, why 3% employee raise when the State raise is 1.5% and Federal is 1.6%.
 - Request a breakdown of who got a raise and the % per employee raise.
- Explanation of the HRA benefit, how does it compare to last years, is it 1st dollar, can it be transferred, held over, etc.
 - Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting
- 2021 Breakdown cost to the Town – Single, 2-person, Parent & Child, Family Plans
 - Health Ins
 - HRA/FSA Ins
 - Dental
 - Life
 - Retirement
- Request a breakdown of Highway wages per employee including benefits and retirement.
 - As highway crew consists of 3 people, please break out what each employee receives with wages, benefits, including retirement. Please include employee's hourly/salary wage.
 - Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting
- What are our Employee wages/salaries?

ENGINEER COST

- How much money have we spent on engineer fees in the past 3 years? Please list by vendor.

TAXES

- Selectboard Minutes 11/4/20: 2021 Review and adoption of the 2020 Tax Rate – Motion to authorize \$200,000 from the FUND BALANCE . Clarify what FUND BALANCE is.
- BAC concerns of 10/14/20 Delinquent Taxes, especially the Deferred Tax Bill that the rest of the town taxpayers will have to cover.
 - 97 Past Due Invoices equal a total of 58 properties unpaid
 - Due 2017 - \$7,775.58; 2018 - \$33,055.64; 2019 - \$55,628.36; 2020 1st issue - \$82,652.90 = \$179,120.48 past due.
 - 1 Deferred Invoice \$98,216.59 = \$277,335.07 Total Uncollected Taxes.
 - Deferred – No tax sale of taxes till taxes are 80% the value of the property.
 - This information does not reflect what will happen with the 2nd Tax Issue just sent out.

HIGHWAY

- Have the Selectboard looked into the merit of contracting out our highway department?
 - **Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting**
 - BAC Research, Selectboard Minutes **Dec. 10, 2019**: Highway Department – Has the Selectboard looked into contracting out the Highway Dept.? The Selectboard will work on this, but most likely won't be for the 2020 budget.
- Ads in the Journal Opinion
 - Full-time Position
 - Part-time Seasonal Position
 - With 2 ads, Full-time & Part-time Seasonal Position, are we increasing the Highway Dept. man power to 3 full-time and 1 part-time seasonal positions?
 - What is the total cost with a Full-time and Part-time Seasonal Position as advertised?
 - With only 3 plow trucks, what would the 4th crew member be doing?
- Equipment Repair/Replacement: Last year a **New** snowplow was bought for around \$6,400 because the old plow was deemed “junk”. The new plow is currently sitting in the sand pit. The “junk” plow has been refurbished and ready to be used. What is the plan of the unused “**New**” Snowplow?
 - **Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting**
 - Road Agent Straight mentioned there was a new snow plow but did not know why it was bought.
 - BAC research, Selectmen Minutes – 10/09/19 Truck #2 has new winter tires, **a new plow**
 - BAC – Concern that a clam shell bucket for the previous backhoe was discovered sitting in the sandpit, un-used, which we paid around \$6,000+/-, and recently was sold at auction for a few hundred dollars. Throwing away taxpayer's dollars is not what we want to repeat.
- It was stated that in the past, the Selectboard was asked to consider creating a Heavy Equipment, Roads, and Bridges Advisory Committee using the expertise of our town's many experienced people, for the purpose of looking at the plus & minus of contracting out the entire Town Road Maintenance? Have the Selectboard considered this?
 - **Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting**
- Culvert Steamer to thaw culverts -Does the Highway Dept. have one?
- What was the cost of crack sealing on Archertown Road from Indian Pond Road to Newcomb Hollow? What cracks were sealed due to the poor condition of this section, especially since the last paving of part of this section was paved sometime 2016/2017? Comment was made, what a waste of money. Request a breakdown, in the past 5 years, when any sections of roads were paved in Town along with the cost of paving those sections?
- Selectboard Minutes 10/28/20: 2021 Vehicle Replacement Schedule update – the Selectboard reviewed the replacement schedule at the same time they discussed the funding. The Selectboard would like to see the replacement schedule follow the schedule created in 2017.
 - R Hook, who attended this meeting, reported that John A recommended to change Highway Department's replacement schedule change from 10 years to 7 years for the big trucks, and 7 years to 5 years for the 1½ ton truck, members agreed.
 - **Clarify** changing replacement schedule.

WARRANT ARTICLES

- 11/23/20 SB & BAC Meeting, what was Lyme's interest rate for borrowing money for a new fire truck rather than using their CRF Vehicle Replacement? BAC research: Lyme's purchase of a New Fire Truck, \$518,000, was voted at Town Meeting, rather than drain the Capital Reserve Funds (CRF), they took out a 7-year loan with Mascoma Bank at 3% (at the time), and will be making payments each year from the CRF. Their theory was the CRF was making more money than the interest rate would cost.
- 2020 Town Report pg. 17 Warrant Article 13: to dispose of the current 1991 fire truck.
 - Clear Explanation from the Selectboard & Chief Straight: Exactly what will this truck be used for, what Department will be in control – Highway Dept. and/or Fire Dept., at what cost, where it will be stored if not sold.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH INFORMATION GATHERED BY THE BAC

- Cost to flush out Culverts, contracted out to Billamore
 - Spent 2014 - \$735; 2016 - \$505; 2017 - \$1120; 2019 - \$1120 = \$3,480, a total cost for 4 years (average of \$870 a year).
 - Chief Straight – use the truck to flush out culverts and wash off bridges.
 - Selectboard Minutes – 10/28/20: Sale of Fire Truck – Kidder, the body of the truck is in good condition, only issue with the tank was the failure of the PSI test for Fire department usage, but could be used for culvert and bridge cleanings for the Highway Department. Motion made by Adams, seconded by Steketee to keep the 1991 Fire Truck. Motion passed.
 - BAC Suggestion – OFD Training using current Fire Engines, either the Tanker – 1500 Gallon tank or Engine #3 – 1000 Gallon tank, to flush out culverts and wash bridge decks.
 - BAC researched Firetec website – offering for sale for a truck similar to Orford's Engine #1, asking price \$15,000. This truck should be sold while it still has value, rather than hold onto this truck like Orford did the 1965 Engine which was sold back in 2015 or 2016 for \$800+.
 - Proposed Warrant Article #7: \$219,000 10-wheeler Internal Dump Truck.
 - Clarify actual cost to operate this 10-wheeler vs 6-wheeler Dump truck.
 - Clear explanation of cost savings.
- BAC CONCLUSION EXPENSE 10-WHEELER vs 6-WHEELER
- Using Wages (used \$20/hourly) and total benefit package of Health Ins, HRS/FSA Ins, Life Ins, Dental Ins, Retirement, came up with an estimated \$41.00/hourly cost – Conclusion by the BAC – will NOT save any money, will actually cost the town more vs keeping with the current 6-wheeler Dump Truck Size and contracting out the hauling of Highway Dept. material.
 - 10-wheeler will have extra costs: additional chains, tires, possible rims, etc. What will the cost be?
 - remBAC – Request, would the 10-wheeler (if purchased), 6-wheeler, and 1½ ton trucks all fit in the garage with plows and wings on, or do you have to unhook and leave plows and wings outside to fit all trucks inside the Garage?

- Proposed Warrant Article #8: \$68,000 reconstruction of High Bridge Road bridge to a 3-ton limit deck, and to authorize with the withdrawal of \$46,000 from Road Improvement Capital Reserve fund, with the balance of \$22,000 that was approved by the voters at the March 16, 2017 annual meeting, Warrant Article #7.
 - Clarify what the weight limit will be after spending \$68,000 reconstruction cost, a 3-ton limit or E1?
 - Question – The majority of the SB recommend this article – Do all the Selectboard members recommend the additional cost?
 - Question – Have you looked into an alternate use such as a foot bridge, and what would the current estimated cost be?

REQUEST Cost to the Town of Orford for the following projects

- **Town Road #100 is scheduled to be completed this year**
- **Quinttown Road Dual Culverts is scheduled to be completed this year**
- **Sawyer Brook Headwall will be completed in 2021**
- **Mousley Brook culvert replacement is still open**
- **Jacob's Brook Bridge on Archertown Road – to be completed in 2021 (State and Town project)**
- **Archertown Hill Road reconstruction project – on hold**
 - What have we already spent in Engineer Fee's for the above project?
 - Selectboard Minutes 1/22/20: Archertown Road Rebuild Project – Adams reported the project will be postponed until at least the summer of 2022. The Selectboard and abutters have many concerns about the water drainage, and other issues around the design. Is this causing additional Engineer fees for Orford or is this the responsibility of the Engineer's?
- **High Bridge Road bridge- see Warrant Article #8 request above**
- **River Road Paving – Road Agent Straight is heading the long-term paving project**
 - Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting
 - 3/13/2018 Annual Town Report – Warrant Article #5: \$75,000 Pave River Road
- **High Bridge Road bridge- see Warrant Article #8 request above**
- **Sand Pit Reclamation – Tom Steketee is heading this project**
 - Per John A, under contract.
 - BAC request a follow up on the status of this project.
- **Garage upgrades per Primex report – on going project**
 - What is the cost of on-going project?
- **Garage Grader Cover – Fred Kidder is heading this project**
 - Not addressed at 11/16/20 Meeting
 - BAC research, Selectboard Minutes **12/23/19**: Building at Town Garage - an estimate was received to construct the lean-to at the Highway garage. \$8,800 will be encumbered for the 2019 Warrant Article #4 (3/12/19 Warrant Article #4 was passed for \$10,000 to be non-lapsing)
- **Garage Storage Addition – Fred Kidder is heading this project**
 - Fred K reported he was working on project, will have to down size the addition. (2019 Annual Town Report, pg. 15, Warrant Article #4 \$25,000 purpose of expanding the highway garage to be used to address safety issues identified in the Primex audit report}.
- **Beaver Dam Bog on Orfordville Road – Not on original list of projects**

- BAC research with Conservation Committee
 - Received 2 engineer bids, Horizon \$10,000 – DuBois & King \$16,500.
 - Picked Horizon Bid, actual cost was a little over \$10,000 for engineer design
 - Application submitted, 2 more hurdles left, expecting permit soon
 - Agreement between Conservation & SB, the town will pay for the repairs

Next meeting: November 23, 2020 SB/BAC Work Session – GoToMeeting

BAC meeting to follow the Week of 11/30: to schedule a meeting to discuss potential changes to address with the Selectboard on the proposed budget and warrant articles

Bob P motion to adjourn, Tom T 2nd.

Adjourned 6:45

Respectfully Submitted

Ruth Hook