

Orford Budget Advisory Committee
Work Session – GoToMeeting Minutes
January 26, 2021

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

Meeting called to order 5:40

CRF: Capital Reserve

SB: Selectboard

BAC: Budget Advisory Committee

Review 12/22/20 Draft Minutes

Tom T made a motion requesting to add to the minutes that **Esther Dobbin-Marsh, Town Administrator**, had helped him with the research on the San Reclamation, Tim S 2nd Motion Passed Bob P Motion to accept the request, Tim 2nd. Motion Passed.

Review Final Review 2021 Budget and Warrant Articles

Reviewed Selectboard's January 22, 2020 amended 2021 Proposed Warrant Articles.

Article 2: 4 Favor, 3 Opposed: \$1,158,454 General Municipal Operations

- **4 – Favor:** Bob P, Bill P, Tim S, Ken W
- **3 – Opposed:** Lawrence H, Ruth H, Tom T
- **Motion Passed** Majority Approved

Article 3:(Original) \$337,146 Payment to Capital Reserve Funds

- **BAC: 12/22/20 Original Article 3: Reduce all CRF accounts by 10%, 4 Favor, 2 Opposed \$337,146** Payment to Capital Reserve Funds
- **1/22/21, after Public Hearing, SB REVISED Article 3: 3 Favor, 4 Opposed \$311,146** Payment to Capital Reserve Funds (*Change:* reduced payment to Road Improvement from \$146,000 to \$120,000)
- **1/26/21 BAC Motion – Original Article 3: Reduce all CRF accounts by 10%, 4 Favor, 3 Opposed \$337,146** Payment to Capital Reserve Funds
- **SB Response: Article 3:** The Selectboard was asked to consider an across-the-board reduction to all categories of funds in the table by 10%. The Selectboard believes this is not a good idea since it does not respect the reasoning behind Capital Reserve Funds (CRF). Those funds each are setup with specific saving goals. Reducing the input this year means we would have to increase it in future years. The Selectboard did chose to reduce the Road Improvements CRF(1989) by \$26,000. This is because Article 4 (the amount being returned to us from FEMA payments in 2020) will be adding that amount to this capital reserve fund. We therefore do not have to raise that amount ourselves and still hold the input to the CRF amount the same. This reduction is comparable to an 8% across the board reduction.
- **BAC Discussion:** Majority did not agree with this decision. Article 4, to add back \$26,530 from FEMA reimbursement, was money originally used from the Road Improvements CRF. Accordingly, monies used on FEMA projects are to be returned from the CRF from where the monies came from. The Revised Article penalizes only the Road Improvement CRF, creating a shortage of \$26,000, which is more than the 10% per CRF payment reductions recommended.

- **Tom T, as Article 3 was revised after the Public Hearing, made a motion** to revote not the 1/22/21 SB's Revised Proposed Article 3 of **\$311,146**, but to revote the Original Proposed Article 3 of **\$337,146**, reducing all CRF payments by 10%. Ken 2nd
- **4 – Favor:** Tom T, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H
- **3 – Oppose:** Bob P, Bill P, Tim S
- **Motion Passed** to reinstate original \$337,146, reducing all CRF's by 10% .

Article 7: (Original) \$220,000 10-wheel Truck

- **BAC: 12/22/20 (Original) Article 7: Put off a Year, 5 Favor, 2 Opposed:** \$220,000 10-wheel Truck
- **1/22/21, after Public Hearing, SB REVISED Article 7:** \$193,000 6-wheel Truck
- **1/26/21 BAC Motion Revised Article 7: Put off a year, 5 Favor, 2 Opposed** \$193,000 6-wheel truck
- **SB Response:** Article 7: was changed from 10-wheeler to 6-wheeler and the potential cost reduced accordingly. This final version also corrects the cost estimate from the value I (John Adams, SB Chair) apparently misspoke at the meeting and added a non-lapsing clause so we may complete the sale of the used truck in the following year.
- **BAC Discussion:** Questioned what happened that at the Public hearing Fred K, SB, was not in favor of replacing the truck this year. (12/19/20 SB minutes: Fred Kidder, SB, “doesn’t feel this is the year to replace Truck #3. A lot of work and money has gone into truck #3, so he would like the Town to keep that truck for another year.”) Also mentioned that we currently only have a 2-man crew. There is not a clear picture of how much we have spent in repairs to each of the highway trucks as the Budget line item is a combination of Repairs & Maintenance. The detail report on Repairs/Maintenance shows items such as tires, chains, snow plow repairs, inspections and service, etc.
- **Tom T, as Article 7 was revised after the Public Hearing, made a motion** to revote the 1/22/21 SB's Revised Proposed Article 7 of **\$193,000** for a 6-wheel truck, to **put off for a year**, Ken 2nd
- **5 – Favor:** Lawrence H, Ruth H, Tim S, Tom T, Ken W
- **2 – Opposed:** Bob P, Bill P
- **Motion Passed** to Put off a Year

Original Article 8: Change Highbridge Road Bridge to a bike/walking bridge

- **BAC: 12/22/20 Article 8: LET LAPSE, 6 Favor, 1 Opposed:** Highbridge Rd. Bridge bike/walk bridge
- **SB Response:** Former Article 8 concerning an option for Highbridge Rd Bridge was **withdrawn**. This topic will be addressed in a Public Hearing later in 2021.

Original Article 8 Renumbered Article 9: \$1,200,000 Bridge over Jacob Brook on Archertown Road

- **BAC: 12/22/20 Article 8: 7 Favor:** \$1,200,000
- **1/26/21 SB revised \$240,000 from Road Improvement CRF, split into \$120,000 Road Improvement CRF and \$120,000 unassigned Fund Balance**
- **1/26/21 BAC motion Revised Article: 7 Favor**
- **SB Response:** Renumbered Article 8, the partially State funded Archertown Road bridge over Jacobs brook, now has half the Towns potential obligation being paid from the unassigned fund balance rather that from raising it by taxation. This is a reduction of \$120,000. The unassigned fund balance is projected to increase by at least this amount for 2020 so we are not putting that balance below the state DRA recommended minimums.

- **Tom T, as Article 8 (formerly 9) was revised after the Public Hearing**, made a motion to revote the 1/22/21 SB's Revised Proposed Article 8 of withdrawal of \$240,000 from Road Improvement CRF to \$120,000 and \$120,000 from the unassigned fund balance. Bob P 2nd
- **7 – Favor:** Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P, Bill P, Tim S, Tom T, Ken W

SB: The former articles 9-14 were renumbered 8-13.

BAC: Corrections to Articles 3, 7, & 9 and Article 8, need to be made before turning the in BAC Report for the Annual Town Report

Additional Discussion

- BAC members expressed their concerns that during the Public Hearing, Scott Reed, owner of Reed's Truck Service, who prepared a quote for a new 10-wheel dump truck, had been invited to join Orford's Public Hearing. This discussion should have been held during a SB & BAC work session. As Reed's has a vested interest as our current choice for service and potential vendor for purchasing a new truck, to speak about the potential problems that this truck could have, should have been discussed at a SB and BAC work session so we could have been prepared before the Public Hearing. We were told other towns who own this truck are replacing them as they had experienced emission problems, and even some who had tried to fix the problem, still ended up replacing the truck. The suggestion was implied that Orford should be getting rid of Truck 3 as fast as we can. The SB and Highway Department should be reprimanded for their action.
- Ken W, who joined the SB's 1/22/21 *GoToMeeting*, expressed that he was confused, because when John Adams, SB Chair, brought the meeting to order, he announced that the Road Agent was invited to speak, but during the meeting, Bob P was very involved. He stated he had followed the rules and did not speak. He questioned Bob P if he was representing the BAC, as John A, SB-Chair, had not mentioned him as an invited guest. Bob P said he had asked permission to speak and it was given. He also made it very clear that he was speaking for himself and not for anyone else.
- Tom T disagreed with the Selectboard's Policy that the public cannot speak at the Selectboard meetings unless they are on the SB's Agenda. He recommended that the SB should allow 10 – 15 minutes for Public Comments rather than silence the Public. A majority of the members were in favor – Ruth H, Bob P, Tom T, Ken W
- Ruth H questioned why our Highway Department plans to add Road Aprons to 4 of our town roads. This is a new project which seems to have been approved using encumbered funds for paving project(s) by the SB, when we still have a long list of infrastructure projects that still have not been completed. Ruth H then read from the 12/9/20 SB minutes, under Old Business pg. 2, g) "Long Term Paving Plan – Straight presented his 10-year paving plan to the Selectboard. The plan starts in 2021 with adding road aprons on Sawyer Brook, Baker, East Cemetery and Orfordville roads for a total cost of \$29,858. The Selectboard said the encumbered funds for paving projects could be used for this work, which will eliminate the need to request funding from the voters. The second project was to reclaim and repave ½ of River Road at a total estimated cost of \$79,637. Adams felt this was not

a good year to request funding for paving. Adams suggested Straight present a draft of the paving plan for residents to review and gather feedback on. Straight asked if paving becomes an annual expense, should it be part of the highway budget or always a warrant article? No decision was made on that question at this time.”

- Suggestion, next year, during the work sessions, add another column to the Warrant Article payments to the CRF accounts show the know balance.
- Suggestion, next year, to have available during the work session, a sheet showing a breakdown of when and how many tons of Gravel and Salt was purchase along with how many loads of Sand where hauled from Orford’s Sand Pit.

Tom T express his appreciation to Ruth H for taking on the BAC Chair and Secretary position this year. All BAC members agreed with him.

No Public Comments

Adjourned 6:45

Respectfully Submitted

Ruth Hook