TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Budget Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2015

Meeting called to Order at 5:35

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Tom Steketee, Anne Duncan Cooley

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Tom Tompson, Laurence Hibbard, Paul Carriero, Ruth Hook, Bob Palifka,

OTHERS PRESENT: Brenda Smith, Paul Messer, Joe Arcolio (Cemetery Commission),Terry Straight (Fire Chief), Faith Knapp, Eva Daniels, Edmond Cooley (Social Library), Emily Bryant (Energy Committee), Ann Green

John Adams chaired the meeting.

**Cemetery Paul Messer**

Mostly level funded.

Building estimated at about $17,000. Money would come out of existing account. Need warrant article to authorize removal. Would be over $18,000 to put electricity in, much more than thought. Will be looking into solar. Joe Arcolio said they are looking into solar vs generator and solar looks like maybe the better option. Orford Village District gave permission to run line down boundary line, but there may be a better option.

Need new building because old building isn’t big enough to fit all the mowers in. Current building is old and if you need equipment you need to move other equipment outside to get it. Also get water in the building. It’s just been outgrown. New building would be 24 x24 on slab. Because there is not power there now the employee has to go where there is power to do things such as sharpen blades. Have not determined if there might be additional costs for some soil work/fill. Shouldn’t be any cost for removing current building. Will go for higher pitch for snow and metal roof for less maintenance.

Transportation of the equipment has been done on a volunteer basis by Paul Messer and this needs some thought for the future.

Steketee said this is another reason it might makes sense to have a Town pickup for cemetery, fire and other purposes. Trying to schedule with the highway department doesn’t work. There is a trailer. Tom T suggested asking if someone in the Town wants to do this and be paid.

Adams suggested adding to maintenance line for transportation. Carriero suggested looking at contracting everything out and saving money on building and equipment. Messer said they had thought of it, and mowing a cemetery is entirely different. Years back they got prices and it was less expensive to do it themselves. Arcolio and Smith said outside contractors don’t care as much and tend to damage the gravesites. Steketee suggested Alan Dyke might be hired to transport the equipment.

Adams suggested adding a line item for transportation, and adding the historic cost per mile that has been added to the cost. Pencil in historic cost.

Cemetery commission is still looking for new members. Need to think about how to get new commissioners at Town Meeting.

**Energy Committee – Emily Bryant**

The Energy Committee requests $460. $100 for notices in the Friends newsletter, 2 boxholder mailings for workshops or movies, $130 for boxholders, and $100 for a movie. Totalling $460. Ann Green suggested the Committee contact the Niles Committee instead of having this be a budget request. Carriero suggested this come out of the conservation commission budget. Bryant said this hasn’t been discussed with the Conservation Commission. Steketee suggested putting it in as a placeholder while the Energy Committee contacts the Niles Fund. The Energy Committee will explore this, and a new line will be added as a placeholder for this amount.

**Social Library – Ted Cooley**

Asked to reduce request by $600. Eva Daniels, also a Trustee present. Social Library has been flat funded for 3 years, which has been a problem. Request of own is $ 22,400, up from $19,500. Increase in library supplies is due to increase in online catalog being done with the Free Library. The Friends help to defray some of these costs. Salary increase is a mix of performance and consideration of Town increases.

Tomson asked about fundraising decrease. Cooley said it’s based on actual from last year. Income from book sales are decreasing. Library is also taking $7500 from reserves. Library is taking money out of principal, which Palifka agreed was not a good long term strategy. Consensus to pencil in $22,400. Carriero thanked Cooley for breakdown of budget.

**Fire Department – Terry Straight**

112 calls year to date, last year had only 110. Getting more ems calls, which are at a higher pay rate. More members means higher dispatch costs.

Emergency medical services increase is for supplies, and replacing outdated replies.

Have had a lot of repairs this year, mostly for vehicles. Vehicles now on a routine maintenance schedule. Have spent $12,900. Asking $4400 for this year, doesn’t include truck repairs. Proposing a new line for truck repairs. Over budget costs were taken out of fund created at last meeting. Don’t anticipate a warrant article for those costs this year.

Utilities are added to rent this year. This is the first time paying utilities, so this number is an estimate.

Fuel is up a bit due to adding new truck, and trucks are being run more for training.

Compressor is shared with Fairlee, and is for maintenance of air bottles.

Equipment line is for new equipment. Carriero asked if this takes into account new people. Straight said new members would get gear from existing members. This line is for hoses etc. Right now there are 15 members, Straight said goal is 20.

Forest fire is increased to get most out of State matching grant, which might come next year to help with equipment or paying wages for a forest fire.

Radios – all radios are outdated. New radio for a truck is about $4,000, a portable is $3,000 – $3,500. Pagers need new batteries etc.

Warrant article approved this year helped update some pagers. Replacing radios is an ongoing thing. Still need pagers because there isn’t cell service everywhere.

Palifka asked how much is left of $65,000 warrant article. Straight said $46,273 has been spent. Straight saying he’s going to take some radios out of that, since it would go back to general fund if not spent.

Uniforms dropped, and at lower level to cover new members. Training and mileage due to increased training.

Vehicle maintenance is lower because a lot of maintenance has been done, and if it’s kept up there’s a lower chance of unanticipated expense. Includes pump testing.

Cooley asked about wage increase. Wage increase is due to additional time due to increased call. Stipends stay the same and hourly rate stays the same.

Adams asked if any reimbursement were available for mountain rescue. Straight said only if person is lost, not because of medical emergency.

Also requesting a warrant article of $23,000 for equipment replacement. Palifka recommended increasing to $23,690, a 2% increase. Also requesting $46,350 for Capital Reserve Fund same as last year.

Hook recommended increasing utilities number. Straight said the Town got a better rate for oil and propane. Terry said oil was more in the $2.40 range, so he thought utilities amount was ok. Hook thought the rent and utilities should be separate lines. Straight agreed. So, $8400 for rent and $6,000 for utilities should be listed separately.

Submitting a grant proposal to Mascoma Savings Bank for GPS for mountain rescue.

Jordan Sutherland arrived at the meeting after it began.

Tomson questioned amounts for training, mileage and radios. Tomson said there had been a big increase in Fire Department budget and that there are some areas to cut back. Budget has doubled and people are going to have some questions.

Palifka noted big portion of increase is due to wages and maintenance which have been underpaid for a number of years.

Members are paid for training time. Carriero noted increase in wages not due to just calls, but numbers of new members, training and maintenance training. Straight said mutual aid calls and mountain rescues also added to wages. Straight said new truck would also mean more training costs. Carriero noted increasing membership to 20 will increase wage costs. Straight said it would also depend on calls, and Town is getting older so there are more medical calls.

Straight said we need medical supplies because we are now certified as first responders. Knapp said ems equipment was so old it was falling apart. Orford often gets to a scene before Upper Valley ambulance. Need new equipment to enable Orford to do this.

Straight explained mutual aid systems. Towns in this mutual aid don’t send each other bills since they are all part of mutual aid. Knapp said other towns come to help us and bring equipment we don’t have. Towns try not to duplicate specialized equipment.

Adams asked why increase to 20, instead stay at 15. Straight said only 4-6 work in town, most work out of town. He never knows who will be in town to respond. Usually about half of members won’t be able to respond to a call. NFP requires at least 7 people to operate an engine officially at a scene. Mutual aid helps with this. May not have enough people show up to meet this standard and operate new truck.

Green asked if we have already spent enough to have a good baseline for new equipment, and questioned the need for $10,000 for new equipment.

Straight said $23,000 capital reserve is to periodically replace old equipment, and build up the money so it’s there when we need it. New air packs are $6,700 each. New equipment line is to replace old equipment such as hoses. New truck will also need some new equipment. Hanover Fire Department gave us some good hose, which saved some money. Some older hoses and nozzles will need replacement.

Hibbard suggested Straight write down a plan. Carriero and Palifka said we are doing this a little bit at a time because we can’t afford to do it all. Carriero said we are trying to catch up in an affordable way. Carriero suggested the budget will be increasing in the future with increased memberships, and doesn’t know how we avoid this increase in the future. Doesn’t know if there is any way around it. Steketee said we should develop a 3-5 year plan to anticipate what we will be looking at going forward.

Sutherland suggested getting equipment updated before trying to increase size of department. Adams asked how long it takes to get new members. Straight said it wouldn’t happen overnight. New members get second hand equipment until they are certified, and see how committed they are before they are certified. Certification to level 1 is over 300 hours. Takes a while to get people certified. Rate of increase would not be that fast, 1 or 2 a year. This eventually results in a ramped up budget, and maybe we can’t afford that, noted Adams and Carriero. Maybe look at where we will be ending up. Straight reminded people that some people can only make major calls, and you need 10 to really be where you need.

Adams suggested penciling in proposed Fire Department budget with further discussion anticipated.

**Wages and Benefits**

Discussion of schedule for determining proposed wage and benefit budget. Tomson asked about employee contribution amount, and 5% being a low contribution amount. Adams said the alternate plan was attractive. Tomson wanted to know what similar Towns are doing for increases. Adams said this would have to be determined at next Selectboard meeting.

Adjourned at 8:16

Respectfully Submitted

Anne Duncan Cooley