

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Minutes of the 2021 Budget Public Hearing

Rivendell Multi-Purpose Room, Orford, NH

January 24, 2022

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Fred Kidder II, Chase Kling

RECORDED BY: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Adams reviewed the Warrant Articles

WA #1 – Election of Officers

This year the Town was informed that several additional position should be included on the ballot – Free Library Trustee, Cemetery Commissioner and Trustee of the Trust Funds.

WA #2 – Operating Budget \$1,203,037

The 2022 proposed operating budget of \$1,203,037 is an increase of \$44,583 (3.8%) over the 2021 budget.

- **Highway Department** – concerns were address regarding the under spending in 2021, but asking for additional funds in 2022. Kidder reminded the attendees that in 2021 the annual meeting was later than normal, and departments held off with spending, unless it was needed, until after the annual meeting in May 2021. Kling said there is a great uncertainty around the costs of propane, diesel and utilities so the Selectboard took this into account when putting together the budget.
- The majority of the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) want to level fund the Highway budget, as there are several line items within that could be reduced:
 - Gravel – the 2021 budget was for \$25,000 but only \$16,551 was spent – so why is the 2022 budget for \$30,000. Several loads of gravel were delivered late in 2021, so that gravel will be available to use in 2022. They would like to reduce this line item back to \$25,000
 - Salt – the 2021 budget was for \$18,000 but only \$6,483 was spent – so why is the 2022 budget for \$18,000. Can this be reduced for the 2022 budget?

Kling - there are several road projects scheduled for 2022 – Grimes Hill road culvert replacement and road work, and if the paving warrant article passes, work will be needed on River road. In addition, there are culverts on Indian Pond Road and Orfordville road that need replacing. The Selectboard has great expectations that the work will get done in 2022, and feel this budget supports this.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article

WA #3 – Funding of Capital Reserve Accounts \$372,655

Capital Reserve accounts act like savings accounts so there are funds to cover large expenditures, such as vehicles, large equipment and repairs to roads & bridges.

- The majority of the BAC are not in favor of the funding amounts primarily due to the increase in the funding for the Police Cruiser. With the price difference between the lowest and highest priced vehicles being about \$12,000 the increase to the CRF funding is not needed.

Bachus said the actual price difference between the highest and lowest vehicle, after applying various incentives and discounts, is just over \$7,000 (highest-2022 Explorer SUV \$69,692 – lowest-2022 Police Interceptor \$62,640)

The Budget advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article

WA #4 – Charitable Appropriations \$16,878

These are various charitable organizations that request funding and provide services to residents of Orford. The Town receives annual appropriation requests for the Town's consideration.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 7-0 in favor of this article.

WA #5 - Move \$16,115 from the unassigned Fund Balance into the Road Improvement Capital Reserve Fund

FEMA funds received can't be paid into the Capital Reserve accounts until the voters approve the transaction, which is what this article is requesting.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 7-0 in favor of this article

WA #6 – Move \$68,101 of ARPA funds into the Broadband Capital Reserve Fund

After discussion with the NH DRA, Town Attorney and accounting firm, the Selectboard decided to remove this article. These funds will be tracked on the Balance Sheet under the line item labeled "Deferred Income-ARPA Funds" and this amount will be reduced as Broadband expenses are incurred.

WA #6 – Create a Revaluation Expendable Trust Fund \$7,000

Our previous assessor prebilled the town for the revaluation that occurs every 5-years. Our current assessor invoices the town as work is completed, and will charge a total fee for the 5-year revaluation (approximately \$35,000). The operating expense for assessing is approximately \$7,000 less than last year.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 7-0 in favor of this article.

WA #7 – Moving funds from the Unassigned Fund Balance into the Playground (2011) Trust account \$2,422

This is a housekeeping article to combine the checking account of donor funds into the Playground (2011) Trust account

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 7-0 in favor of this article.

WA #8 – Replace Police Vehicle \$68,500

This warrant article is to replace the current police vehicle with a new one

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article as the majority want the replacing vehicle to be the Inceptor SUV

The Budget advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article

WA #9 – Purchase Mobile Solar Radar Feedback trailer sign \$7,000

The Speed cart would be mobile and would provide data to the police chief regarding speeds in specific locations in Town

- Larry Duffy expressed his opposition to the warrant article as he found a less expensive speed sign for \$2,000 that will flash the speed of the oncoming car.
- There is also concern about the trailer and where it will be parked – if on a resident's property it may cause damage during mud season, and during the winter snow piles may make it difficult to park in general.

The Budget advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article

WA #10 – Highway Truck Purchase \$218,400

The Highway department is requesting to replace the 2013 International 6-wheel dump truck (Truck #2) with a new 10-wheel dump truck.

- The majority of the BAC feel the current truck does not need to be replaced. It had low maintenance expenses in 2021 and has low mileage. They feel it could be kept for a year or two more.

Kidder said recently there was a major repair that was needed, and thankfully the warranty was still in place that saved the Town thousands of dollars. At this time, the warranty on truck #2 has expired, so the next large repair bill will be on the Town. Also, this truck was part of a batch of trucks known to have problems, so it's best to trade now while it's still in working condition.

The Budget advisory Committee voted 2-5 against this article

WA #11 – Paving Project \$250,000

The paving project would be to reclaim and pave River Road, shim and overlay Brook Road, and shim and overlay Dublin Road from Route 10 to the gravel section

- Ruth Hook said she'd like the language "*or any other paving project approved by the Selectboard*" removed from the warrant article. She feels the money voted for should be applied to the project outline in the article and if the work isn't completed, the funds roll back into the unassigned fund balance vs. spending on other paving work. Example: the addition of the road aprons that used funds that were originally voted for another project.

The Budget advisory Committee voted 1-3 against this article, with 3 abstaining

WA #12 – Fire Engine Electrical System update \$15,000

This warrant article would replace and upgrade the electrical system of fire engine #3 which would extend the life of the truck by approximately 10 years.

- Hook asked why the work "*approximately*" is being used, as originally Chief Straight said it would extend the life by 10 years.

The Budget advisory Committee voted 3-4 against this article, as written

WA #13 – Create a permanent Orford Town Road Committee

The Selectboard felt the petitioned warrant article from 2021 was unclear as to the term of the committee, but agreed it was an important committee to have. This article will create a committee of town residents that have road and bridge work experience, as well as vehicle & heavy equipment experience.

- It was suggested to have the Selectboard appoint members to this committee and not elected. That will give the Selectboard a chance to make sure committee members have the experience needed.

The Budget advisory Committee voted 7-0 in favor of this article if it's amended to have the Selectboard appoint the members.

WA #14 – Have the Selectboard enter into negotiations to purchase land that will provide additional sand for the Town

This warrant article is to open discussion with the voters to see if they want the Selectboard to pursue the possibility of this purchase

- Ann Green asked if the Town had the ability to access sand on the garage side of Townshed Road?

The active pit is being used, but without the ability to expand, the resource is limited. It's possible to lower Townshed road or close access to the road in order to gain use of the sand around the current sand pit and on the other side of the road.

With no further discussion, Adams closed the Public Hearing at 8:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh