

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Jen Carter (vis phone), Chase Kling

BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Ruth Hook, Bob Palifka, Bill Paxton, Larry Duffy, Ken Wiren (via phone)

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

2023 Proposed Budget Discussion

The Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) had a list of questions discussed with the Selectboard

- Will the percentage of benefits paid by the Town employees be changed this year?
Currently the employees contribute 11% and it's been at that level for several years.
 - *The Selectboard has decided to keep the percentage at 11% for 2023*
- Has the Selectboard adopted personnel policies for the Fire Department?
 - *There are no personal policies specific to the Fire Department*
- Does the Selectboard know what other like sized town pay for Fire Department stipends?
 - *Not at this time, Dobbins-Marsh will reach out to other towns*
- Will there be additional reductions to the Fire Department budget as the budget has consistently been under spent for the past several years? Could it be level funded for 2023?
 - *The Selectboard reduced the budget by \$5,000 for salaries, which includes the increase requested by the department. With many unknown costs, it would be difficult to level fund this budget*
- Has there been a count of how many culverts need to be contracted out for 2023 – is this why contracted services has an increase of \$7,000?
 - *Contracted Services includes costs for sand sifting, culvert replacement for larger culverts, and help with plowing in winter months*
- Has the State entered into a contract for diesel pricing yet?
 - *Not yet – and it may not happen due to the current oil market*
- Can the salt budget be reduced as over the last few years we haven't spent as much as budgeted?
 - *This line item was reduced by \$5,000, and with the cost of salt per ton increasing for 2023 that reduction is all the board is comfortable with*
- Can additional reductions be made to the highway budget?
 - *At this time no – the highway department is moving in a good direction, and has plans for a lot of road work next year, and the current budget supports that.*
- Why is the Beach Monitor line item still at \$3,000 when we've spent so little over the last few years?

- *The goal is to find a monitor for the entire summer, and over the past two summers, the monitor has only been on duty during swim lessons.*
- Has the revised Community Field contract been signed, and what is the lease fee?
 - *The revised lease agreement has been submitted to Rivendell for their review. It reflects an annual lease fee of \$29,000. The superintendent of Rivendell will attend a Selectboard meeting in early January 2023 to discuss further.*
- The total budget is up 11.56 over the 2022 budget. Adams mentioned he attended a NH Municipal webinar on municipal financial forecasting with the municipal cost index at 9.1% Will there be further reductions to the budget to get closer to that percentage?
 - *Not unless something unknown changes*

2023 Proposed Warrant Articles

- Was it legal to expend \$247,319 from the Highway gravel budget line item, when only \$30,000 was budgeted?
 - *Yes, departments can overspend their budget with Selectboard approval, and when the operating budget is over spent, due to an emergency situation, the Selectboard can request approval under RSA 32:11 – a public hearing is scheduled for December 21st at 5:30*
- What does the rebuilding of the road consist of and what does that mean?
 - *14 roads were impassable during mud season. To restore the roads, Highway had put down an underlayment, a coarse material purchased from Martin's Quarry called 4" minus. To prevent tire being damaged, due to the rough material, gravel was added to these roads with road beds were raised up so they now have crowns.*

Highway Truck

- Why do we need to purchase a new 10' plow and radio for the new F-550?
 - Once we have a spec sheet from the dealer, these may not be needed. The Selectboard will discuss further with the Road Foreman, Steve Williams at their meeting on 12/14
- Is it possible to keep the cab and chassis and just replace the body? Why purchase a 1.5-ton vs a 1-ton truck (like the Town had several years ago)?
 - The Selectboard will ask Williams about this

Paving

- Why isn't the specific road listed in this warrant article?
 - *The Selectboard is looking at several options and would rather discuss the options verbally at the Town Meeting.*
- Why is this years' warrant article asking to be a 3-year non-lapsing vs 2 year as with last year?
 - *This will allow for flexibility to accommodate contractors' schedules*

Generator

- What is included in the cost of \$22,000 per the warrant article?
 - *A verbal estimate was received to include the generator, labor to install, 1-year service plan and a 500-gallon tank. A written estimate has been requested from the vendor. Once received, the Selectboard can see if there is room to reduce the amount requested.*
- What happens if the Warrant Article passes to amend the purchasing policy?

- *Amending the amount to \$25,000 as a minimum amount to go out to bid would still require the Town to obtain 3 estimates.*
- *Would it make more sense to purchase a 1000-gallon tank all equipment to connect to?*
 - *It would be preferable to keep the current tank where it is (for heating), and add a second tank near where the generator will be placed.*

Highway Equipment

- *What is the breakdown of cost for the equipment?*
 - *The grader cutting edge is just under \$8,000, the leaf blower is \$9,700*
- *Should the cutting edge be included in the Highway operating budget?*
 - *The Selectboard feel this is considered a new piece of equipment, and the operating budget is to “replace and/or Repair equipment*
- *What is the leaf blower? How would it operate to avoid blowing debris into oncoming traffic?*
 - *The leaf blower is mounted on the small truck and can be shut off, but it’s not known how the blower direction is changed. The Selectboard will verify with Williams on 12/14*

There was a brief discussion on the water at the highway garage – should the Town invest in a new well? The water needs to be tested to determine why it’s undrinkable – Dobbins-Marsh will look into having the water tested.

Adjourn

Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kling to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 2/0

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh