

Orford Budget Advisory Committee

Niles Room

Work Session - Minutes

November 12, 2020

BAC Members: Lawrence Hibbard, Ruth Hook, Bob Palifka, Tim Surpernant, Tom Thomson

BAC Member via Phone: Ken Wiren

Public: Larry Duffy

Meeting called to order 5:30

Elect Chairperson:

- Tim S nominated Bob P, Ruth H 2nd. Bob P said he had served as chair for 30 years and was not interested in the position. Tim S withdrew his nomination, Ruth H 2nd. Tim S nominated Ruth H, Lawrence H 2nd. 4 voted yes, 1 Bob P abstained, Ruth did not vote. Ruth H was elected Chair of the OBAC.

Budget and Warrant Articles:

- Members were given copies of questions Ruth H had emailed to Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Town Administrator, after she had reviewed the current proposed 2021 Budget Worksheet for further information.
- Discussion: With the current state of Covid-19 and the effect it has on citizens, delinquent taxes, lost jobs, etc., Departments Heads should be looking at their budgets and come in 10% lower than last budgets.
- Employee Raises, why 3% employee raise when the State raise is 1.5% and Federal is 1.6%.
- Why are Cemetery wages up from \$19,745 to \$22,380?
- Request a breakdown of Highway wages per employee including benefits and retirement.
- Explanation of the HRA benefit, how does it compare to last years, is it 1st dollar, can it be transferred, held over, etc.
- Reduce budget line items with Seminars as this year there are no Seminars.
- All Departments, Gasoline & Diesel: OPD Current Budget \$3,000, request \$2,500, SB revised \$3,000, currently used \$1,781.61; OFD Current Budget \$1,200, request & SB revised \$1,200, currently used \$749.18; HW Current Budget \$20,000, request & SB revised \$20,000, currently used \$13,223.08. Is the Selectboard expecting more travel and/or higher fuel cost?
- Has the Selectboard looked into the merit of contracting out our highway department?
- Vehicle Maintenance & Repairs: After a member reviewed Reed's invoices, the conclusion was improper maintenance to town trucks and the \$30,000 + spent to date was misleading. It was brought to our attention that a Cam had a problem because it had not been greased. A truck was taken in for brake repair and 2 weeks later the same truck went back for more brake work. Per Reed's, the bent rear end on Truck #2 was bent backwards which indicated that the truck had been pulled backwards. Conclusion, if you don't take proper care of the trucks, why buy new trucks?
- Equipment Repair/Replacement: Last year a New snowplow was bought for around \$8,000 because the old plow was deemed "junk" and 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?

- Culverts: 2020 Budget \$10,000, currently spent \$192.91. 2021 Requested \$6,000, SB revised \$5,000 What happened to the 20+ culverts that were to be replaced in 2020, how many did the road crew put in themselves vs. contracting out, and at what cost?
- It was stated, in the past, the Selectboard were 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?
- Parks & Recreation: It was noted that no salaries were used because of Covid-19. There is still the unknown with Covid-19 in the summer of 2021. A member wondered, as our Beach Monitor does a good job, if we still should have the beach monitor at the beach as there was a lot of activity at the beach this past summer even with Covid-19.
- Conservation Committee: Noted that E-Coli budget line has doubled, 2020 budget \$1,250, request and SB revised \$2,280. If we are doubling testing, to what end, why spend more money if we are not going to do anything about it?
- Warrant Article 3: Concern that the contribution to Capital Reserve Fund Road Improvements was the same as last year, \$146,000, and should be reviewed.
- Warrant Article 7: \$219,824 purchase a 10-wheeler International dump truck
 - Selectboard voted to change the replacement truck schedule, the big trucks from 10 to 7 years, and the small truck from 7 to 5 years. Why?
 - If we do not do proper maintenance, why purchase a new truck
 - 66,200 is low mileage for replacing a diesel truck
 - Last year, FD Chief stated when requesting a new Fire Truck, it was to be smaller than the 1997 Rescue Truck, and it would be easier to navigate our narrow town roads and easier to turn them around at the end. Why would this theory not apply to the purchase of a 10-wheeler vs. 6-wheeler?

Bob P motion to adjourn, Lawrence H 2nd. Motion passed.

Adjourned 6:44

Respectively Submitted

Ruth Hook