

**Orford Budget Advisory Committee
Work Session – GoToMeeting Minutes
December 22, 2020**

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

Public: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Town Adm., Ann Green

Called to order 5:30

Selectboard – SB

Budget Advisory Committee – BAC

Minutes:

120120 BAC minutes – Tom T motion to approve as amended, Bob P 2nd. Motion Passed

121120 BAC minutes – Bob P motion to approve, Tom T 2nd. Motion Passed

Reviewed Budget Revised Worksheet dated 11/30/20 & Updated Warrant Articles

Tax Collector

- 01-150-40-630 Avitar Software Original Dept. Request & SB Revised \$4130. Confirmed with Tax Collector Software fee went down from \$4130 to \$2116. Saving \$2,014.
- BAC members questioned where we stood on uncollected taxes. Ruth H had talked with the Tax Collector, payments are still coming in, the final figure will not be available till next week.

Engineer Fees - 01-4153.20-320 Engineering Services – Dept. request & SB Revised \$5,000

- **BAC** – questioned why no warrant article for Sand Pit Reclamation
- **SB** – will use Engineering Services for Sand Pit Reclamation.
- **RE: Sand Pit Reclamation** – Tom Steketee is heading this project
- **BAC** – requested a copy of the contract & correspondence from Mary Pinkham-Langer.
- **SB** – response, the sand pit reclamation project will be worked on in early 2021 and all aspects will be discussed then
- **BAC – Tom T researched with Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Town Administrator**, required documents that Mary Pinkham-Langer requested in March 2020 at the town office, and within 30 minutes, was able to retrieve documents for boundary lines and abutters, as well as the deed history of the sand pits that Mary P had requested from SB Member, Tom Steketee. Esther Dobbins-Marsh was able to access Grafton County Reg of Deeds via computer and supply Tom T with a copy of the survey map the next day. Since March, 2020, Tom Steketee has been claiming that he would have to go to the Grafton County Reg of Deeds to research these same documents that have been accessible at the Town Office.

Highway Dept.

01-4312.20-864 Road Salt Dept Request & SB Revised \$18,000.

**Lawrence H recommended, go back to 2019 \$15,000 – Members agreed – Reduce to \$15,000.*

01-4312.20-630 Vehicle Repair & Maintenance Dept. Request & SB Revised \$32,000.

**Lawrence H recommended, go back to 2019 \$ 15,000 – Members agreed – Reduce to \$15,000.*

01-4312.20-630 Vehicle Repair & Maintenance – Tires & Chains

WARRANT ARTICLES

SKIPPED – Warrant Article 2: \$1,158,454 for General Municipal Operation

- Membership agreed to **SKIP at this time.**

Reduce by 10% - PASSED – Warrant Article 3: \$337,146 Payment to Capital Reserve Funds.

- Tom T motion **to reduce each line be 10%**, Ken W 2nd.
- *Discussion:* Due to Covid-19, current economy, lost jobs, increased delinquent taxes, etc.
- **Voted 5 – Yes to reduce each line by 10%:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P – Changed yes vote to no
- **Voted 1 – No:** Bob P
- *Bill P – could not hear his response, internet connection glitch*

PASSED – Warrant Article 4: \$26,530 FEMA reimbursement of expenses paid by the Town.

- Ruth H motion, Bob P 2nd.
- *Discussion:* housekeeping article
- **Voted 6 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P
- *Bill P – could not hear his response, internet connection glitch*

PASSED – Warrant Article 5: \$2,000 Establish Broadband Development Capital Reserve Fund

- Ken W Motion, Bob P 2nd
- *Discussion:* Some areas in Orford without internet connection, others experience poor service.
- **Voted 7 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P, Bill P

PASSED – Warrant Article 6: \$15,607 Non-profit groups

- Bob P Motion, Tom T 2nd
- *Discussion:* none
- **Voted 7 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P, Bill P

PUT OFF A YEAR – PASSED – Warrant Article 7: \$220,000 purchase 10-wheel International Dump Truck

- Tom T Motion **to put off for a Year**, Ken W 2nd
- *Discussion:* A lot of information was sought and took a while to get. Questioned – why was only Reed’s asked for a proposal? Why just an *International truck*, there other trucks and dealers out there. Questioned – the truck being replaced, Truck #3, trade-in value is only \$6,000 - \$11,000 per Road Agent. Recommend that more information be gathered from other Dealers, Makes, 10-wheel vs. 6-wheel dump trucks.
- Tom T Motion to move the question, Ruth 2nd.
- **Voted 6 – Yes to put purchase off a year:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bill P
- **Abstained 1:** Bob P

LET LAPSE – PASSED – Warrant Article 8: amend Warrant Article #7 approved by the voters at the March 14, 2017 annual town meeting, to read “for the restoration of the High Bridge road bridge deck to 3-foot-wide walking/biking bridge.”

- Tom T Motion **to let \$22,000 – 2017 Warrant #7 lapse**, Ken W 2nd.
- *Discussion:* This is a very limited used bridge and has been closed for years. There are numerous bridges that need repairs/replacement that service the residents on all town roads with a potential cost at this time of \$2,000,000 plus dollars. If this bridge was to be improved as a walking/biking bridge, the road crew should be able to remove the old decking, replace with hemlock planks, add railings for less than \$22,000.

- **Voted 6 – Yes to let 2017 Warrant Article #7, \$22,000 to lapse:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bill P
- **Voted 1 – No:** Bob P

PASSED – Warrant Article 9: \$1,200,000 Bridge over Jacob Brook on Archertown Road

- Ken W Motion, Bob P 2nd
- *Discussion:* The town is paying out a lot of money for Engineering Fees. This job should have requested three (3) bids for the Engineer fees.
- Tom T motion to move the question, Ruth H 2nd.
- **Voted 7 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P, Bill P

PASSED – Warrant Article 10: Discontinue Bridge Replacement Capital Reserve Fund (2011)

PASSED – Warrant Article 11: Discontinue Community Field Expendable Trust Fund (1984)

PASSED - Warrant Article 12: Discontinue Community Field 1 (Hazen Morey) Expendable Trust Fund(1984)

- Bob P Motion Articles 10, 11, & 12, Ken W 2nd
- *Discussion:* Discontinue the above accounts were recommended by Chris Crowley, Trustee of the Trust Funds. (10/14/20 SB Minutes: Crowley provided a list to the Selectboard to review and discuss to create a warrant article to properly close out and/or rename trusts to match how they were voted for originally.)
- **Voted 7 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bob P, Bill P

TABLED AT THIS TIME – PASSED – Warrant Article 13: \$5,200 additional funding for to house the grader and other town equipment.

- Motion to combine Article 13 & 14 to table at this time.
- *Discussion:* Questioned why only \$8,800 was incumbered as the original Warrant Article was \$10,000.
- **SB 12/11/19 Minutes:** *Building at Town Garage* – now that it's been decided to only construct the original structure per the 2019 warrant article, (SB) Fred Kidder will have the contract for the structure sent to the Office for the Selectboard signatures. The cost will be encumbered for 2019.
- **BAC** – if a contract has been signed, it's up to the contractor to abide by his bid and the town is not responsible for any additional cost. Requesting a copy of the Contract from SB.

TABLED AT THIS TIME – PASSED – Warrant Article 14: \$40,000 purpose of expanding the highway garage to be used to address safety issues identified in the Primex audit report.

- Tom T motion **to table both Warrant Articles 13 & 14 for further research**, Ken W 2nd
- *Discussion:* Warrant Article #4 \$25,000, March 2020 annual town meeting will Lapse (SB) Fred Kidder is heading this project – Warrant Article #4 \$25,000, March 2020 annual town meeting will lapse December 31, 2020, for an addition to the garage to address Primex Audit List.
- **BAC – Researched SB minutes** – as of 10/29/20 Still working on revisions – **Warrant Article was passed to address safety issues identified in the Primex audit report.**
 - June 7, 2020 – SB proposal **included New Office, Existing Office – Break & Locker Room**
 - July 8, 2020 – SB approved proposal, put out to bid
 - July 19, 2020 – SB opened bids, \$35,000 – did not include cement work, & \$74,316.06.
 - Aug 11, 2020 – SB **revised** proposal, put out to bid. (SB Fred Kidder – The layout of the lights in the storage area provides the ability **to add an office** in the future if needed.)
 - Aug 26, 2020 - SB one (1) bid rejected, too high.
 - Oct 29, 2020 – SB Fred Kidder still working on revision.
- **BAC** wants *research on out sourcing the Highway Dept.* to see if it is cost effective to privatize

vs maintaining a town road crew. Members expressed that the SB comparison of Fairlee VT. to Orford was like comparing apples to pears. **BAC recommends** the SB form an Orford Town Road Commission for the purpose of assisting and suggesting to both the SB and Road Agent on issues that pertain to the town highway garage, roads, bridges, equipment, vehicles, and any other items that fall under the Orford Highway Dept. The major concern is, are we throwing good money after bad. Until further information can be provided, the majority of the members agreed to let **2020 Warrant Article #4 \$25,000 Lapse, and 2021 Warrant Article 13: \$5,200 additional funding and 2021 Warrant Article 14: \$40,000 be tabled at this time.**

- **Voted 6 – Yes:** Tom T, Tim S, Ken W, Lawrence H, Ruth H, Bill P
- **Voted 1 – No:** Bob P

OTHER DISCUSSIONS:

Idling Policy - questioned asked about vehicles idling at the Town Office

- **BAC Research:** orfordnh.us website – Town Policies – Vehicle/Equipment Use Policy , pg. 2
 - Unless previously approved by the Selectboard, max idling times will be as follows:
 - a) Above 0C (32 F) – no more than 5 consecutive minutes in any 60-minute period
 - b) At or between -23C (-10F) and 0C (32F) – No more than 15 consecutive minutes in any 60-minute period
 - c) Below -23C (-10F) – No Limit so long as no nuisance is created

Reed Truck Service, Inc. - Company History

- Questioned if Reed Truck Service, Inc. is a Truck Dealer.
- Reed Truck Services is a family-owned business which was established in 1959. They sell and service commercial trucks, service, and utility vehicles, plus offer 24-hour emergency towing, recovery, and roadside repair services. New Truck Dealer – Brands: Cummins, Freightliner, International, Peterbilt, Sterling Trucks; Automobile Repairing & Service-Equipment & Supplies; Towing; Truck Equipment & Parts; Truck Equipment, Parts & Accessories-Used.

BAC concerned that the public input was not allowed during 11/23/20 SB & BAC Meeting

- **March 27, 2019 Selectmen Minutes** – John Adams explained the new format the Selectboard will be following at their meetings. The Selectboard will limit public comments to allow the Selectboard members to have a business discussion on the agenda topics. If someone wants to address a specific issue, they will need to be added to the agenda for a future meeting.
- **Three types of Selectboard Meetings:** Esther Dobbin-Marsh, Town Adm.
 - **Regular Board meetings** - occasionally these meetings allow for comments from the public if the comments pertain to a specific topic and are to add needed information for the topic being discussed - generally questions are not taken at these meetings. Should a member of the public have a specific topic they'd like to bring before the board, they can contact me and I will add them to a future agenda - topics not allowed are those regarding personnel. If the public has specific concerns about town employees, they should contact a Selectboard member personally and have that discussion.
 - **Work Sessions** - these meetings are for the board to address a specific topic(s) before making a final decision on that item. The board may invite others to the meeting for discussion on the topic at hand (in the case of budget discussions, members of the Budget Advisory committee are invited), but uninvited members of the public are not allowed to ask questions or address the topic being discussed.
 - **Public Hearings** - these meetings are when members of the public are allowed to speak their opinions and ask questions of the Selectboard.

- **BAC:** All taxpayers should be concerned that the public cannot speak at a SB Meeting's.

Road Agent vs. Fire Chief

- **BAC** – Ruth H asked what the Town of Orford's liability is when our Road Crew responds to a Fire Call to assist another town during a snow storm.

Orford Vol. Fire Dept., Inc. special ordered an enclosed Trailer for the OFD

- **BAC** – Ruth H shared with the BAC members a letter sent to the Selectboard from the OVFD, Inc. *November 25, 2020 Selectmen Meeting Minutes – Correspondence: "A letter was received from the Orford Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. addressing the trailer purchased for the Orford Fire Department. Because the Selectboard elected to keep the 1991 fire truck, the Corporation voted to keep the (special ordered) trailer for them to use for their summer flea market fund raiser."*

Questions submitted to the SB:

- Q - How much an hour is Orford paying Paige to plow Orford's roads using his truck. Has he been contracted for the winter season? Please confirm the size truck he is using as members saw he was plowing with a one-ton truck.
- Q – Did Paige provide a certificate of insurance?
- Q - How many loads of gravel did Orford purchase? how many yards a trip? cost per yard? how many trips a day, how many days a year?
- Q - How many loads of sand does the highway use a year out of Orford's sand pit? how many yards a trip? - BAC has been asking for this information for a number of years. The BAC has recommended to the SB that all trucks have a log to record the days and loads. Without this information, at the time Orford runs out of sand, there will be no solid usage history in order to create a budget when we have to purchase sand.
- Q - In the event there is an incident on one of Orford's town roads, what is the liability to the town during a snow storm event when the road crew is out plowing and a member of the crew leaves to respond for an assist fire call to another town? - an Orford call?
- Q - Is there a signed contract between the SB and Brad McCormick, who's bid was accepted, \$8,800, for the Grader cover? Please forward agreement.
- Q -What is the schedule for OPD office hours vs. on the road duty?
- Q - Testing fire hoses and ladders budget line \$3,500 a year - Do they need to be tested yearly? if so, please forward the Requirement documentation. What is the cost of new hose?
- Q - How many air packs does the fire department have, how many times have they been used for entering a burning building this past year, how often are they tested, and please forward the Requirement documentation for replacement.
- Q - During the Dec 16-17 snow storm, what was the theory that the 6-wheel dump truck ran with only a front plow the day of the storm but did not have the wing on? and the after the storm, the same truck ran without the front plow and only with the wing on?

Tom T expressed his thanks to Ruth Hook, Chair of the BAC, for accepting the role of Chairman and at the same time doing the minutes and much of the research for the BAC. All BAC members agreed and thanked Ruth for all her help. Tom T asked that this appears in the minutes.

Tom motion to adjourn, Ken W 2nd

Adjourned 8 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Ruth Hook