

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Minutes from the Budget Public Hearing

January 23, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Fred Kidder II, Tom Steketee

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh,

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm

Adams reviewed the Warrant Articles, including the major changes in the operating budget.

WA #2 – Operating Budget

- Executive increase of \$4,000 is for potential professional services for the Trust Fund Trustees as Mark Blanchard will be stepping down as the Trustee, and outside services may be required to maintain the Capital Reserve accounts
- Election & Registration increased by \$2,000 due to additional elections that will occur in 2020
- Legal increased by \$3,000 based on funds spent in 2019
- Cemetery increased by \$2,000 to increase the mowing season
- Insurance increased by \$2,000 as presented by Primex
- Police budget decreased by \$10,000, some of which is due to dispatch being moved to Emergency Services
- Emergency Services – Dispatch was added for \$22,000
- Fire Department decreased by \$6,000, some of which is due to dispatch being moved to Emergency Services
- Highway – increased by \$120,000 as there are many projects that need to be completed in 2020 to the roads & bridges
- Landfill – decreased by \$4,900 as the review and reporting for this are now done bi-annually
- Parks & Playgrounds increased \$14,000 as the Town will now maintain the Community Field and share the cost with Rivendell

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #3 – Funding of the Capitol Reserve Accounts \$276,700

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.

There were many comments and suggestions on increasing the amount being added to the Roads & Bridges CRF and reducing much of the funding into the other CRF. The Selectboard commented that by reducing funding into other accounts, for example, the Town may have a shortage of funds when the next highway truck needs replacing.

In the past the Town has voted funds for paving projects – where are those funds? Adams said the funds are reflected as encumbered funds and money is in the fund balance for these voted projects. Have FEMA projects been put out to bid for engineering services. Adams said DuBois & King is certified with the State of NH and are used for these situations. Engineering designs are approved by NH DES even when FEMA is involved. For smaller projects, estimates are requested from engineering firms. Can the 2020 projects be completed by the Highway department? Adams reported that some may, but most will be contracted out. This will also allow the highway department to concentrate on the many culverts that need replacing in 2020. Should the Town look to privatize the highway department? Kidder said he looked into this, and it would be fairly expensive, assuming the contractor could find qualified help to work at the Town.
The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #4 – Highway Garage Building Addition \$25,000

This article is a result of the Town's insurance company completing an inspection and determining several safety issues. This addition would be on the office side of the garage, and allow an additional egress and allow better access to the eye wash station, electrical panel and storage. The size will be the width of the current office and the length of the current garage.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #5 – Purchase Radar signs \$5,800

The Police Chief borrowed the radar sign from Piermont when their police chief was on vacation. Ordering two radar signs will save approximately \$1,000 on the total cost. Chief Bachus has contacted both Federal and State governments to inquire about grants to help offset the costs – currently there are none available.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 3-3 on this article

WA #6 – Move \$10,000 from the unassigned Fund Balance into the Highway Vehicle CRF

When the new Highway F550 truck was purchased, the old 1-ton truck was sold separately. The funds received can't be paid into a Capital Reserve fund until the voters approve the transaction, which is what this article does.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #7 – Household Hazardous Collection \$1,500

This allows residents of Orford to take their hazardous waste to various locations within NH. In 2020, Piermont will be one of those locations. What can be taken to these locations? There will be a mailer sent out to remind residents

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #8 – Charitable Appropriations \$15,482

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

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article.

WA #9 – Amend Disabled Veterans Tax Credit to \$4,000

This article would increase the tax credit allowed for Service-Connected Total Disability from the current amount of \$2,000 to \$4,000

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #10 – Create Police Department CRF \$7,000

The Police Department will have a large cost increase from Hanover Dispatch for a new records management software package in about 2 years. While the current cost is unknown, it is estimated to be \$22,000 or more to the Town of Orford. Will there be a cap on this CRF? Chief Bachus said he would be comfortable with a \$5,000 cap once the software had been paid for.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #11 – Fire Department Rescue Truck Purchase \$200,000

The Fire department requested replacing the current rescue truck with a 2020 model for several reasons. The truck to be purchased is smaller and can be operated by more people, and the current rescue truck is no longer used as originally designed. The new truck would allow for more flexibility for the fire department, and makes it easier to get thru muddy and snowy roads. Chief Straight was told the current rescue truck could sell between \$60,000 and \$80,000 and selling now would get the best return. The Selectboard said to replace apples to apples would not have been supported, but could support this smaller version. The current replacement schedule for the rescue truck is slated for 2029 – how does purchasing the new truck early impact the schedule. Bob Palifka (budget advisory member) said when the Fire Engine needs to be replaced in 2026, the Town would be approximately \$90,000 short of funding. Many felt this was an unnecessary purchase, and more focus needs to be on the roads & bridges in town, not a new rescue truck.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 3-3 on this article

WA #12 – Fire Department UTV and Enclosed Trailer Purchase \$40,000

Chief Straight said this purchase would allow the fire department to access remote areas and other locations when roads are in bad shape. Larry Taylor, president of the Orford Volunteer Fire Association, Inc. said they could possibly fund this purchase – not this year, but in the near future. Taylor also mentioned that Vershire has a similar UTV that hasn't been used in the last two years. What would the replacement cycle be – Straight said he thought between 20-30 years

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 4 against, 2 in favor of this article

WA #13 – Disposal of the 1991 Fire Engine

The current 1991 fire truck isn't certified and isn't used much, but is maintained. Chief Straight thought it could be sold between \$1,000 and \$2,000.

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

WA #14 - Move \$25,000 from the unassigned Fund Balance into the Roads & Bridges CRF

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

The Budget Advisory Committee voted 6-0 in favor of this article

Tom Thomson, Chair of the Budget Advisory Committee expressed his thanks to the members of the committee, Jordon Sutherlin and Ken Wiren who attended many meetings and provided valuable input, Ruth Hook for taking minutes at the BAC meetings and the Selectboard and Selectboard administrative assistant.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh