

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 28, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jen Carter Chase Kling

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Bob Palifka, Laurence Duffy. Jason Bachus

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

- *Motion made by Kling, seconded by Carter to accept the minutes of the 12/12/2022 Budget Work Session Motion Passed 2/0*
- *Motion made by Kling, seconded by Carter to accept the minutes of 12/14/2022 (as amended) Motion Passed 2/0*
- *Motion made by Kling, seconded by Carter to accept the minutes of the 12/21/2022 Public Hearing Motion Passed 2/0*
- *Motion made by Carter, seconded by Kling to accept the minutes of the 12/21/2022 Budget Work Session (as amended) Motion Passed 2/0*

Reports

- Assessor**-Todd Haywood left his report for the Selectboard to review. He completed the annual DRA equalization ratio study. The preliminary weighted mean of 62.6% is the statistic used to determine the towns apportionment of the state, county and school taxes. The median ratio of 65.5% is the statistic used for current use and abatement calculations. The price related differential of 1.05 tells the Town where the assessment basis lies. In Orford's case, it tells him that the higher valued property is assessed at a lower percentage than the lower valued properties. Haywood feels these statistics are somewhat less than ideal, however, except for the median ration all other ratios fall within the ASB standard when the 10% confidence interval is applied. Haywood feels it may be necessary to move up the re-assessment year from 2025 to 2024. He will continue to monitor subsequent sales and make that determination in the fall of 2023. He reminded the board that these are preliminary results subject to change. The Department of Revenue will issue the final ratio study in the first half of 2023.
- Police Department** – Chief Bachus presented his November activity report to the Selectboard. There was a total of 60 calls for service (NHSP had 10) – the department calls included 10 animal complaints, 3 motor vehicle crashes, 3 suspicious persons, 3 assist to DCYF or APS and various non-criminal calls. There were 16 motor vehicle enforcement calls. Chief Bachus attended and completed the annual first aid/CRP/AED training, as well as a Glock armorer course which allows him to maintain and service his duty pistol.
The new police vehicle has been picked up – Bachus will be working on switching the gear and other items from the old cruiser to the new one.
- Committee Meeting recap from Selectboard**

- Carter attended the Planning Board meeting – the board will have a table at the Annual Meeting to provide information on what the Planning Board does in the hopes of finding residents to serve on the board. The Planning Board discussed and agreed to handle all lot line adjustments (minor or major) in the same manner.

Old Business

A. Public Hearing schedule – the date for the Public Hearing as requested by Susan Hild is scheduled for January 18, 2023 at 10:00 at the Selectboard Office, followed by a site visit to Upper Baker Pond road.

B. Highway Department Updates

- The Archertown Road culvert by the Bailey's was resolved during the rain storm. Due to the excessive water run-off, the property owner removed the culvert and replaced it without the solid pipe insert
- The Highway garage storage addition exterior is complete, and the floor was poured. Interior work of the addition will be started after the first of the year.
- When power was lost, the highway crew had challenges opening the large overhead garage doors. The generator on site struggled to open them due to their weight, and there is no way to manually open the doors. The Town will need to look into some additional work to these doors.
- Highway temporary help – the current Town policy states employees of the Highway Department must hold a CDL license and a medical card. In order to find temporary help to operate the F-550 while the department is short staffed, the Selectboard agreed to temporarily amend the requirement of a CDL license when operating the F-550. *Motion made by Carter, seconded by King to temporarily remove the CDL/Medical Care requirement to operate the F-550 for the 2022-2023 winter season. Motion Passed 2/0* The hourly rate for emergency temporary help will be between \$25-\$30 per hour
- During the recent snow storm several Highway trucks had windshield damage due to tree limbs falling onto them. Insurance claims will be submitted for the repairs.
- While plowing, the road crew encountered a few issues the Selectboard will address:
 1. A white car belonging to Paul Griffin was parked in the Right of Way on Upper Baker Pond road, and it needs to be removed
 2. The large rock on Marjorie Green's property on Mud Turtle Pond road still needs to be removed, as it is too close to the road.

C. Resignations from Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) members – four members of the Budget Advisory Committee resigned effective December 20, 2022. Their letters of resignation were read into the minutes, and are attached at the end of these minutes.

Motion made by Kling, seconded by Carter to accept the resignations of Ruth Hook, Tom Thomson, Lawrence Hibbard and Kenneth Wiren as members of the Budget Advisory Committee, as submitted. Motion Passed 2/0

Carter felt it was great to invite the BAC members to all the budget meetings, which allowed them to hear all that was discussed, and generate questions to follow up on. The process used was a good start, but needs some refinement. The Selectboard does listen to comments from the Budget Advisory Committee, but ultimately it is the responsibility of the Selectboard to create a fiscally responsible budget and warrant

articles, based on the needs of the Town, to present to the voters at the Annual Meeting. Before the next budget season begins, it may be helpful for the Selectboard and BAC members to meet and discuss the role of the BAC members.

- D. Other** - the NH DRA approved the request to use \$200,396 from the unassigned fund balance to cover the overexpenditure of the 2022 operating budget.

New Business

A. Review of received “Notice of Intent to Cut Wood”

Property Owner: Tom & Shelia Thomson, Map & Lot #08-89-43, Forester: Tom Thomson. Kling said it appears the logging operation began prior to the intent being approved. Until the signed intent is received by the property owner, no cutting is allowed. A letter will be sent to the Thomson’s to address this concern, along with the signed Intent to Cut.

B. Complaints – none received

C. Contracts – none received

D. Correspondence – the City of Lebanon sent a letter with 2023 new pricing for punch cards at the landfill – effective 1/1/2023 the card will increase from \$15 to \$20 per card.

E. Public Hearing date for the 2023 Budget and Warrant Articles – The Public Hearing for the 2023 Budget and Warrant Articles will be held on Tuesday, January 24, 2023 at 7:00 pm – location to be determined.

F. Other

- Letters will be sent to the following residents regarding seasonal structures that appear to be year-round structures regarding the possibility of needing septic systems installed, and for them to address their plans moving forward:
 1. Sally Tomlinson – a yurt on Town Road #85 which appears to be a year-round structure
 2. Tiffany Vance – the temporary structure on the Class VI section of Prettyman road appears to be a year-round structure
- A letter will also be sent to Tiffany Vance regarding the lack of maintenance of the Class VI section of Prettyman Road
- Palifka questioned the warrant article requesting additional funds for the highway truck surcharge – should this read “additional charges”? He also questioned the amount being requested. The Selectboard will revisit at the next meeting on January 11, 2023

Manifests, Payroll and Accounts Payable folders

The manifest, payroll and accounts payable folders were reviewed and signed where necessary

Adjourn

Motion made by Kling, seconded by Carter adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Letters of Resignation from the Budget Advisory Committee

Ruth Hook
17 Hammond Lane
Orford, NH 03777

RECEIVED
DEC 20 2022
TOWN OF ORFORD

Town of Orford Selectboard
2529 Route 25A
Orford NH 03777

December 20, 2022

To the Members of Orford's Selectboard

I am writing to inform you of my resignation from my position as Chairperson, Secretary, and Member of Orford Budget Advisory Committee.

As a member of this committee, our job is to review and make recommendations to the Selectboard on the Proposed Budget and Warrant Articles. The Selectboard has shown a total lack of respect for our committee. We have spent time asking questions from the Selectboard which we may not get an answer to, we research the Selectboard's minutes and the Annual Town Reports before we make our best-informed decisions to help give guidance to the Selectboard. Many times our suggestions are answered with "we will take that under advisement". I would like to point out that the Budget Advisory Committee's Report for this past year, 2021's Annual Town Report, was split up. The first page of our report was printed on page 55 and the second page was printed on page 19. This report should have been printed side by side as in the past to make it easier for the taxpayers to follow and understand, but it was split up by the Selectboard for no reason and no reason was given before it was printed in the Town's Annual Report.

After much consideration, having served on this Committee since 2012, I've decided to resign effective today, December 20, 2022.

Sincerely,



Ruth Hook

Chairperson of Budget Advisory Committee

Lawrence Hibbard
88 Archertown Road
Orford, NH 03777

DEC 20 2022
TOWN OF ORFORD

December 19, 2022

Orford Selectboard
2529 Route 25A
Orford, NH 03777

Dear Selectboard Members,

This is to inform you that I am resigning from the Orford Budget Advisory Committee as of today.

I have been disappointed in the way you have ignored nearly every suggestion we have put forth to you in the past number of years. The members of the Orford Budget Advisory Committee have worked hard to research the various budget issues and provided you with our suggestions to help get the best services at the least cost for our Taxpayers and after all the work we did last year you did not accept any of our suggestions.

I, along with many others on the Budget Committee and folks in Town are disappointed with your over spending the Gravel Budget by \$215,00 this past summer and now increasing the 2023 proposed budget by 11.5%, Orford Taxpayers are struggling now in paying their property taxes and this will just increase next years tax bill.

Thank you,


Lawrence Hibbard

RECEIVED

DEC 20 2022

TOWN OF ORFORD

Thomas Thomson
173 Strawberry Hill Road
Orford, NH 03777

Orford Selectboard
2529 Gov. Meldrim Thomson Scenic Highway
Orford, NH 03777

December 19, 2022

Dear Selectboard Members,

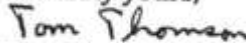
This letter is to inform you that as of today, I will be resigning from the Orford Budget Advisory Committee, which I have served on for the past 12 years.

Simply, I have lost confidence in the working relationship between the Selectboard and the Budget Advisory Committee. One example is; we just recently learned that the approved 2022 Road Dept. Gravel Budget of \$30,000 was over spent by the Selectboard in the amount of \$215,685 a huge increase in the Gravel Budget alone.

But at our meeting on Nov. 15, 2022 with the Selectboard and Budget Advisory Committee, I asked the Selectboard who it was who authorized spending \$215,685 over the gravel budget and why? Was it the past Road Agent or the Selectboard who was responsible? Only after asking my question three times, the Chair of the Selectboard said it was the decision of the Selectboard but with no explanation as to why they overspent \$215,685 and where the money came from to cover this amount. At the very least the Selectboard first should have had a Public Hearing to go over this with our Taxpayers, or more appropriate, a special Town Meeting and let the voters decide before over spending the gravel budget by \$215,685.

Other budget increase concerns are: why is the budget of the Orford Planning Board doubling from \$7010, to \$14,050 and the Selectboard's answer was we should ask the Chair of the Planning Board. You also indicated you were planning to increase wages for Orford employees by 8.7% this coming year. If that were to pass, the total wage increase in the past 2 years would total 14.7% (as last year it was 6%). There doesn't seem to be any concern about the increase in Town spending, while Orford Taxpayers are suffering with inflation, which is at a 40 year high.

All of us who are elected or appointed to serve the Taxpayers of Orford need to go out of our way to be transparent to our Taxpayers but unfortunately that's not always happening.

Sincerely yours,

Tom Thomson

Kenneth Wiren
37 Dame Hill Rd.
Orford, NH 03777

RECEIVED

DEC 20 2022

TOWN OF ORFORD

December 15, 2022

Town of Orford Selectboard
2529 Route 25A
Orford, NH 03777

To the members of the Orford Selectboard,

The members of the Budget Advisory Committee put a great deal of time and effort into reviewing and making suggestions / recommendations for the upcoming budgets. A few years ago because of my administrative experience, I requested to be a part of the committee and was subsequently appointed to it as a member.

During my time on the committee, numerous members, including myself, have made cost cutting / cost savings recommendations, but the Selectboard almost always leaves their budget unchanged. A common response seems to be, "We'll take it under advisement" or "We will let the public decide". The members of the Selectboard were elected to represent the people of Orford and to make fiscally responsible decisions that best benefit the town. In my opinion, because of the factual details and mathematical calculations, letting the voters decide on so many different issues, may not always be the best approach. Some may feel that it is the Selectboard's way of not having to make decisions.

At many of the meetings that I have attended, I and other members of the committee have made suggestions and / or recommendations throughout the budget process. I certainly do not expect the Selectboard to accept and act on all of our suggestions, but I have begun to feel that the Selectboard is just going through the motions by including us at their meetings.

At the December 12, 2022 meeting with the Selectboard, I questioned the wording on some of the warrant articles and shared my experience with how purchase requests were written in New Jersey where I used to live. I was surprised by Selectboard member Chase Kling's response that I should go back to New Jersey.

I no longer have a desire or interest in continuing as a member of the Budget Advisory Committee, and I am resigning from that position effective immediately.

Respectfully submitted,



Kenneth Wiren
Budget Advisory Committee member