

# TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 20, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Kevin Follensbee, Chase Kling

BUDGET ADVISORY COMM MEMBERS: Bob Paliifka, Bill Paxton, Laurence Duffy

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

## Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

## 2024 Proposed Budget Review

The Selectboard and Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) members reviewed the worksheet.

- **Salary Increases** – why the salaries are higher than the 3.2% COLA increase.
  - The hourly rate is increased by 3.2%, but because the increase doesn't happen until after the annual meeting, the first 10 weeks reflect the increase of 8.7% from 2023
- **NH Retirement** – there was a slight decrease in the percentage the town is responsible for, so the line items under Town Administration, Police and Highway decreased.
- **Tax Collector Fees** – why the increase?
  - The tax collector is paid 0.85% of the taxes collected. With the tax increase, more taxes will be collected in 2024, thus a higher fee
- **IT Equipment** – why so much higher than the budget for 2023
  - This line item includes computer equipment for all departments, toner for printers, etc. The Planning Board is requesting a laptop plus software. Two replacement monitors will be needed for the Treasurer and Admin Asst. offices. Once actual costs are received from our IT vendor, this line item of \$7500 may decrease
- **Streetlights** – Currently the budget is for \$5,000 based on the change over to LED lights. Eversource needs to verify the reduced cost for these lights, so this budget amount will change.
- **Emergency Services** – why the increase?
  - Ambulance fees are set by the UV Ambulance, and Dispatch services are set by Hanover Dispatch – these are the organizations that Orford contracts with
- **Drug Testing** – does the Town do random drug testing for Town employees?
  - Yes, we contract with a service that provides drug testing for Highway employees prior to employment, after an accident and randomly during the year. Drug testing is connected to drivers with CDL licenses
  - Fire Department employees are not required to hold CDL licenses, so drug testing is not done for the department.

After changes to the NH Retirement funding is changes, the total operating budget for 2024 is \$1,415,398, a 5.04% increase over the 2023 budget

## 2024 Proposed Warrant articles

The Selectboard and BAC reviewed the financial Warrant Articles

- **Funding the Capital Reserve Accounts** - The funding was increased by 5% except for the following:
  - Tree Care & Replacement EFT remained the same at \$10,000
  - Revaluation CRF remained the same at \$7,000
  - Town Properties CRF remained the same at \$29,000
  - Highway Trucks CRF – all 3 new trucks ordered (6-Wheel Western Star, 10-Wheel Western Star and the Ford F-550) will be delivered to the Town in 2023 and early 2024. Unfortunately, the assumption was the Ford F-550 would not arrive until late 2024/early 2025. This creates a shortage of funding from the CRF. In addition, the Selectboard feel the 2013 International and the 2020 Ford F-550 should be sold (not traded) – when this occurs, the only way to transfer the funds received for the sale is thru a vote to move those funds into the CRF, which also adds to the shortage of funds. The Selectboard is looking into several options to allow payment for the F-550
    - Add \$134,000 to the warrant article for the Highway Truck CRF funding
    - Delay adding the plow package to the 2023 F-550 cab & Chassis
    - Look into a payment plan to pay for the plow package
    - Look into short term loan to pay for the plow package
  - Dobbins-Marsh will contact Viking-Cives to discuss the payment plan option, and the ability to hold off on adding the plow package to the truck.
  - If we add \$134,000 to the Highway Truck CRF account, the total Warrant Article will be \$494,223
  - It was agreed by the Selectboard, if we add \$134,000 in 2024 to the Highway Truck CRF, in 2025 the funding will drop to \$14,000
- **Charitable Appropriations** – currently the total appropriations are at \$17,311 – no concerns were addressed on this warrant article
- **FEMA and Special State Block Grant funding**
  - The Town received \$32,569 from FEMA, and \$18,044 from the State as a special Block Grant amount. Both amounts will be added to a warrant article to fund the Road Improvement CRF
- **Archertown Road Phase II** – the engineer is working on an estimate to complete this phase of reconstruction on the Archertown Road flat area. The primary work will be ditching, possible culvert replacements, underdrains and paving.
- **Mousley Brook Culvert or Bridge** – the engineer is working on an estimate to remove the culvert and replace with a bridge. The estimate will also include engineer fees and wetland permit fees.
- **Indian Pond Culvert replacement** – the engineer is working on the estimate for engineer services, wetland permits, and the cost to remove and replace the culvert.
- **Upper Baker Pond area culverts** – the engineer is working on the estimate for engineer services, wetland permits, and the cost to remove and replace the culverts in the Upper Baker Pond area, including culverts on the Prettyman Road and Piermont Heights road.

- **Highway Hand Held Radios** – the Selectboard is looking to purchase hand held radio systems in the amount of \$5,000 for the highway department crew. This would give crew members access to radios when they are outside their trucks.
- **Sand Pit Evaluation** – the engineer will provide an estimate to complete core borings to determine the amount of sand available in the Town sand pit.

#### **Other**

- Agreement and Release permit for Construction on a Class VI road – a buyer wanted to know who is responsible for completing and submitting this permit to the Selectboard for review. It was agreed the person that wants to construct a house on a lot that abuts the Class VI road is the one that needs to complete the permit agreement.
- Eversource wants to use the Niles Room to hold a seminar. The Selectboard agreed to this request. Follensbee will contact the office with the date and time of the event.
- Highway Updates – paving on the Archertown Road Phase I has begun – R&D has paved from the Dublin Road ext. to approximately Michael Gilberts driveway. Paving will be completed tomorrow (11/21/23) and along with the shoulders. The guardrails are scheduled to be installed next Monday (11/27/23).

#### **Adjourn**

*Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh