

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

October 21, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Chase Kling, Larry Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Road Agent Ted Nutter

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm

Review Highway Department Budget

The Selectboard and Road Agent reviewed the draft budget. Changes made include:

- Equipment Rental decreased by \$5,000 (Nutter will obtain an estimate to rent a mower for roadside mowing and these line items will be adjusted based on data he receives)
- Contracted Services increased to \$20,000 as the department will be hiring contracted help for grading again in 2025, and possible contracting for excavation.
- Safety Supplies and Personal Protection expenses will be combined for a total of \$1,500 (vs \$4,000 from 2024) a decrease of \$2,500
- Propane reduced by \$1,000
- Building Maintenance reduced by \$1,000
- Vehicle Maintenance decreased by \$5,000
- Diesel increased by \$5,000 (new trucks and the backhoe now require a fuel additive)
- Road Treatment decreased by \$2,500
- Asphalt Patch reduced by \$1,500
- Road Salt decreased by \$5,000

Nutter asked if the budget reflected the Short-Term Disability premiums yet – At the time the budgets were being put together, the Selectboard had not made the decision on adding another benefit, however, Kling said he felt it was a good benefit to have. Dobbins-Marsh will add that line item. No quote has been received from Long-term disability, but generally this is the more expensive coverage. The Selectboard will discuss further once a quote is received.

The Selectboard discussed leasing the loader – The Trustees of the Trust Funds are reviewing this to determine if the Backhoe/Loader CRF will cover the lease payments. If not, the annual leasing fee will become part of the operating budget.

Review Highway Warrant Articles

- Paving the top coat of Archertown Road from Dooley's driveway to the end of Phase I. The warrant article for ask for \$115,000 and will use the Road Improvement CRF to cover the cost of the project.
- Reclaiming and Paving Archertown Road from Newcomb Hollow bridge to Norris Road. The warrant article will ask for \$100,000 and will use the Road Improvement CRF to cover the cost of the project. (this amount may change based on pending estimates)

- High Bridge Road bridge – the warrant article will ask voters if they want to replace the bridge or not. This will be a state/town project and the state is estimating the total cost of \$1,500,000 with the Town being responsible for 20% (\$300,000)

Review Administrative Budget

The Selectboard and Dobbins-Marsh reviewed the administrative draft budget. Changes over last years' budget are as follows:

- Executive Budget – Office Supplies and Postage increased \$200 and \$300 respectively.
- Administrative Budget – salaries are projected to increase 2.5%, and benefits increased similar to other departments.
- Town Meeting – the cost to produce the annual report and postage increased \$200
- Information Technology
 - IT Support increased \$300
 - IT equipment and supplied decreased \$3,000
 - IT licenses & Fees increased \$1,000
- Annual Audit – the 3-year rate for auditing services increased \$250 for each year
- Revaluation of Property increased by \$605
- Government Buildings
 - Sidewalk Plow rental decreased by \$750
 - Electricity increased by \$400
 - Propane decreased by \$500
 - Furniture/Equipment increased by \$500 (A/C unit for the Niles Room)
- Insurance – the rate from Primex has not been set yet, but is estimated to increased between 9% - 12% for Property-Casualty insurance and Workers Compensation.
- IVLSRPC Dues – the 2025 rate has not been set yet
- Emergency Services
 - Ambulance increased \$2,474 (\$2 per capita)
 - Dispatch increased \$1,285 (based on the rate for July-Dec estimated to increase 4-5%)
- Streetlights decreased \$3,500
- Landfill Closure – for 2025 the rate will be \$9,980 (the Town is billed every two years for this service)

Review Warrant Articles

- **Funding of Capital Reserve Accounts** – Information will be provided to Bob Palifka to estimate the funding in 2025
- **Charitable Organization Appropriations** – The organizations that the Town has donated to in the past have submitted their requests. In addition, the Town has received two new requests (North Country Healthcare \$500, and The Bridge House \$2,000). The current appropriations, based on requests received, will be \$20,074
- **Revaluation Appropriation** – the total estimated by Granite State Municipal is \$38,000. \$21,000 would be used from the Revaluation Capital Reserve account, and the balance of \$17,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance.
- **Truck Sale proceeds** – the warrant article will request the amount of \$15,100 be moved from the unassigned fund balance into the Highway Truck CRF
- **Trade in of Cemetery Mower** – the refund of the trade amount of \$600 will be moved from the unassigned fund balance to the Cemetery Mower/Building CRF

2024 Tax Rate

The Selectboard reviewed the current tax rate calculated at \$35.07 (Municipal \$11.16, County \$1.57, School \$20.54 and State Education \$1.80). The Selectboard discussed how much of the fund balance can be applied to help reduce the Municipal rate (the only rate the Town can adjust). Dobbins-Marsh will provide options at the 10/23/24 Selectboard meeting, when the final rate will be set.

Public Comments: none

Adjourn

Motion made by Taylor, seconded by Follensbee to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 3/0

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh