

# TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Charles Smith, Jr., Larry Taylor

BUDGET ADVISORY COMM: Bob Palifka, Bill Paxton, Rusty Keith, Vanesa DeSimone

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh,

**Call Meeting to Order** - The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am

## **2026 Budget Review:**

- Executive Budget – the group agreed to keep the Selectboard salaries at \$4,500
- Town Administration – The group discussed the rate of pay for a new Admin Asst – Keith will research what other Towns have for an hourly range. The position hourly rate would be based on experience
- Town Clerk – the group discussed the increase of wages (based on the additional time for 2 elections in 2026), and the increase for training (for a new deputy Town Clerk)
- Election – there will be a charge of \$600+ from the state to program the Handicap Voting machine. Dobbins-Marsh will check if it's required for Orford to have this machine, as it hasn't been used in Orford for the several years. She will also verify the rate to program the machine.
- Tax Collector – the Tax Collector will change her compensation to an annual stipend vs a fee based on collected taxes. She requested a lower the stipend as the Town will now pay their share of FICA.
- Cemetery Budget – will the mowing contract be put out to bid? The Cemetery Commission wanted to advertise for an employee for mowing and trimming – these applications are due 11/25. If none are received, then the contract will be bid out for 2026. The current budget is based on contracted services, so if an employee is hired, the budget will decrease.
- Police Department – the group discussed the cost to run the department – removing the salary line item, there remains over \$100,000 in expenses, however, most of the line items are level funded, except those that are related to salaries and benefits.
- Highway Department – Part-time is higher than budgeted in 2025 – the Town hired a part-time employee to grade the roads, and because of having only 2 employees for a portion of the year. The full-time salary line item is under budget. The cost of Health, dental and HRA expenses may change depending on what employees elect for 2026 coverage.
- Animal Control – the group asked if there are statistics to support the \$1,000 stipend budget for the officer. Chief Bachus will be asked for this information.
- Parks & Playgrounds – the bids are pending for the mowing contracts for the Community Fields and Town Properties. Once the Board accepts a bid, the costs will be entered into their respective line items.

## 2026 Warrant Articles

- Capital Reserve Funding – Palifka reviewed his calculations for 2026 funding for a total of \$496,002.
  - The group questioned the Highway Truck Funding increase from \$47,610 to \$92,400 (in 2025 the Town added the sale of two trucks to this CRF in the amount of \$50,200). This resulted in a lower amount needed to be raised by taxes.
  - Should the Town add more to the Tree Care CRF due to many ash trees that may need to be taken down – Bill Wilson, Tree Warden, will be asked his opinion.
- Palifka asked if there will be a warrant article to purchase a new loader. The Selectboard said not for 2026, but most likely will need one for 2027.
- The group discussed paving the walkway entrance to the Town Office building. It is a tripping hazard at this time – Taylor will look into the cost of paving this walkway, and a Warrant Article will be added.

The Budget Advisory Committee will meet on November 17<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 to review any changes to the Budget and Warrant Articles, and if necessary will attend the Selectboard meeting on November 26<sup>th</sup> with suggestions or to ask for additional information.

**Public Comments** - Heidi Wilson asked the Selectboard if they would consider budgeting \$300 for Military Service Flag Holders. The Friends of the Orford Cemeteries will be fund raising to cover the balance. Some stones have plaques and some don't. The Selectboard agreed to this request.

Budget Advisory Committee members left the meeting

**Other** – The Selectboard reviewed an email received from Peter Tse regarding the valuation of his property, and questions on a Current Use Land Use Change tax invoice received. Follensbee will write a letter in response. He will review with the Selectboard members at their 11/12/2025 meeting.

## Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh