

# TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Minutes of the Proposed Budget Public Hearing

January 27, 2026

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

## **The Public Hearing opened at 7:00 pm**

Follensbee reviewed the 2026 Operating Budget asking if there were questions after each section. He explained the 2025 budget, pre-audit, is underspent by approx. \$165,000, with much of this due to the Town only having 2 highway employees much of the year, which reduced the Highway salary and benefit line items just under \$60,000.

The Town has hired an Animal Control officer, so that budget increased \$1,500. The Cemetery Commission will have an employee in 2026 to maintain the cemeteries, which reduced their budget from 2025 by \$17,500

Warrant Article #2 is regarding the Line of Credit and max interest on these borrowed funds for the Archertown Road over Jacobs Brook bridge project. This is for cash flow as the construction contractors will bill the Town for large sums (for example-concrete and steel). Mascoma Bank will transfer funds as requested to the Town, and once the NHDOT reimburses the Town, we can transfer the funds back to the bank. The interest is calculated on the funds borrowed, and for the length of time. If we reach the end of 2026 and there are still outstanding work to be completed and/or outstanding invoices, the Selectboard can vote to encumber the project, which provides an extra year to complete the project and accounting transactions.

Warrant Article 4 is the total additional cost of the Archertown Road over Jacobs Brook bridge project. In 2021 the Town voted to approve the project cost of \$1,200,000 and with the project now at \$1,900,393 voters need to approve the addition. This extra amount is 100% reimbursed by the NHDOT.

Warrant Article 5 - Capital Reserve funding – it was suggested by Bob Palifka, Budget Advisory Chair, to amend the funding for the Road Improvement, Grader and Fire Truck CRF. This would reduce the current requested amount of \$502,975 to \$448,370. The Selectboard felt this change should be made as an amendment to the article at the annual meeting.

Warrant Article 11 (renumbered #13) – removal of the small garage on Route 25A – this article is only to receive permission from the voters to remove the garage. If there are costs associated with this work, the Building CRF would be used.

Warrant Article 12 (renumbered #14) – construction of Grader Cover – the plan is to have the Highway crew help with the construction of this unit, such as setting poles, etc.

Warrant Article 14 and 15 (renumbered #6 and #7)– moving funds reimbursed to the Town into the Road Improvement CRF and Cemetery Maintenance CRF – it was requested making these articles #6 and #7 so they follow the annual funding of the Capital Reserve funds.

Warrant Article 18 – Changing the High Bridge road bridge into a pedestrian bridge. It was discussed to change the language to reclassify this to be a Class A Trail. The Conservation Commission will work on revised language, and if the NHDRA approves the changes they will be reflected in the warrant article before posting prior to the annual meeting.

The Public Hearing closed at 9:50 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh