

**TOWN OF ORONO
FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 2019 AT 8:00 A.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Tom Perry (Finance Chair), Council Chair Cindy Mehnert, Meghan Gardner, Terry Greenier, Laurie Osher, Town Manager Sophie Wilson, Assessor Mike Noble and Finance Director Connie Thorne.

2. Spending Approvals for Council Consideration

a. Landfill Remediation Project Cost Overrun

Ms. Wilson stated that one bid was received from Whitmore Contracting, Inc in the amount of \$25,120, which covers a greater area of the landfill than originally anticipated. She explained that the Town will initially pay for the project but will be reimbursed 90% (or \$22,608) by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (MDEP) for a total out of pocket expense of \$2,512 (to be funded from the Landfill Reserve Account). Given the need for the work to be completed as soon as possible, and with prior conversation with Council, staff engaged the contractor; however, the contract award and expenses must be approved by Council.

The Committee agreed to forward the Landfill Remediation Project contract award to Whitmore Contracting, Inc and cost overrun to the September 9, 2019 Council consent agenda.

b. Additional Ambulance Retrofit Costs

Ms. Wilson explained that in July the Town Council approved the purchase of a new chassis and retrofit of the existing patient box to “purchase a new ambulance”. This project was approved with a budget of \$128,000 (with \$120,000 funded from Ambulance Reserve); however, upon further evaluation of the box, it was determined that the patient box needs more body work than anticipated and will also require the box to be repainted and relettered. Staff has also identified the need for the alternate ambulance stretcher mechanism to be retrofitted to be able to manage equipment appropriately. Combined, these items will add \$16,457 to the purchase cost. Staff strongly recommended completing the additional work and suggested funding the increased cost from Ambulance Reserve.

The Committee agreed to forward the additional Ambulance Retrofit Costs to the September 9, 2019 Council agenda.

c. Emergency Ladder Truck Repairs

Ms. Wilson explained that the ladder truck required emergency repairs which have been completed, but since they exceed \$5,000 will require Council confirmation of the expense. The expense will be funded from the operating budget.

The Committee agreed to forward the Emergency Ladder Truck Repairs to the September 9, 2019 Council consent agenda.

3. FY19 Budget Carry Forward Requests

Ms. Wilson reviewed the list of requests to carry forward from the FY19 Municipal Budget into the FY20 budget to cover planned expenses. The list includes: Town Manager intern project and library celebration; Assessing data collection; Police tuition reimbursement; Parks and Recreation trail maintenance, signage and painting projects; Public Works street striping; Library travel and training; Capital Infrastructure projects; and Cable Consortium Assessment.

The Committee agreed to forward the FY19 Budget Carry Forward requests to the September 9, 2019 Council agenda, under New Business.

4. Volunteer Appointments to Various Town Boards

Ms. Wilson stated the Orono-Veazie Water District Board of Trustees has an open seat at this time. In addition, Farahad Dastoor has stated he would like to run again when his term ends in December. Ms. Wilson asked for guidance on the process. **The Committee recommended continuing the process of advertising, interviewing and recommending the appointment as has been done in the past.**

The Committee reviewed the candidates for appointment to various boards and committees: Joseph Sprecher - Planning Board; Paula Moore - Board of Appeals; Paula Moore - Board of Assessment Review; David Olick-Llano - Tree Board; and Ray Soucy - OTO Fiber Corporation. Ms. Wilson noted that all the proposed appointments come recommended by the respective committee chairs and/or staff.

The Committee recommended having Council interview Mr. Sprecher for the Planning Board seat at 6:30pm, prior to the Council Meeting.

The Committee agreed to forward the candidates to the Council agenda for appointment.

5. FIRST READING: Acceptance of Forfeited Assets Policy

Ms. Wilson stated that staff has created the policy from a discussion held last year about the Town's practices related to the acceptance of seized and later forfeited assets.

The Committee discussed the policy relating to firearms. The Committee expressed concerns about wanting to stop assault weapons. Ms. Osher suggested taking all seized guns out of

service. Mr. Perry suggested only selling to a licensed dealer who sells to people in their shop and go through the background check.

Ms. Wilson suggested having the Police Chief draft language to address the concerns and bring the revised language to the Council Workshop.

6. Tax Collector's Report

a. FY20 Tax Commitment

Assessor Mike Noble reviewed the FY20 tax commitment with the Committee. He noted that the total tax valuation is up \$4M. He also reviewed the new additional homestead exemption.

Mr. Perry commented that many people have expressed how pleased they are with the mill rate reduction.

b. Prior Year Collections

Ms. Wilson stated that last year's tax collection rate is above 95% collected.

7. Treasurer's Report

a. Cash Position & Activity Highlights

Ms. Wilson and Finance Director Connie Thorne reviewed the cash position and activity highlights.

b. July Financials

Ms. Thorne reviewed highlights of the financial reports with the Committee. Ms. Wilson noted that the revenues and expenses are in good shape.

8. Brief Town Manager Update

Ms. Wilson gave a brief update on the following issues:

- Tax-acquired property at 30 Island Avenue – one bid received for \$2,760. Demolition and cleanup estimated at \$20,000. Mr. Perry suggested including language in the agreement to require the building taken down before yearend. Ms. Wilson stated she would work with the Town's attorney and the buyer to write an agreement.
- North Main Avenue construction to continue through November.
- Mill Street repairs are close to completion.
- Pie in the Sky Race and Library Anniversary Celebration to be held on September 7th.

9. Schedule Next Meeting - 9/17/2019 at 8:00AM

10. Adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Minutes are summary only. An audio recording of the meeting is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org under Agendas and Minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant