

**TOWN OF ORONO**  
**COUNCIL FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 22, 2021 AT 6:15 PM**

**WATCH ONLINE AT**

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*Comments can be submitted via email prior to the meeting start time at [info@orono.org](mailto:info@orono.org) and during the meeting by using Zoom comment features.*

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Tom Perry (Finance Chair), Cheryl Robertson, Laura Mitchell, Geoff Wingard, Meghan Gardner, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

**2. Tax Acquired Property Redemption Request: 173 Kelley Road (Video record time 00:20-26:50)**

Ms. Wilson provided information on foreclosed property located at 173 Kelley Road for non-payment of property taxes. The total redemption price is \$16,624.60. She noted the property is no longer being used as the former owner's primary residence, but is being used as a rental property. The Committee discussed details of the property.

Mr. Farnham (the prior owner of record) commented he is willing to pay the taxes, but he needs more time to pay. Ms. Wilson stated Mr. Farnham is willing to commit to an informal payment plan. Mr. Perry noted that the Town Attorney has recommended entering into an agreement for two payments. The Town would not transfer interest in the property until it is paid in full. Mr. Farnham stated his goal is to pay the taxes before August 2021.

**The Committee agreed to consider an agreement with Mr. Farnham at the April 12th Council Meeting. Ms. Wilson will develop the budget, timeline, and will work with Mr. Farnham and the attorney.**

**3. Review of Current Town Social Media Policy**

This item was postponed to a later date.

**4. Pre-Public Hearing Review of Marijuana Moratorium (Related to C-2 Only) Ordinance Language (Video record time 26:52-40:45)**

Town Planner Kyle Drexler stated that staff has identified that a change in ordinance language (related to large properties with multiple units meant to address concerns in the C-1 district) inadvertently resulted in retail marijuana establishments being allowed near the entrance to the University of Maine in the C-2 District (on Park Street). Staff has worked with the Town Attorney to draft Moratorium Ordinance language that would allow for the implementation of the recently adopted Marijuana Opt-In Ordinance, except for retail marijuana stores in the C-2 district. This moratorium would allow staff to re-examine setback standards that were intended for the C-2 District and present options to Council.

**The Committee supported moving forward with the Moratorium Ordinance. A public hearing will be held at a Special Town Council Meeting on March 29, 2021 at 5:00PM.**

**5. Pre-Public Hearing Review of Proposed Fee Schedule Amendment(s) (Video record time 40:49-1:15:55 )**

Community Development Director Dave Milan stated staff has researched communities that have opted-in for Marijuana establishments. Mr. Milan reviewed other communities' fees and staff's recommended fee(s) for marijuana establishment business licenses/year: Retail \$2,000; Manufacturing \$600; Testing \$0; Cultivation Tier I \$600, Tier II \$700, and Tier III \$800. The Committee discussed the fee. Ms. Wilson noted that Council will review the entire Fee Schedule in June 2021.

**The Committee agreed to forward the proposed fees to Council for public hearing on March 29, 2021.**

**6. FY22 Service Level Expectation Feedback for Staff (Video record time 1:16:10-1:52:40)**

Ms. Wilson stated that staff is looking for feedback on the service level expectation. Police Chief Josh Ewing reviewed Police (7-10 year) firearms replacement and upgrade and the best trade-in value. He reviewed firearms with the latest optics versus traditional sights for the best equipment. Chief Ewing noted the total cost of the firearms with optics is \$23,000 with a \$5,100 savings with trade-in.

**Tom Perry recommended including the firearms purchase in the initial budget to discuss during the budget process to review with other priorities.**

Ms. Wilson asked about the service level expectations for security/staffing at Gould's Landing. She noted last year's security/staffing through Seaboard Security cost \$6,000 for seven weeks which was funded through a grant. The Committee discussed security, staffing, and use of the park.

**Mr. Perry recommended putting it in the budget to be measured against other priorities. The Committee agreed.**

**7. Review of Monthly Financial Reports (Video record time 1:56:10-1:57:15)**

Ms. Wilson noted the financial reports are all okay. She urged Councilors to contact her if they had any concerns.

**8. Statement Condemning Anti-Asian Violence (Video record time 11:57:20-2:30:00:21)**

The Committee discussed making different wordsmithing points for the statement condemning Anti-Asian violence. Ms. Mitchell suggested tying the statement to Orono versus the country. The Committee agreed that it is better to get a statement out than to get caught up in the details. Ms. Wilson offered to rework the statement to take Councilors points into consideration.

**9. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned by unanimous consent at 7:31 p.m. Minutes are summary only. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at [www.orono.org](http://www.orono.org).

Respectfully submitted,  
Nancy W. Ward, Executive Assistant