

**TOWN OF ORONO
FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020 AT 4:00 P.M.**

WATCH ONLINE AT
<https://zoom.us/j/95178126049>

(LINK AVAILABLE AT ORONO.ORG)
*Comments can be submitted via email prior to
the meeting start time at info@orono.org.*

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Tom Perry (Finance Chair), Cindy Mehnert, Cheryl Robertson, Meghan Gardner, Laurie Osher, Town Manager Sophie Wilson and Assessor Mike Noble.

2. FY21 Revenue Sharing Forecast & Municipal Budget Review

Ms. Wilson reviewed the Municipal Revenue Sharing projections. Orono's new projected forecast increased to \$526,733 from the FY21 budget projections.

She presented four options to respond to the new forecast: No change; revise revenue and expense budgets; increase revenue budget and decrease mil rate; or some combination of 2 and 3. She noted a significant lack of confidence in the forecast: The State economic future is unknown and public health officials are preparing for a second virus surge in the fall.

Ms. Wilson reviewed items for Council consideration for funding: expenses that were cut from the budget; departure from planned financial steps; and incremental funding for the Route 2 culvert project and preparation for the fire department staffing increase.

Mr. Perry commented on the Governor asking for towns to find a 10% reduction in budget which reflects an uncertainty. He noted he was reluctant to make changes in the budget and was in favor of leaving the budget the way it is. Ms. Gardner agreed that there are too many unknowns. She noted if revenues come in high they could be applied to the reserves. Councilors agreed to not make any changes.

The Committee agreed to make no changes to the existing revenue and expense budgets.

Tom Perry suggested revisiting this later when more information is known.

3. Fire Department Staffing Options to Cover Long-Term Absences

Ms. Wilson stated the Fire Department is currently covering two long-term absences (work

related injuries). Council reviewed the options for addressing staffing needs: Maintain current operations (fill to 5 per shift); hire a Firefighter/Paramedic early (Sept vs May).

The Committee agreed to recommend hiring a firefighter/paramedic early (Sept versus May). The Finance Committee will report this at the Council Meeting.

Ms. Wilson reviewed the number and type of fire/EMS calls.

4. Addendum to Assessing Revaluation Contract with Vision

Assessor Mike Noble reported that 1,100 residential parcels need to be assessed which Vision will do for \$49,500. Vision anticipates it will take four months to complete. He commented it is a significant burden for him to accomplish alone.

Ms. Wilson noted there is \$5,000 left in reserves to allocate towards the project. Mr. Perry stated this has been an ongoing project that has been around for a while and needs to be completed by April 1st. Mr. Noble stated that the commercial parcels have been completed by Vision.

The Committee agreed to forward to the next Council agenda, authorizing a contract addendum of \$44,500 with Vision to complete the residential parcels, depleting the Assessing reserves first.

5. Proposed Municipal Budget Adjustments (FY20 and FY21)

Ms. Wilson presented the FY21 budget adjustments totaling \$9,750; \$3,950 for fire department emergency management, \$5,000 in the flex account management and \$750 for group life premiums that were approved but not tied into the budget. She would like to fund these from unexpended library salaries (\$2,000) and the remainder from overlay to balance the budget. The Committee agreed.

6. July Financial, Tax Collection and Cash Reports

Not being done tonight.

7. Brief Town Manager Update

Ms. Wilson reviewed the following items:

- The Pride crosswalk was painted.
- Citizen's question on how projects like the Pride crosswalk get approved by Council. She noted that citizens are told they can make proposals to Council.
- Public sign rules - The signs need to have the person's name, contact information and the date posted. Political signage is coming. She suggested getting media information out on signs and the rules, which will be enforced equally for all.

- There are two pending appeals to the Board of Appeals. Attorney Roger Huber will assist the Board. The hearing will be public. The training will take place on August 12th and the hearing will be held on August 20th.
- We will be advertising for two positions: one Public Works equipment operator and one WPCF operator.
- Resolution on Council Meeting agenda regarding wearing face coverings.
- Council agreed with the response to the street light issue. Laurie Osher asked if there was flexibility with the lights. Ms. Wilson noted it would be costly. No further action was taken.

8. Schedule Next Meeting - September 10, 2020 at 4PM

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 5:35pm.

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