

**TOWN OF ORONO
COUNCIL FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE VIRTUAL MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2021 AT 5:00 PM**

WATCH ONLINE AT
<https://zoom.us/j/93142990853>

**For Dial in Only call 1-312-626-6799 Webinar ID: 931 4299 0853
(LINK AVAILABLE AT ORONO.ORG)**

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

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Tom Perry (Finance Chair), Meghan Gardner, Laurie Osher, Police Chief Josh Ewing, Fire Chief Geoff Low, Finance Director Connie Thorne and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

2. DISCUSSION: Orono Public Library Foundation Expansion Project

Laurie Carpenter, Library Director, introduced James Jackson Sanborn, Orono Public Library Foundation President. They discussed the Orono Library Foundation's efforts to design and raise funds for an expansion of the Orono Public Library. They noted there are no definitive plans yet, but they have hired an Architect to preliminary look at the space and needs for a conceptual design. They have hired a Fundraising Consultant to help with a needs assessment and evaluation. During the design phase, OPLF will continue to work with its fundraising consultant to undertake a multi-phase campaign aimed at raising funds.

Councilors asked questions about the ideas for the building expansion. Mr. Sanborn noted expanding the community space for community meetings, programming to support teens and other users, more staff space and more space for children's programming. Ms. Carpenter stated that focus groups will also help with what might be needed.

Ms. Wilson noted meeting with Council members is the first step in the process.

3. Purchasing and Installing a Generator for the Town Office

Ms. Wilson explained the need for a generator at the Town Office due to power outages. The Town received a 6-month extension on the Center for Tech and Civic Life grant (approximately \$55,000 unencumbered) and staff discussed what might be needed to assist elections. Ms. Wilson noted, with so much computer equipment, if compromised, the Town might not be able to complete election functions. Ms. Wilson reviewed the quote from Hampden Electric who is familiar with the Town's electrical system. She noted, if Council agrees with moving forward, exact quotes will be obtained.

The Committee expressed support for the purchase and installation of a generator at a cost of approximately \$67,000; \$55,000 from the CTCL grant and \$12,000 through other funds. Staff will seek out quotes.

4. FY22 Municipal Budget Process & Timeline

The Committee reviewed the draft FY22 municipal budget process and timeline.

5. Review of Financial Reports

a. December Expense and Revenue Reports

Ms. Wilson stated revenues remain about the same; however, State Revenue Sharing is \$500,000 more than predicted. She noted expenses are up due to legal fees from Covid-19, the bargaining unit and Code Enforcement (Board of Appeals hearing). The other major overage is in the Fire Department, covering vacation and sick time. Funds have come in from Keep Maine Healthy and FEMA grants.

b. Tax Collections & Lien/Foreclosure Updates

Ms. Wilson stated there have been six property foreclosures.

6. Miscellaneous Town Operations and Project Updates

Ms. Wilson spoke of the challenges with cutting the part-time job from the FY21 budget that was shared between Public Works and WPCF. She noted Rob Yerxa's recommendation to shift everyone's pay scale ½ step as of January of 2021 (an increase of \$12,000 this year and \$28,000 for next year). Mr. Perry spoke in support of the move.

7. Brief Town Manager's Report

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

- The WPCF crew is quarantined. An individual tested positive but the entire crew had to be sent home. Public Works stepped up to cover minimum daily work and weekend testing at the WPCF. The crew will be back on February 3rd.
- The Town Assessor had an early retirement. Staff has reached out to others without luck to temporarily fill the position. Mr. Milan is in the process of writing an ad for filling the position.
- There will be a Special Edition of the Orono Observer for election information and the marijuana referendum.
- The pop up ice skating rink will be put together next Wednesday.

8. Schedule Next Meetings - February 22, 2021 at 5:00 PM

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.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