



## COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

### MINUTES

#### 1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Tom Perry, Meghan Gardner, Leo Kenney, Cheryl Robertson, Geoffrey Wingard, Robert Laraway, Sonja Birthisel, and Town Manager Sopic Wilson.

#### 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

##### a. Review the Webster Neighborhood Study & Discuss Next Steps (*Video record time 0:00:20 - 0:33:00*)

Public Works Director Rob Yerxa reviewed the Webster Neighborhood Traffic Planning Study by Sebago Technics with the Committee, which focused on traffic calming methods, pedestrian safety, sidewalk and signage improvements, and pavement markings. He spoke of two levels of improvements that can be made: Level 1 - striping, signage, education outreach, and enforcement; Level 2 - adding infrastructure to the neighbor (reconfiguring intersections and adding pedestrian facilities). The Committee discussed the recommendations and how to implement them. Mr. Yerxa proposed creating a staggered plan through the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan and budget process. Councilors like the idea of getting reports from the Town Manager when items are implemented. Councilors liked the idea of portable electronic speed signs as an enforcement tool. Ms. Wilson stated the lighting in the neighborhood will be reviewed by the police department.

##### b. Discuss Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Belonging Council Committee Appointments (*Video record time 0:33:01 - 1:10:30*)

The Committee discussed the next steps in the Committee appointment process. They reviewed the candidate positions and discussed staggered terms of office to start. The Committee agreed to leave vacant spaces on the DEIB Committee for special representation. Mr. Kenney suggested making the second alternate, the first alternate; the Committee agreed.

The Committee discussed how the meeting would be recorded and available to the public. Mr. Kenney commented that the meetings should be recorded. Ms. Gardner suggested leaving it up to the DEIB Committee. The Committee agreed that the meetings would be video or audio recorded and made available for the public, but live streaming was not necessary.

Ms. Wilson stated that she and staff will contact the candidates about appointments to the DEIB Committee, with the recommendations going to Council at the February 13th Council meeting.

### **3. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**

#### **a. Overview of the Public Tree Inventory Project** *(Video record time 1:10:31 - 1:20:56)*

Public Works Director Rob Yerxa stated the Town applied for and received grant funding to complete an urban forest inventory and management plan. To complete this, the Town hired a Master of Forestry student to work with Environmental Services Coordinator Megan Hess. Data was collected for 1,700 trees and more than 30 species. The data also reflected that there is a large portion of medium size trees. Mr. Yerxa reviewed the final report related to this project.

Ms. Robertson asked about ways to stop the Emerald Ash Borer. Ms. Hess stated it is through education and outreach for now. Mr. Yerxa stated a major use of the tree management plan will be to track issues like this.

#### **b. Discuss ARPA Funding Priorities** *(Video record time 1:20:57 - 1:58:27)*

Ms. Wilson provided a brief background on the \$1.14M American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds the Town will/has received and noted the use of the funds so far. She noted the funds are for one-time expenses. Ms. Wilson provided a brief overview of the potential priorities for the remaining funds. She specifically noted the sanitary sewer rehab of Peters Street to North Main Avenue and upsizing the sewer system on Hillside Road (Crosby Street to cross country). Leo Kenney requested looking at these projects with the upcoming budget process. Mr. Yerxa stated these projects will take six months to develop with construction starting a year later (summer 2024). Councilors stated they were okay with moving forward.

Mr. Kenney asked about using funds to assist Orono people with heating costs. Ms. Wilson explained the use of General Assistance funds to assist with heating costs and also noted other types of funds to provide assistance. Mr. Perry suggested identifying resources currently available and ways to get the word out. Mr. Wingard noted he was not interested in establishing a new program that cannot be sustained. Ms. Birthisel offered to pass on resources that she is associated with that can assist people. Ms. Wilson will work with staff to put together information about resources.

#### **c. Approval of the FY24 Budget Process & Timeline** *(Video record time 1:58:28 - 2:03:28)*

Ms. Wilson reviewed the proposed FY24 budget schedule. She noted the first budget meeting will be on April 24, 2023 at 5pm for the budget overview and offered the budget workshops for Thursdays in May.

### **4. Town Manager's Report** *(Video record time 2:03:29 - 2:12:40)*

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- New estimate on the salt-affected well, for a total of \$33,000
- Fire ladder truck new estimate for hydraulic repairs of \$21,000
- Public Works backhoe needs repairs
- Public Works pick up trucks (2) not available; Town has an option for a quality used truck
- Candidates' Night scheduled for February 2, 2023
- Fire Department given permission to apply for a Jaws of Life grant
- Looking for approval to apply for Window Dressers grant for \$4,000

- WPCF Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) report was submitted to the State.
- Meeting on Budget Priorities, January 31, 2023.

**5. Public Comment - None**

**6. Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn by Meghan Gardner and seconded by Leo Kenney. All unanimously agreed. The Council Meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Minutes are not verbatim. 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