



## COUNCIL COMMITTEES MEETING MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.

(SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING TO FOLLOW CONCLUSION OF COMMITTEES MEETING)

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

### MINUTES

#### 1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Pro Tem Geoffrey Wingard, Cheryl Robertson, Sonja Birthisel, Dan Demeritt, Sarah Marx, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

#### 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- a. **Caribou Bog Trail Center Request for Financial Support** (*Video record time 0:0:25 - 0:52:45*)

Orono Economic Development Corporation (OEDC) President Shep Shepard and Treasurer Bob Bass provided background information on OEDC and the Caribou Bog Trail Center. They asked for a one time capital campaign donation of \$25,000 towards the \$365,000 project budget which was funded by a \$165,000 Recreational Trails Program grant, supplier contributions, and ongoing private fundraising. Approximately \$235,000 has been raised (or donated) to date, leaving a project deficit of \$130,000. Mr. Bass noted that they have applied for additional grants.

They also asked for an annual operating support request of \$9,500. This would help to offset the estimated \$16,500-\$18,000 in annual operating costs. Mr. Bass noted that this facility meets some of the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Yerxa estimated the road repairs at \$25,000 and the road maintenance at \$3-4,000 per year.

Committee members discussed details of the project and the financial needs. Ms. Wilson reviewed the Committee's options.

**The Committee agreed to wait to make funding decisions on the road until later to be able to find out about grant opportunities. Ms. Wilson will review the budget at the fiscal year-end and report to Council regarding Capital contribution options, and the \$9,500 request will be added to the FY24 budget.**

#### 3. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

- a. **Initial Discussion: Proposal to Revise the Town's Road Opening Ordinance to Eliminate Routine Deposits and Replace with Responsibility for Permittee to Fix Damage Caused to Public Infrastructure** (*Video record time 0:52:46 - 1:04:28*)

Ms. Wilson explained the current road opening permit process which requires a \$50 permit fee and a \$500 deposit which is held by the Town for two years. After that time, if there are no issues with the excavation site, the Town returns the funds to the permit holder. Ms. Wilson explained that using the deposit system creates a need for the Town to track these funds for each permit and, in staff's experience, the deposits are rarely needed. In addition if there was an issue, staff also suggests that \$500 would likely not cover costs associated with improper excavation practices.

Ms. Wilson stated other municipal approaches to issuing road opening permits identified a generally accepted practice of issuing a permit with fees based upon inspection/administrative costs and then holding the permittee responsible for the costs associated with repairing damage to the public way seen within the two years following excavation.

**The Committee supported the concept of changing the ordinance to eliminate deposit requirement and add language holding permit holders responsible for up to two years for damage to public infrastructure, property, and right of ways caused by excavation.**

Staff will bring back draft language for the Committee's review.

**b. Public Safety Building Assessment Contract (Scope of Work and Consultant) (Video record time 1:04:29 - 1:45:20)**

Ms. Wilson stated during the FY22 budget process that the Town Council allocated funds to undertake an assessment of the Public Safety Building. After a request for qualifications (RFQ) process, staff scored Port City Architecture of Portland as the top responder. In February 2022, the Town Council approved an agreement with Port City to undertake a physical assessment of the building and programmatic study of the public safety departmental operations. In December 2022, Town staff terminated the agreement due to the firm not meeting the Town's desire to evaluate the existing building systems versus proposing the construction of a new building.

In accordance with the procurement ordinance, staff contacted Sebago Technics of South Portland which scored second in the RFQ process. Staff has been working with Sebago Technics to develop a scope of work that would address the hot water issues, air filtration system, size and need of the departments and ways to retrofit the building to make it work.

Public Works Director Rob Yerxa commented that the goal is to understand the existing conditions, identify the needs of the space, code compliances, roof, electrical, HVAC, energy efficiency and to make necessary improvements and upgrades moving forward. To look at what we have, and what we need, and the discrepancies. Mr. Yerxa stated a detailed, professional report of the existing facility. He noted that both the old and new study would be reviewed.

Ms. Wilson noted we need a better understanding of the need and existing conditions to be more prepared to discuss and make decisions about the next steps. The Committee discussed various details of the project and how to proceed.

**The Committee agreed to move the item forward to the Council agenda for consideration of**

**approving Sebago Technics for the Public Safety Building Assessment Contract.**

**c. Process for Issuing Time Sensitive Communications** (*Video record time 1:45:21 - 2:15:00*)

Committee members discussed the process for issuing time sensitive communications. The Committee discussed communicating with a unified voice. Ms. Wilson stated that in the past the Manager's office was a clearing house of information that flowed in and out to Councilors. Ms. Marx suggested emailing and texting Councilors when there is time sensitive information, and sending the information to both the Town Manager and Council Chair. Ms. Marx suggested discussing having two Council Meetings per month, at a future Committee meeting.

The Committee agreed to respond to time sensitive matters within 24 hours, if it is emailed and texted; Other less sensitive matters can just be emailed. The Town Manager will draft the language to add to the Council Manual for discussion.

**4. Town Manager's Report** (*Video record time 2:15:01 - 2:29:02*)

Ms. Wilson stated she would email a Town Manager's report to Councilors.

Ms. Wilson reported on the following items:

- Community Conversation on law enforcement, Thursday, April 6th, 5 p.m.
- Tyler Technology groundbreaking on Wednesday, April 5th, at noon with remarks by Cheryl Robertson
- Local non-profit looking to occupy the downstairs of the Keith Anderson Community House either short-term (less than six months) or long-term with a lease that would come to Council
- Update on the employee union
- Dirigo Search and Rescue
- Old Town Mill
- The Committee agreed to have Geoff Wingard sign the warrants and to elect an Interim Council Chair on April 10th

**5. Public Comment** - None

**6. Adjourn**

The Committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 7:29 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