



**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
FOR BUDGET ADOPTION**

**MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2023 AT 5:00 P.M.**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE**

**MINUTES**

**1. Roll Call**

Present: Council Chair Geoffrey Wingard, Leo Kenney, Sarah Marx, Robert Laraway, Sonja Birthisel, Daniel Demeritt, and Town Manager Sophie Wilson.

**2. Agenda Review** *(Video record time 0:0:20 - 0:00:44)*

Geoffrey Wingard stated there would be a brief Town Manager’s update at the end of the agenda on the upcoming Special Election, August 8th.

**3. Public Comments - None**

**4. New Business** *(Video record time 0:1:09 - 0:11:26)*

**Order 23-102 Order, approving the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Municipal Budget (expense and revenue).**

Operating Expenses	\$10,396,615	
Capital Debt Service (P&I)	907,821	
Capital Expenses	<u>2,160,680</u>	
<b>Total Municipal Expenses</b>		<b>\$13,465,116</b>
Revenue Sharing	\$4,653,260	
General Revenues	2,730,488	
Use of Unassigned Fund Balance	300,000	
Revenue to Offset Capital Expenses	<u>650,000</u>	
<b>Total Municipal Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 8,333,748</b>

**Total Amount to be Raised by Taxes for the Municipal Budget \$5,131,368**

Moved by Rob Laraway and seconded by Sonja Birthisel. All voted in favor, 6-0.

Ms. Wilson explained the difference between what Council has seen for budget numbers and this budget order. She provided a budget summary spreadsheet to explain the difference and reviewed the items that Council does not approve (which are finalized through commitment by the Assessor).

**Order 23-103 Order, approving the Water Pollution Control Facility budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 in the amount of \$1,897,750 for Operations and \$339,000 for Capital Improvements for a total of \$2,236,750.**

Moved by Sonja Birthisel and seconded by Sarah Marx. All voted in favor, 6-0.

Ms. Wilson stated the WPCF budget was discussed during the Council Budget Workshops. She noted this order maintains current service levels and begins rebuilding the reserves.

**Order 23-104 Order, approving a Sewer User Fee increase from \$5.90/100 cu.ft. to \$6.25/100 cu.ft. with a minimum quarterly charge of \$75.00, effective July 1, 2023 (billing date).**

Moved by Rob Laraway and seconded by Sarah Marx. All voted in favor, 6-0.

**Order 23-105 Order, approving the Five-Year Capital Investment Plans FY2024 - FY2028 for the Town and Water Pollution Control Facility.**

Moved by Rob Laraway and seconded by Leo Kenney. All voted in favor, 6-0

**Order 23-106 Order, approving a Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Economic Development budget totalling \$859,784 funded by the following Tax Increment Financing District Development Programs:**

- Downtown & Transit Oriented \$699,319
- Webster Point 20,165
- Penobscot Valley Dermatology 32,800
- Dirigo Pines Inn 105,000
- Orono Basin 2,500

Moved by Sarah Marx and seconded by Dan Demeritt. All voted in favor, 6-0.

**Order 23-107 Order, approving revisions to the Town of Orono Fee Schedule effective July 1, 2023.**

Moved by Dan Demeritt and seconded by Sarah Marx. All voted in favor, 6-0.

**5. Consent Agenda** *(Video record time 0:11:27 - 0:12:18)*

Leo Kenney requested taking Order 23-109 off the consent agenda, to be taken up separately.

**Order 23-108 Order, approving the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Special Revenue Operating Budgets for the following:**

- Hazardous Materials Response Team \$ 39,500
- Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant \$246,003

**Order 23-110 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to pay the 2023 Penobscot County Tax Assessment in the amount of \$848,451.**

**Order 23-111** Order, authorizing the Town Manager to pay the FY24 RSU#26 Tax Assessment in the amount of \$7,684,926.

**Order 23-112** Order, adopting the Orono Village Center District Development Program and establishing the boundaries of the District:

Said District shall include real and personal property located on land shown on Orono tax maps as follows: Tax Map 019-004, Lots 061, 062, 063, 065, 066, 067; Map 027-002, Lots 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 047, 048, 050, 051, 052, 053, 054, 055, 056, 057, 058, 059, 060, 062, 063, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 148, 149; Map 027-12, Lots 001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033, 034, 035 (maps on file in the Assessor's Office at the Municipal Building, 59 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473). The preceding map and lot numbers encompass an area generally described as follows: most properties abutting Route 2 from 87 Main Street to Murray's Campus Service, 5 properties on Forest Avenue, properties abutting Canal, Oak and Summer Streets, most properties abutting Mill Street from Route 2 to Byer Manufacturing, properties abutting the West side of Pleasant Street, most properties abutting Pine Street from Route 2 to Birch Street, 6 Myrtle Street and Alpenglow Adventure Sports.

**Order 23-113** Order, establishing the amount of the implementation assessments of the Village Center Tax District for the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 Fiscal Year at \$0.00 (zero dollars and zero cents) per thousand dollars of valuation on all real and personal property located within the District as of April 1, 2023 and hereby committing said assessments to the Tax Collector of the Town of Orono for collection in accordance with the authority established under 30-A M.R.S.A., Section 5255(5).

**Order 23-114** Order, establishing the due dates for FY24 Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes of September 21, 2023 and February 8, 2024, the rate of interest at 8% per annum, and for interest to begin accruing on said tax balances remaining as of September 22, 2023 and February 9, 2024.

**Order 23-115** Order, authorizing the Tax Collector to accept money prior to the tax commitment in prepayment of taxes, to issue receipts for the same, and pay no interest on prepaid taxes.

**Order 23-116** Order, setting the rate of interest to be paid by the Town for the overpayment of FY24 taxes at 4% per annum.

**Order 23-117** Order, authorizing the Tax Collector/Treasurer, pursuant to Title 36, M.R.S.A., Sec. 906, to apply any tax payment received from an individual as payment for any property tax against outstanding or delinquent taxes due on said property in chronological order beginning with the oldest unpaid tax bill.

**Order 23-118** Order, authorizing the Tax Collector/Treasurer, pursuant to Title 36, M.R.S.A., Sec. 906, to apply any payment received from an individual as payment for any sewer use fee against outstanding or delinquent fees due on said account in chronological order beginning with the oldest unpaid tax bill.

**Order 23-119** Order, setting the rate of interest to be collected on delinquent sewer accounts at the same annual rate as established by the Town Council for delinquent taxes for the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 Fiscal Year of the Town of Orono. Interest will be charged on unpaid balances after the due date.

**Order 23-120** Order, authorizing the Town Manager to accept and expend funds from the Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) for expenses related to Hazardous Material Response Team operations; and, further, limiting this authority to those expenditures that are within the current scope of services provided by the Team, conform to the Town purchasing policy, and do not exceed \$25,000 in total for MEMA's FY24 granting year.

**Order 23-121** Order, authorizing the Town Manager to carry forward prior approvals, authorizations, and remaining appropriations for projects funded through special revenue, grant, reserve, or TIF funds that have not been completed as of June 30, 2023.

**Order 23-122** Order, authorizing the Town Manager to transfer funds remaining in the FY23 Capital Infrastructure budget to the Capital Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

Moved by Sonja Birthisel and seconded by Leo Kenney to approve the consent agenda. All voted in favor, 6-0.

Order 23-109 taken out of the consent agenda and taken up separately as requested by Leo Kenney.

**Order 23-109** Order, authorizing the Town Manager to adjust the FY2024 Tax Increment Financing District expense budgets and use of restricted funds to reflect the changes in Credit Enhancement Agreement payments from Tax Increment Financing District Program Development Funds which were previously approved by Council as estimates, but will be determined by the commitment of FY2024 property taxes. *(Video record time 0:12:19 - 0:19:25)*

Moved by Leo Kenney and seconded by Rob Laraway. All voted in favor, 6-0.

Mr. Kenney asked for clarification of the adjustment to the TIF expense budgets and use of restricted funds. Ms. Wilson explained that the budget order estimated the payments, and this order allows for an adjustment to reflect the actual changes in Credit Enhancement Agreement payments, which will be determined by the commitment.

## **6. Brief Town Manager's Report** *(Video record time 0:19:26 - 0:30:20)*

Ms. Wilson provided a brief update on the Special Election to be held on August 8, 2023 from 7AM to 8PM in the Council Chamber to elect a new Town Councilor. She noted that the nomination period is currently open and closes Wednesday, July 5th at noon. Absentee Ballots will be available July 6, 2023. Ms. Wilson stated that two candidates have taken out nomination papers. She noted, in lieu of

holding Candidates' Night, there will be a Candidate bio and/or questionnaire that will be posted on the Town's website. She noted that Candidate information is not edited.

Ms. Wilson reviewed the past process for Council Candidate bios and questions. Councilors agreed to have an abbreviated bio/questions process due to time constraints and to encourage participation, with the option to answer four additional questions and provide a video, if desired. The bios and/or questions and videos will be uploaded to the website as soon as they are received after July 5th.

**7. Public Comments - None**

**8. Council Workshop**

Council held a workshop to discuss the FY24 Council Work Plan.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was declared adjourned by Council Chair Geoffrey Wingard at 6:45 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