



**SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
BUDGET ADOPTION**

MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022 AT 5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 59 MAIN STREET, ORONO, MAINE

WATCH ONLINE AT <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/99327170651>

CALL (312) 626-6799 ID: 993 2717 0651

MINUTES

1. Roll Call

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

2. Agenda Review *(Video record time 0:00:32 - 0:01:05)*

Council Chair Tom Perry stated that Order 22-132 is being removed from the agenda due to not being ready for Council action. He noted it will be brought back at a later date in some form.

3. New Business

Order 22-109 Order, approving the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Municipal Budget. *(Video record time 0:01:07 - 0:06:02)*

Operating Expenses	\$9,602,646	
Capital Debt Service (P&I)	921,547	
Capital Expenses	<u>1,782,655</u>	
Total Municipal Expenses		\$12,306,848
General Revenues	\$2,505,031	
Revenue Sharing	3,340,190	
Use of Unassigned Fund Balance	300,000	
Revenue to Offset Capital Expenses	<u>688,500</u>	
Total Municipal Revenue		\$6,833,721

Total Amount to be Raised by Taxes for the Municipal Budget \$5,473,127

Moved by Cheryl Robertson and seconded by Meghan Gardner. The vote was in favor, 6-1 (with Leo Kenney opposed).

Ms. Wilson stated in early May, staff presented a draft municipal budget to the Town Council for its

consideration during six public budget workshops. Through this process, revisions were made to the document and a final draft presented at the June 13, 2022 Town Council public hearing. No public comments were made.

Mr. Kenney stated he would not be voting in favor of the budget as presented, because the operating budget was not significantly reduced given that State Revenue Sharing increased. Ms. Gardner stated the budget was discussed at length and noted that the service levels in Orono are what people want which affects the operating budget.

Order 22-110 Order, approving the Water Pollution Control Facility budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023 in the amount of \$1,756,350 for Operations and \$101,000 for Capital Improvements for a total of \$1,857,350. (Video record time 0:06:03 - 0:07:40)

Moved by Cheryl Robertson and seconded by Meghan Gardner. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Ms. Wilson stated the Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) operating and capital budgets are an enterprise account. She noted the WPCF's operating budget includes a \$0.05/100 cu.ft. increase in the sewer rate (which is considered in Order 22-111) and removes one operator position.

Order 22-111 Order, approving an increase in the Sewer Use Fee of \$0.05/100 cubic feet of consumption from \$5.85/100 cu.ft. to \$5.90/100 cu.ft. with a minimum quarterly charge of \$70.80. (Video record time 0:07:41 - 0:09:14)

Moved by Leo Kenney and seconded by Sonja Birthisel. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Ms. Wilson noted that a rate increase is anticipated for next year. Ms. Wilson stated that Orono is still significantly the lowest rate in the area.

Order 22-112 Order, approving the Five-Year Capital Investment Plan FY2023 - FY2027 for the Town and Water Pollution Control Facility. (Video record time 0:09:15 - 0:10:24)

Moved by Meghan Gardner and seconded by Rob Laraway. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Ms. Wilson stated the five-year capital investment plan is on the Town's website and is modified and revised each year.

Order 22-113 Order, approving a Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Economic Development budget totalling \$838,669 funded by the following Tax Increment Financing District Development Programs: (Video record time 0:10:25 - 0:13:24)

- **Downtown & Transit Oriented** **\$642,169**
- **Webster Point** **34,500**
- **Penobscot Valley Dermatology** **50,500**
- **Dirigo Pines Inn** **109,000**
- **Orono Basin** **2,500**

Moved by Meghan Gardner and seconded by Cheryl Robertson. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Ms. Wilson stated the Town's Economic Development Department activity, as well as economic development related debt and credit enhancement agreement payments, are 100% funded through the tax increment financing (TIF) district program development funds (listed above).

Order 22-114 Order, approving revisions to the Town of Orono Fee Schedule effective July 1, 2022. (Video record time 0:13:25 - 0:15:07)

Moved by Meghan Gardner and seconded by Rob Laraway. All voted in favor, 7-0.

Ms. Wilson stated the Town's Fee Schedule is reviewed and revised each year. She noted the changes in the fee schedule which: reduced coping fees, reflected fees for thumb drives versus CDs, and the increased cost for non-resident services, and some reductions in resident fees.

4. Consent Agenda (Video record time 0:15:08 - 0:15:31)

Order 22-132 was removed from the agenda due to it not being ready for Council action.

Order 22-115 Order, changing the time of the July 11, 2022 Regular Council Meeting from 7:00pm to 5:00pm in Council Chambers.

Order 22-116 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to adjust the FY2023 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 FY2023 property taxes.

Order 22-117 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to pay the 2023 Penobscot County Tax Assessment in the amount of \$825,399.

Order 22-118 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to pay the FY23 RSU#26 Tax Assessment in the amount of \$7,242,774.

Order 22-119 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 22-120 Order, establishing the amount of the implementation assessments of the Village Center Tax District for the July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023 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, 2022 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 22-121 Order, establishing the due dates for FY23 Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes of September 22, 2022 and February 9, 2023, the rate of interest at 4% per annum, and for interest to begin accruing on said tax balances remaining as of September 23, 2022 and February 10, 2023.

Order 22-122 Order, that the Tax Collector be, and hereby is, authorized 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 22-123 Order, setting the rate of interest to be paid by the Town for the overpayment of taxes at 0% per annum.

Order 22-124 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 22-125 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 22-126 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, 2022 to June 30, 2023 Fiscal Year of the Town of Orono. Interest will be charged on unpaid balances after the due date.

Order 22-127 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 \$15,000 in total for MEMA's FY23 granting year.

Order 22-128 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, 2022.

Order 22-129 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to transfer funds remaining in the FY22 Capital Infrastructure budget to the Capital Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

Order 22-130 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to carry forward the following FY22 capital budget project budget balances into the FY23 capital budget to be used for the same purposes:

- Pool Roof \$15,000
 - Elevator Pump Replacement \$ 6,000
 - PW Pick-Up Truck \$55,000
 - PD Audio/Visual Equipment \$24,750
 - FD Hose \$ 3,000
 - FD Air Bottles (SCBA) \$ 9,000
 - Public Safety Building Assessment \$27,072
- (or 6/30/22 balance, if less than the amount listed above)*

Order 22-131 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to reallocate \$150,000 of WPCF Capital Facilities Reserve and \$50,000 of WPCF Capital Equipment Reserve to the WPCF Capital Infrastructure Reserve Fund.

Order 22-133 Order, authorizing the Town Manager to enter into a one-year agreement with Downeast Assessing and Real Estate Services of Lamoine, Maine for Assessing Services July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023 at a cost not to exceed \$82,000.

Moved by Sonja Birthisel and seconded by Geoffrey Wingard to approve the consent agenda. All voted in favor, 7-0.

5. Workshop: Increasing Council Stipends to Encourage Diverse Candidate Pools

(Guest: Robert Glover, Associate Professor of Political Science and Honors at the University of Maine) (Video record time 0:15:35 - 1:27:15)

Ms. Wilson stated that earlier this year, Town Council discussed the Council annual stipend and queried as to whether increasing the stipend would encourage historically underrepresented residents to run for the Town Council. She reached out to Rob Glover, Associate Professor of Political Science and Honors, to see if there was academic research and/or data available.

Dr. Glover reviewed the research from the Maine Scholars Strategy Network which sought to address the question, "Would increasing Town Council salaries result in greater candidate diversity?" He committed that the research offers little support that an increase in compensation will lead to a more diverse pool of candidates. He noted that the research shows that the June and November elections

have greater turnouts, that having ward elections may help with diversity, the importance of candidate recruitment, community education is important, and that local elections are the stepping stones for other state elections. Councilors discussed the research findings.

Councilors suggested having the DEI group reach out to encourage people to run for Council; to discuss the time of the municipal election at a future meeting; to have a mechanism to provide more information to the voters on the candidates, and have the candidates speak for a longer period of time at Candidates' night.

6. Public Comments - None

7. Executive Session pursuant to 36 MRSA, § 841 et seq., to Consider a Request for Poverty Tax Abatement Based on Poverty and/or Disability #2022-002.

At 6:28 p.m., Rob Laraway motioned and Cheryl Robertson seconded to move into executive session consider a request for Poverty Tax Abatement based on poverty and/or disability #2022-002. All voted in favor, 7-0.

At 6:49 p.m, Cheryl Robertson motioned and Rob Laraway seconded to move into regular session.

Order 22-134 Order, approved the request for Poverty Tax Abatement Based on Poverty and/or Disability #2022-002, and authorizing the Council Chair to sign.

Moved by Meghan Gardner and seconded by Sonja Birthisel. All voted in favor, 7-0.

8. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Geoffrey Wingard and seconded by Cheryl Robertson. All voted in favor, 7-0.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Minutes are not verbatim. A video-recorded version is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant