

TOWN OF ORANGE
SELECTBOARD BUDGET FORUM MINUTES

Monday, February 12, 2024 - Town Hall

Present: Selectboard - Eric Holmgren, Shelia Stone, Kevin Wilson
 Town Clerk - Ginny Raboin

Chairman Eric Holmgren called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Agenda Revisions: Chair asked for revisions, none made.

Discuss 2024 proposed budget: Chairman Holmgren noted an error on the Highway Fund, stating the board did not consider the transfers out of \$21,000. This will change the total Highway Expenditures total currently listed at \$495,680.67. Holmgren advised the board has two options to correct this. 1. They can cut \$21,000 from the proposed budget or 2. At the Town Meeting they can ask the town to amend Article 7 to increase the total amount requested by \$21,000.

There was discussion regarding town grader, Chairman Holmgren advised there are no plans to replace the grader at this time. The plan is to continue with routine maintenance and upkeep.

FEMA money isn't listed on the budget, Chairman Holmgren reports the town spent \$35,000 under budget last year, the FEMA damage is approximately \$120,000 and explained FEMA typically reimburses 75% leaving the remainder for the town to cover at approximately \$35,000. Chairman Holmgren advised the State just announced they are asking for 100% reimbursement from FEMA and it seems it will be approved.

There was discussion in regard to why the books haven't been reconciled since 2022, Chairman Holmgren reports he was unclear why that hadn't happened. Lee Youngman, former treasurer reports she resigned being the treasurer in November 2022 and continued as the bookkeeper anticipating completing the reconciliation but did not. She resigned as bookkeeper summer 2023.

In review of the budget it was noticed there was no dollar amount noted for Insurance on the buildings, Legal Fees, Barre Town Fire Retainer and Fire/Accidents Washington. Chairman Holmgren spoke to the oversight acknowledging the error and advised the Selectboard would review and correct.

Discussion pertaining to the salary increases for the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk. Chairman Holmgren reports the 3% raise is cost of living and projected for all Town Staff and was not specific to one role. The Assistant the Selectboard awarded a merit raise. Chairman Holmgren spoke to each role and implementing performance evaluations with expectations and standards to meet for each employee.

Orange County Sheriffs Dept. contract discussion regarding the current contract of \$8,000 is being increased to \$15,000 on a yearly basis. This will allow the Sheriffs department to patrol 4 hours per week.

Clarification of Article 9 and 12 was discussed from the Warning.

Adjournment: With no other questions or comments Kevin Wilson made a motion to adjourn, Shelia Stone seconded, the board unanimously voted to adjourn the budget forum at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Raboin
Town Clerk