

TOWN OF ORONO
FINANCE & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2019 AT 8:00 A.M.
VOTER REGISTRATION ROOM, MUNICIPAL BUILDING
MINUTES

1. Roll Call

Present: Council Chair Cindy Mehnert, Meghan Gardner, Laurie Osher, Tom Perry (Finance Chair, via telephone), Town Manager Sophie Wilson and Public Works Director Rob Yerxa.

2. Purchase of Equipment to Maintain the Cemetery

Ms. Wilson noted that the FY20 municipal budget will include cemetery maintenance as part of the Public Works Department regular work plan. Mr. Yerxa described the additional mowing equipment that will be needed: a zero-turn mowing tractor, 2 trimmers, 2 push mowers, 2 leaf blowers (totaling \$15,500) to be expended from the Cemetery Services Account (balance \$14,881), with the balance paid from the Public Works small equipment line.

Ms. Wilson noted that the authority to purchase equipment is within the budget; however, the tractor is about \$10,000 and will need Council's approval.

The Committee agreed to recommend to Council, the purchase of a tractor with funds drawn from the remaining balance in the Cemetery Contractor Services Expense Account (\$14,881).

3. Closed Landfill Cover System Repair

Rob Yerxa described the Town's closed municipal solid waste (MSW) landfill adjacent to the open commercial and demolition debris landfill off Putnam Road. He noted that the Town is actively managing (inspecting, testing, and reporting) the formerly used site. Last year, staff and our consulting engineer began working with the Maine DEP to address a problem in the landfill cover system. It was determined that the problem is related to methane gas. He noted that the problem can be resolved by reestablishing the 18" clay barrier soil layer in-place and removing/replacing a thickened topsoil layer with seed and mulch for stabilization. He stated that DEP is not requiring additions to the ventilation system. Since this issue is methane gas related, this repair qualifies for cost sharing - DEP 90%, Town 10%. He commented to expect a lag between the initial outlay of expense and reimbursement. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$10,000. Staff recommends paying for the project from the Landfill Reserve Account (current balance \$40,600). Mr. Yerxa noted that the project will be bid out.

The Committee agreed to recommend at the May Council meeting, accepting a contract for the Landfill Cover Repair Services.

4. Single Stream Recycling Disposal Contract with Coastal Resource Management

Ms. Wilson and Mr. Yerxa explained that the region (including Orono) is in the midst of a fairly major transition related to municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal and recycling processing. The Town currently has long-term contracts (4 additional years) for both MSW and recycling collection; however, the Town is transitioning the disposal to the Coastal Resources of Maine (also known as Fiberright) facility currently under construction with plans to begin accepting waste this spring.

Up until June 30, 2018, the Town had an agreement with Pine Tree Waste Inc to process the recycling collected at no additional (per ton processing fee) cost. In July, this arrangement reverted to the market price (approximately \$140/ton processing cost) and the Town has continued to participate on a week to week basis in anticipation of transition from this Casella program to the Coastal Resources of Maine (CRM) recycling program. By virtue of our contractual obligation to deliver MSW to the plant, the Town has access to the CRM recycling processing program at a capped cost of 50% of the MSW tip fee. For example, at the start of operations, the Town would pay \$70/ton for MSW disposal and \$35/ton for recycling processing. Unlike the Town's 15-year MSW agreement with the Municipal Review Committee, this recycling agreement is for a two-year term with an automatic renewal of two additional years. (Committee members will note that the agreement provides for termination notice from either party 90-days prior to the end of the first two-year term.)

Unlike the MSW disposal transition which will have little impact on the residential trash generator, moving to the CRM recycling program requires adhering to more limited acceptable materials that recognizes the huge shift in the global recycling market. For example, glass and #3-7 plastics will no longer be acceptable for the single sort program. (The contract and a list of acceptable/unacceptable recycling material was included in the Committee packet.)

Mr. Yerxa noted that recycling changes will be brought forward to the public for July. UMaine students will be assisting with website information and flyers that speak to the changes.

The Committee agreed to recommend at the April Council meeting, accepting the Single Stream Recycling Disposal Contract with Coastal Resource Management.

Adoption of a Formal Mailbox Replacement Policy

Mr. Yerxa described the Town's practice of working with residents to repair/replace mailboxes hit by the Town plow trucks during winter road maintenance. He noted that this practice has been very informal and manageable; however, staff is recommending that Council adopt a policy limiting the expense and clearly defining the circumstances under which mailboxes will be repaired/replaced. Mr. Yerxa recommended adopting a policy for the next winter season to expend up to \$25 for a new post and/or \$25 for a new mailbox (the total not to exceed \$50) or Public Works will repair it with a standard post and mailbox. The information will be in a future Orono Observer and on the Town's webpage.

The Committee agreed to recommend at a future Council meeting, adopting a formal Mailbox Replacement Policy.

5. Brief Town Manager Update

Ms. Wilson provided a brief update on the following items:

- Mill Street water main break at the fire hydrant near Pleasant Street and potential damage to the road. Mr. Yerxa spoke of the need to further inspect the drainage and sewer systems, road and sidewalk.
- Sewer backup at 3 and 6 University Place. WPCF will camera the system.

6. Renewal of Contract to Provide Emergency Medical Services to Veazie

Ms. Wilson spoke of the longstanding agreement with the Town of Veazie to provide emergency medical services (EMS). Since FY18, the Town of Veazie has been billed \$200 for each EMS call that the OFD responds to and the Town collects all patient billings received. In April of last year, staff recommended renewing the contract for a period of only one year in order to allow the new Fire Chief an opportunity to evaluate the service and contract terms. Staff met with the Town of Veazie and has reached agreement on a 3-year renewal period with an increase in the billing to \$225/call contingent upon the Orono Town Council approval.

For background information, in FY18 the OFD responded to 163 Veazie EMS calls and billed a total of \$32,000. Through January 31, 2019, the OFD has responded to 82 Veazie EMS calls and billed a total of \$16,400. This FY19 total is down 9 calls (\$1,800) from the same period in the prior fiscal year.

Ms. Wilson clarified that the contract will be reviewed every year even though it is a 3-year contract.

The Committee agreed to recommend at the April Council Meeting, renewing the contract to provide Emergency Medical Services to the Town of Veazie.

7. Review and Highlights of Financial Reports

The Town Manager reviewed highlights of the financial reports with the Committee.

8. Schedule Next Meeting - 4/16/2019 at 8:00AM

9. Adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

Minutes are summary only. An audio recording of the meeting is available on the Town's website at www.orono.org under Agendas and Minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy W. Ward
Executive Assistant