

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2010
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS**

A Town Council Workshop of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council was held on Thursday, April 29, 2010 in the Town Hall Chamber. The Chair opened the meeting at 7:10 p.m. The following were being discussed at this workshop: 20106– Assessor; 20196 – Abatements; 20105 – Treasurer/Finance; 20191 – General Assistance; 20104– Tax Collector; 20107 – Town Clerk; 20108 – Elections; 20109– Registrar; 20171– Recreation.

Present:

**Chair Sharri MacDonald
Vice Chair Michael Tousignant
Councilor Robin Dayton
Town Manager Jack Turcotte
Assistant Town Manager V. Louise Reid
Finance Director Jill Eastman
Assessor George Greene
Town Clerk Kim McLaughlin
Voter Registrar Beth Gilman
Recreation Director Jason Webber**

Absent:

**Councilor Shawn O’Neill
Councilor Laura Bolduc**

Assessor George Greene detailed the primary mission of the Assessing Department which is to operate an open assessment program in compliance with the Maine Constitution as well as the governing statutes. He indicated they do their best to implement its obligations with the State resulting in an equitable assessment of properties and a fair distribution of taxes. Discussion on the reduction in seminars and training was a concern but the Assessors said he believed that with what was funded he and his staff could maintain the accreditation that is required. The question on the service contracts including Vision which were moved into the IT section of the budget (new this year.) As far as professional engineering, an amount was placed in the budget if and when that should be necessary for instance someone questioning their assessment and a third party view needed.

In discussion of Abatements the Director explained that she takes a very conservative approach and that is the reason for the increase. We need overlay. Any revenue that does not come in; this is a buffer. If a department overspends or there is a real reduction in revenues this is a coverage for that type of emergency.

The Town Clerk went over her budget and there were few questions. The question of laser fiche was raised and the Clerk indicated that she is doing as much as possible in this project but she had not asked for any more funding this year because of the economic constraints of the budget. She discussed elections and the extra funding needed because of special June elections and the November election being for Governor which is always much larger than the usual November election. She was questioned on the insurance aspect of her department as were others but again it came down to the concern relative to the 15% increase in insurance rates. The Assistant Town Manager expressed appreciation to the Town Clerk for her assistance with the Manager's office.

The subject of the insurance rates and the suggestion to go out for other rates from other insurance companies was discussed. It was suggested that other municipalities have done this only to find that after three or four years the costs were even greater than the original amount suggested by the Municipal Health Trust who handles the majority of municipal health coverage. The Town Manager was, however, getting costs from other insurance carriers. Discussion of whether the insurance premium was a wage increase or a benefit was entertained. Discussions relative to Voter Registration and the Voter Registration Budget raised no questions or suggestions.

The Recreation Department budget raised some questions relative to the number of employees and previous issues related to a contract/agreement. The request was made for a report on what the Recreation Coordinator's position had added as far as revenue and Councilor Dayton reiterated that she has asked for this report and it had been promised at the original hiring. The suggestion that the \$5,000 for the Memorial Day parade be put into a different account so that any funds not spent can be used the following year. Again insurance was questioned but again, depending on the employee's family situation determines the amount of the coverage. Jason Webber provided a scenario of his department as well. The department strives to provide programs that will meet the leisure needs of the citizens of Old Orchard Beach. The Department focuses on offering a variety of programs to serve the various individual populations in the community – pre-school, youth, teens, and adults. He spoke about the struggle to keep the programs in a financially sound and responsible manner. He updated the Council on the new senior program specifically addressing the 50 over and under group which now totals over 100 members.

The Finance Director reviewed the General Assistance Department budget, indicating that the need for General Assistance has been greatly increased this year because of the difficult economical times that people are going through. Pastor Mike Gray and Assistant Town Manager Reid both indicated that their work with the Methodist Church and The Salvation Army has shown an enormous increase in the demand for services and that many who have come for assistance are new; never asked before. It is obvious signs of the economic situation and also the job losses in the State of Maine. Vice Chair Tousignant requested that \$5,000 be added to the General Assistance fund because of the current economic situation.

No questions or discussions were raised on the Tax Department. The Finance Department reported on her department referencing financial projects and the need to be conservative. She also related the cash management program involving the custody of monies is handled in a timely manner. The addition of the Accountant position has enabled them to review

each of the personnel files and provide time and effort on the human resource function of the office. This is moving forward and with the Munis financial package module she feels that they will be able to provide an enormously orderly function in this department. The question of how time is reported was explained by the Finance Director.

The Finance Director was asked to get a copy for the Council of the Health Insurance Contract. She also was asked to provide the Legal invoices by subject matter. In discussion of the Information Technology portion of the budget she indicated that the budget is a new budget this year. In previous years the costs for technology were in the various departments that used it. We feel it is better to separate it, so that the total cost of technology is in one place. The amounts in this budget have been deleted from the Town Manager, Tax, Finance, Assessing, Police, Public Works and the CIP. The funding is broken up into user licenses, support services, GIS and upgrades. She indicated that many of the systems have been upgraded and usually further upgrades are done over the next five years. As you can see by the budget upgrades to the MUNIS program have been done and this is going to bring a timely and more accurate programming to a number of areas in the Town Hall including purchase orders. The MUNIS Human Resource Module which has been requested will certainly increase our capacity to conduct the human resource area in a more professional manner.

The Workshop closed at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

V. Louise Reid
Secretary to the Town Council

I, V. Louise Reid, Secretary to the Town Council of Old Orchard Beach, do hereby certify that the foregoing document consisting of three (3) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop held on April 29, 2010.

V. Louise Reid