

**TOWN OF OLD ORCHARD BEACH
TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP
TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2009
TOWN HALL CHAMBERS**

A Town Council Workshop of the Old Orchard Beach Town Council was held on Tuesday, March 31, 2009 in the Town Hall Chamber. The Chair opened the meeting at 7:05 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 Robin Dayton
Councilor Laura Bolduc
Councilor Mike Tousignant
Town Manager Steve Gunty
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

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. The Assessor explained the sharing of his duties with Sanford and Old Orchard Beach which relates to 58% of his salary charged to Sanford and 42% to Old Orchard Beach; an arrangement now over three years old. He indicated his staff works well together and further defined some of the cost centers listed in the budget book. He indicated he receives a car allowance of \$125 a month but also used the Department jeep as does the Deputy Assessor and on a loan basis as well to other department heads when needed. He defined the working relationship with Bill Botting who also shares work in Sanford and the like Munis and the Vision Appraisal System makes it complementary to one another. He detailed the dues/memberships/licenses as necessary items to doing business and includes dues to the International Association of Assessing Officers, Maine Association of Assessing Officers, the Maine Chapter of the IAAO, and an appraisal license for the assessing staff.

Jason Webber, the Recreation Director, 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. He estimated to the Council that for someone living in a \$150,000 home the cost to that homeowner for recreational services is approximately \$15.

Introductions were made of three community leaders, James Harmon, Executive Director of the Chamber, Jim Albert, a member of OOB365 and owner of Jimmy the Greek's Restaurant, and Ken Shupe, President of OOB 365 and a local business person. They encouraged the Council to consider hiring a full time Events Coordinator which the Town has wanted for many years and which could be the impetus for more activity within the Town focusing on the 365 days a year. Discussion continued on other suggested personnel changes within the department with questions being asked about job descriptions and functions. The three business representatives indicated that possibly the business community could at some time in the future assist in the support of this position but asked the Council to consider bringing an individual on in this position to move forward the economic development program being focused on by the Chamber and the OOB365 membership.

Discussion continued on the concerns about the Memorial Day Parade previously for many years funded by the Veteran's of Foreign Wars and the need for funding in order for this to move forward in May of this year. Everyone recognized that this is one of the most well attended events and has been recognized as one, if not the finest, parade in our State. The Council was encouraged to consider providing some funds for the parade to continue and again the OOB365 actively endorsed and promised their commitment to assist not only financially but also with volunteer manpower. The Council spoke about the many pressing concerns economically in our community and so many worthy areas to increase funding but the funds are difficult to get at this point but promised a close evaluation of the requests that were being made. The lack of providing job descriptions for the positions being discussed was a concern and encouragement that these become available as soon as possible.

The Recreation Director spent some time talking about the scholarship program and detailing how that is handled and also the decline in funds but the increase in families asking for assistance in this area. Restructuring of the Scholarship Committee is in the works to better move this process further. As the same time the subject of the Fireworks was discussed because although not under the supervision of the Recreation Director, some Councilors felt that it is a draw for the community bringing an enormous amount of individuals into our community over the summer period. Discussion of the CIP request for skateboard park funding and the necessity to continue to look for funding in that area was requested.

The Council discussed and may revisit some issues discussed during this period:

- Discussion about part time positions and a job description outline**
- Advocate for an Event Coordinator by the Business Community and a job description defining what is the duties and responsibilities**
- Salary considerations for that new position and also a job description defining exactly what that individual is to do.**
- Special Events – look at the dollars spent and the overages and do we need to provide more dollars to cover events such as the Memorial Day parade and the fireworks?**
- Recreation Director to find out about other Town's skateboard parks, funding, staffing, what you are proposing.**

The Town Clerk, Kim McLaughlin, and the Voter Registrar, Beth Gilman, presented their budget considerations. Again discussion of personnel needs within her department and suggested changes presented to the Council were discussed over a good length of the time period of discussion. The Town Clerk indicated that all functions of her office are governed by the Town Charter, Town Ordinances and the State Statutes. Currently the office is staffed by the Town Clerk and a part time Deputy Clerk. The suggested changes in staffing by the relocation of the Voter Registrar back to the Town Clerk's office would meet some of the requests made for more personnel assistance. A division of the time between the Voters Registration and the Town Clerk's office by the Voter Registrar was discussed as well.

Questions were raised with the Town Clerk about the RSU and she and Gary Curtis, a member of the RSU and the Old Orchard Beach School Board attempted to answer questions raised by the Council. It was noted that the RSU Board will present a budget that must have been approved by them by a 2/3 majority. This budget will then be presented to a Regional Budget Workshop where registered voters from the three communities of Dayton, Saco and Old orchard Beach will have the opportunity to vote on each of the 11 legislated cost centers. They can add/subtract by majority vote to each one of these cost centers, for a total budget recommendation that may be different from that passed by the RSU. This budget, approved at the Regional Budget Workshop is the budget put out to voters on the Budget Validation Referendum ballot. This ballot will have no numbers on it, but will ask in so many words, "do you approve of the budget that the regional budget workshop approved on such and such a date"? There will of course be background materials available, and the actual number will be posted at the polls. Questions were asked as to who pays for the elections. Mr. Curtis explained that the State of Maine considers these RSU elections, municipal elections, to be paid for by the community. The ballots and supporting documents have to be "provided" to the clerks by the RSU, but the RSU will bill back to the community all costs incurred that are election related. As the RSU has no funds of its own, and depends on the budget funds approved at referendum, these costs of doing business ultimately get paid by the Town. It is hoped that the RSU can present a budget to the voters on June 9th. If this budget is passed, the Town will be presented with a bill and the first of 12 monthly payments will be due on or before July 20th. Mr. Curtis added that he hoped to be able to give the Council a "ballpark" figure on or close to April 28th.

The Voter Registrar, Beth Gilman, reminded the Council that she has in the past served as the Deputy Clerk and has worked in that office for some time previously. Her budget is now reflected as part of the Town Clerk's budget figures as explained by the Finance Director.

The following revisits may be done by the Council:

- The position that is being considered.
- Possible making Voter Registration/Deputy Clerk – 37 hours instead of 30 – do a cost analysis
- Funding to cover the RSU election

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. Discussion included the increase demand for oil assistance as well as the suggestion by some Councilors that there be a \$10,000 increase to the General Assistance to cover what appears to be overages anticipated before the end of this year. Discussion also was held on the support provided by the back up to the General Assistance Director considering she has five weeks vacation plus sick and personal time and also must cover for the Tax Collector who also has equal amount of vacation and sick time.

The Finance Director indicated that the Tax Department functions very well with one full time Tax Collector, and the General Assistance Director who serves in that office when not involved with General Assistance work (Tuesday and Thursday – 9:00 to Noon). She spoke about the collection rate for liens being at 94% collection rate. It does cost \$13 to file a lien and \$13 to discharge the lien which ultimately is charged back to the citizen. There is a job sharing arrangement of 21 hours a week in which one part time employee works from January through June and the other July through December. It has worked out extremely well. The Finance Director gave an updates on abatements as well as comments about poverty abatements, over assessments and septic fees. She explained Munis licensing requirements.

In discussion the request for an accountant, again a request was made for job description for the position. This discussion included the Town Manager being asked what position he would eliminate to cover this Finance Position. The Town Manager had already provided a scenario for this but then was asked to do a “body to body” scenario showing the financial impact on increase of personnel. The Town Manager was also asked what would be the financial gain if employees were to have a 15% or 18% increase in employee contribution to health insurance? Comments were also made that this would be a pretty high increase considering there are no COLA or wage increases built into this budget and that perhaps increments would be better.

Possible Revisit by Council:

**Add \$10,000 to the General Assistance Budget
Body to Body Scenario and financial impact
to cover the financial position – accountant
Job Description for the Accountant position
15% or 18% insurance by employees on health plan
What would be the impact?**

The Workshop closed at 9:45 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 four (4) pages is a true copy of the original Minutes of the Town Council Workshop held on March 31, 2009.

V. Louise Reid