



Town Manager's Report to the Town Council

Submitted by:
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April 2, 2013

Town of Winslow - In the heart of Central Maine representing People, Pride and Progress.

BUDGET ORDER

The first reading of the Budget Order for FY 2014 will be conducted at the April 8th Town Council meeting. At this point I will only comment on the municipal portion of the budget because the School Budget has not yet been finalized.

The overall Municipal Budget is **down** by \$104,646 or 1.4%. Contributing to this reduction is the proposed elimination of an office clerk position and reduced funding in our Street & Roads Capital Account.

The budget also proposes to maintain our tax rate at 15.50/1000. If this is approved the town's tax rate will have remained constant for 6 fiscal years.

The town's revenues are projected to increase by only \$15,873 or 0.48% (less taxes & use of surplus). The budget proposes to use \$977,000 in surplus funds to stabilize the tax rate, which is an increase in surplus over last year of \$36,000.

Budget summary sheets are attached to this report.

MAINE FARMLAND TRUST

At the February Town Council meeting the Council approved an agreement with the Maine Farmland Trust to provide the town with the following scope of work:

1. Meet with core group of farmers and municipal officials to develop a work plan and process.
2. Meet with local farmers to identify issues and opportunities.
3. Review Winslow's land use ordinances for farming and farmland considerations.
4. Inventory important farmland soils and active farms and identify conservation opportunities.

5. Develop an implementation plan for strategies to support farming and conserve important farmland.
6. Develop any proposed amendments to local ordinances.
7. Work with partners as needed to implement strategies.

A town working group has been established to work with Stacy Benjamin, of the Maine Farmland Trust. Group members are Councilor Steve Russell, Sally Harwood, Kate Newkirk, Jim Veilleux, Elery Keene and myself. Stacy Benjamin will be at the April 8th Council meeting to give the Council an update on the working groups progress and to give an overview of the Maine Farmland Trust.

COURT STREET LAND UPDATE

At the August 13, 2012 Council meeting the Town Council voted to sell 9.59 acres of land off of Court Street (Map 43, Lot 29), which was part of the A&B Associates subdivision plan approved in 1989. The parcel, along with other town owned parcels, were advertised for sale in the local newspaper. The deadline to bid on the properties was Friday, August 31, 2012. At the same time the abutters of the Court Street property were asked to submit an offer for a portion of the land if they were not interested in acquiring the entire property. In the end there were no bids submitted for the entire property, however, a number of abutters to the property did express an interest in acquiring a portion of the property.

At the Town Council's direction a number of abutters and myself have been working on a proposal for the town to sell portions of the property to the abutters. The Council asked me to determine if there were any buildable lots located at the east end of the property. The Council also asked me to seek Planning

Board approval to convey portions of the property to the abutters.

I have since gone to the Planning Board and the Board is in favor of conveying portions of the property to the abutters. The Board suggested that if the east end of the property is buildable, then that portion should be sold separately by the town and not subdivided, which could be costly. The Board requested that I return with a plan that depicts the parcels to be sold and identifies the location of a town easement for the maintenance of an existing drainageway.

Included with this report is a plan prepared by Elwood Ellis of Downeast Surveying & Development, which I intend to present to the Planning Board for approval at their April 17th meeting. Mr. Ellis has determined that at least three buildable house lots could be developed at the east end of the property. The following notes are on the plan:

1. The substandard lots in this division must be sold to abutting parcels. There is NO other access to these lots. The lots MAY NOT be sold as individual parcels.
2. The Town of Winslow reserves a fifty foot wide easement along the Molly Murray Subdivision and the CMP transmission line for maintenance, improvement, repair and replacement of an existing drainageway. The portion of the drainageway on the land retained by the Town of Winslow may be relocated to comply with the easement description upon sale of the parcel. The Town is not responsible for any such relocation.
3. The parcel retained by the Town on the eastern side of these lots may be developed as house lots with the approval of the Winslow Planning Board subject to land use ordinances at the time of development.
4. Any structure placed on these parcels requires CEO approval.
5. This division is to comply with the restriction noted on the original subdivision plan that disallowed any further subdivision without Planning Board approval. This approval will also allow The Town's remaining parcel to be subdivided subject to existing ordinances.
6. These lots are for sale to abutting parcels and no new impact is proposed for Town services or environmental conditions.

If the Town Council is agreeable with the Plan then I will move forward with the sale of the land to the abutters after Planning Board approval. We will need to put the parcel out to bid that abuts Councilor Caron's property per state law. If he is the highest bidder then we can convey that parcel to him

The remaining buildable parcel at the east end of the property is 4.8 acres. I recommend that we determine an asking price for the parcel and then advertise the asking price.

We can discuss this further at the April 8th Council meeting.