

TOWN MEETING MINUTES
MAY 6, 2025

Council Members Present:

Michael Perkins, Chairman

Robert Nutting

Dana Wrigley Vice Chairman

David Groder

Kelly Roderick

Others Present:

SEE ATTACHED SIGN IN SHEETS

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Town Clerk Kathleen Paradis and led those present in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Nominate a Moderator:** Nominations by the Town Council were taken and Phillip Curtis was chosen to preside over the meeting.
2. **Swearing in of Moderator:** Town Clerk Kathleen Paradis swore in Phillip Curtis as Moderator.

Business Agenda:

Employee Appreciation Award: Oakland Resident and retired Recreation Director Eric Seekins gave us background on the award and was honored this year to have Officer Gene Richards receive the award.

1. **Spirit of America Award:** Council Chairman Michael Perkins presented the Ponitz family with this annual award. The Ponitz family has been instrumental in revitalizing the downtown businesses and have been involved in many community committees and events. Councilman Robert Nutting read a Sentiment from the State House and presented it to the Ponitz Family for all their work and being such great citizens to the town of Oakland.
2. **Town Manager Synopsis:** Town Manager Kelly Pinney- Manager gave an informative speech to those present regarding the budget process and how it comes about for the voting for the warrant articles. She also thanked the Town Employees for their hard work. She then thanked the 12 Budget and Advisory Members who work so diligently on getting this budget to where it is. She informed those present that there will be 4 positions open on the Budget and Advisory committee and papers would be available from August 6th to September 15th, 2025, and they could see Town Clerk Kathy Paradis. She also thanked those citizens who serve on various committees to keep moving Oakland forward.

3. **Moderator Instructions for the vote on the Budget Articles:** Moderator Phillip Curtis informed the residents and council members how the process of voting on the warrant articles. He stated that the council will vote on such articles with a motion and a second, then residents will vote on the same articles. He stated he will use the system of raising your hand and vote will be counted that way.

4. **Voting on Budget Articles:**

Article 2: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to pay any and all overdrafts from the 2024-2025 fiscal year that exceeds the \$10,001 limit authorize by Section 303 in the Oakland Town Charter. It was motioned by Michael Perkins and seconded by Dana Wrigley. Was passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 3: To see if the Town will vote to fix dates upon which 2025-2026 taxes shall become payable and to charge interest on same. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and was passed by Oakland Residents

Article 4: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for General Government. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and was passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 5: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Debt Services and Contingency. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and was passed by the Oakland Residents.

Article 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Public Library. Shawn Stevens questioned why such an increase in the budget. Town Manager Kelly Pinney-Michaud explained the cost of insurance had gone up this year. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and was passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 7: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Recreation Department. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 8: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Fire and Rescue. Jamie Phair questioned what the Fund Equity was. Town Manager explained that this is an account that is used to help departments with keeping the cost of their budget down. Shery Gilbert stated that the Council recommendation is 4-0-1 wanted to know why the one? Town Manager Kelley Pinney Michaud stated that Councilman David Groder is on the Fire Department and abstained from voting on the article. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Police Department. Shawn Stevens questioned by increase? Town Manager explained that the Police Department is now union, and we cannot negotiate on their salaries. George Bailey questioned for the School Resource Officer asked if

there were 3, there are only 2. Sherry Gilbert asked why the 1 vote from council was opposed and the one from Budget and Advisory. Councilor Kelly Roderick stated she voted against it due to the raises for non-union employees. Mike Rossignol from the Budget Advisory Committee stated he voted against it due to the large increase. It was motioned by Mike Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 10: To See if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Protection Services. Shawn Stevens asked for an explanation for this article. The Town Manager explained that this included fiber optics, Waterville Communications for answering calls for the police and fire department, hydrant rentals, street lights, street light insurance. Also, the town rental and Delta Ambulance which has increased their fees to the town. It was motioned by Michael Perkins and seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 11: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate for Animal Control. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 12: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Transfer Station and Recycling.

George Bailey asked why the equity fund last year and not this year. The Town Manager explained that she put the equity money in budgets where it was most needed. It was motioned by Michael Perkins and seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Public Works and Road Improvements. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Property Maintenance. Sherry Gilbert asked if that meant cutting back bushes. She walks on School Street and bushes are taking over the walking area. The Town Manager explained that this is a public works issue. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 15: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Capital Improvements. Roberta Santilli questioned the ordering of 3 trucks for public works asking if we always order 3 at a time. It was explained that the trucks are rotted out and we need to replace them. George Bailey asked if we could treat the trucks so that they would not rot out. Public Works Director Jeffrey Hall said that they are looking into this. Sherry Gilbert asked why the 1 vote against the article from the Budget and Advisory. Michael Rossignol stated he wanted to get 2 trucks not 3. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 16: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for Miscellaneous Requests:

Bridget Gherling asked why the Homeless Shelter and the Food Bank were not in this article, Sherry Gilbert echoed the same concern for the food bank. The Town Manager explained that the food bank was in Article 5 in contingency. Bob Knowlton wanted to know about the Growth Council. Town Manager explained that we had just a 3 year contract and she has spoken to Garvin and he has agreed to a 1-year

contract and will promote the town of Oakland. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 17: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate for the Conservations

Organizations. Sherry Gilbert asked why the reason for the one no vote on Budget Advisory? Michael Rossignol explained he did not agree with all the organizations. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 18: To see if the Town will vote to apply estimated General Fund Revenues in the amount of \$1,372,614 towards the appropriations to reduce taxation. Last year-\$1,252,817. Sherry Gilbert asked why it was 11-1 for Budget Advisory. It was explained that it should 12-0. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 19: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to sell or dispose of any real estate acquired by the Town for nonpayment of taxes. Except that the Municipal Officers shall use the special sale process required by 36 M.R.S. § 942-C for qualifying homestead property if they choose to see it to anyone other than the former owner(s). It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 20: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Town Council to accept any and all donations, gifts, reserves or grants and to expend such monies for the purpose stated. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 21: Shall the town of Oakland vote to approve a Community Development program and a possible Community Development Block Grant application and to submit same to the Department of Economic and Community Development? If said program is approved, to authorize the municipal officers to accept said grant funds, to make such assurance, further assume such responsibilities, and exercise such authority as are necessary and reasonable to implement such program. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 22: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Tax Collector and Treasurer to accept prepayment of taxes not yet committed pursuant to 35 M.R.S. Sec 506 with no payment of interest by the town. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Article 23: To authorize the use of reserve funds to update our GIS System and Tax map maintenance from the Digital Mapping Reserve Fund. (Current Balance: \$60,984.50. Project Cost \$30,900). It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and passed by Oakland Residents.

Adjourn: Moderator Phillip Curtis asked for a motion to adjourn. It was motioned by Michael Perkins, seconded by Dana Wrigley and unanimously voted by Oakland Residents to adjourn at 7:29pm.