

TOWN OF ORANGE
SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 25, 2023

Present: Eric Holmgren, Sheila Stone, Kevin Wilson

Assistant Clerk Diane Waters

Absent: Town Clerk Angela Eastman

Guests: Emily Ruff, Marsha Bancroft, Bob Galvin, Rod Coronado, Don Douglas

1. Call Meeting To Order: Chairperson Holmgren called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Approve Agenda: Stone requested two items be added -- (1) Grant question; (2) Letters from Provencher Lane residents.
3. Discuss Petition To Follow the State of Vermont Best Management Practices for Resolving Human-Beaver Conflicts in Vermont in Regards to the Beavers Next to the Municipal Septic System. Petition was submitted to the board at the June 26, 2023 selectboard meeting. Holmgren stated it is not a binding petition so there is no need to take action on it, and there is no need to create a policy at this time because we would be locked into it regardless of the individual situations. He feels it is not in the best interest of the town to stir up controversy again and there are other things to deal with in the town at this time. Stone expressed her concern that because so many residents were involved, she would like the townspeople to decide on the issue at Town Meeting. Wilson agreed, saying we should bring the matter back up closer to Town Meeting. Ruff questioned if that meant the town will not take any action between now and Town Meeting? Holmgren answered that it is a moot point now with the beavers gone due to the flooding. Coronado said he supports the issue going to the voters at Town Meeting and expressed his frustration over how he feels the town has handled the beaver situation. Stone will contact the town Tree Warden about removing the tree wrapping.
4. Discuss Municipal Septic Plant Growth and Wetland Issues: Wilson stated a swath of growth should be cut and removed over the back-up system area. An environmentally-safe product can be applied to any tree trunks left so their root system will not continue to grow. It was noted that both the church and the house next door to the Town Hall also have permits to use the area for a back-up system. Wilson will map out the line.
5. Discuss/Consider Appointment of Cemetery Commissioner: The opening for a third Cemetery Commissioner is being posted for 10 days. Coronado stated it is up to the Cemetery Commission, not the Selectboard, to appoint someone to fill the position until the next Town Meeting.
6. Discuss Proposed School Bus Stop at Riddel Pond Road: Stone said the school bus will be picking up a student at the intersection of Route 302 and Riddel Pond. Because this stop is at a curved and dangerous section of road, she is concerned about safety. After discussion, Wilson will reach out to the School District about possibly moving the bus stop to a safer section. Also, he will contact VTrans about installing School Bus Stop Ahead signs along Route 302.

7. Discuss/Consider Approval of the Fall 2023 Town Newsletter: Waters stated there are a few articles which are not yet finished. Holmgren would like an amount in the flood article of what the town has spent to date on road repairs. A copy of the completed newsletter will be emailed to the board members before being sent to the printer. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to approve the finalized newsletter so long as there are no objections from the board members.
8. Review Budgets: Holmgren inquired if it is possible to get the labor costs to date for the flood work. Wilson mentioned that the Tucker Road pothole patching costs should not be from the cold patch line item but from the grant line item.
9. Discuss/Consider Approving Warrants – Payroll and Accounts Payable: On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board approved the Accounts Payable warrant; Wilson abstained from voting. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Wilson, the board voted unanimously to approve the Payroll warrant.
10. Discuss/Consider Town Treasurer Position: Holmgren explained that he feels it would be beneficial to the Town to consider separating the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer positions as it was before. The treasurer position would be part-time, and it should lighten the workload of the Town Clerk. But because the Town Clerk was unable to attend tonight's meeting, the idea will be tabled until meeting with her to get her thoughts on it.

Additional Agenda Items:

Grants: Stone said the VT Department of Environmental Conservation is offering grants for financial assistance towards equipment. She thought it might be applicable to us for a grader replacement. Steve Simpson, on the town's grant committee, will reach out to the road crew. Cost share will be 35%-100% depending on the equipment project. The board felt the grant committee should pursue the grant.

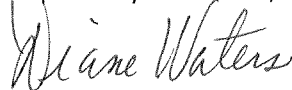
Provencher Lane Letters: Residents expressed concern over rocks in the road and the narrow section. Wilson said they are not finished with the road repairs, and that the narrow area will be widened to 19'-20' wide.

11. Executive Session as per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee: On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to go into executive session at 7:22 p.m. per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee.

On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to come out of executive session at 8:19 pm.

12. Adjourn: On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Waters, Assistant Clerk