

TOWN OF ORANGE

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

October 23, 2023

Present: Eric Holmgren, Sheila Stone, Kevin Wilson

Town Clerk Angela Eastman, Asst. Clerk Diane Waters

Guests: Emily Ruff, Carmella and Russell Tucker, Lee Youngman, Eileen and Charles Houle

1. Call Meeting To Order: Chair Holmgren called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Holmgren announced that because the agenda to the meeting was unintentionally improperly posted, any actions taken by the Board tonight will be ratified at the next meeting.
2. Approve Agenda: A guest asked if Public Comments could be added; the board agreed. There were no further agenda changes.

Additional Agenda Item:

Public Comments:

Carmella Tucker said she phoned Holmgren very upset about the fact the town office was not closed on the afternoon of October 20 for the funeral of John Barnes' wife and the fact there were no selectboard members at the funeral. She said many residents there saw the town was not represented and were upset. Stone stated that she was in fact at the funeral. Holmgren stated it was left up to Town Clerk Eastman to close the office and she opted to keep it open. Eastman said she was told by the board that she would have to use her own leave time if she closed the office, and she needed to save her leave for her son's medical issue.

Houle said he had heard that Road Foreman Barnes had been placed on probation by the selectboard. He commented that Barnes has worked for the town for many years and doing a great job. Tucker added that we are coming into winter and need our crew.

It was mentioned that kids on 4 wheelers are tearing up Smith Road. Eastman said she would advise the Orange County Sheriffs' Department who have been very proactive in town.

Wilson advised he received a disturbing complaint on social media which included a photo of his late mother.

3. Discuss/Consider Animal Control Ordinance: There was no motion made at the August 28 board meeting approving the ordinance. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Wilson, the board voted unanimously to approve the current animal control ordinance. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to set the date for the public hearing at December 11 at 6:00 p.m., followed by the regular board meeting.
4. Discuss Update on Insurance Policy: Eastman gave the board an update on the school parking lot accident claim. She stated the VLCT paid out \$9,182.00 and the case is now closed.

5. Consider Allowing Permission for Snowmobile Club to Access Town Property: The SnoBees snowmobile club sent their annual request for permission to use town property. There was discussion about requesting they stay off the hiking paths in the Town Forest. Holmgren felt the issue should be left as is but ask the club to put up signs saying to stay on their approved trails. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the selectboard voted unanimously to give permission to the snowmobile club to use town property between 9/1/23 – 4/15/24.
6. Discuss/Consider Grant Committee Updates: Stone stated there is one grant the committee feels would benefit the town regarding the John Deere grader. The RFP is not out yet, and two more quotes will be required. The road crew will be asked for their ideas regarding the replacement of the grader engine. Stone advised there is also a waterways clean-up grant to take care of river debris from the flood.
7. Discuss School Bus Stop Update: Wilson stated he contacted VTrans about installing a sign at the US 302/Riddel Pond Road intersection. VTrans responded that the intersection did not meet their requirements for a sign, and said they will contact the school directly with their decision. Tucker asked the Selectboard to reach out to the School Board about how the Selectboard feels the need for VTrans to install a sign at this dangerous intersection. Stone will talk to a School Board member about it.
8. Discuss ARPA Funding: ARPA funds need to be fully committed by December 31, 2024 and have to be fully allocated by December 1, 2026. The board requested a joint meeting with the original ARPA Committee at a November meeting.
9. Review Budgets: Eastman stated she is taking in a lot of tax money, including delinquent taxes. Lee Youngman reminded the board that ARPA spending is at the discretion of the Selectboard and does not need to go before voters. Eastman discussed the overages in Tech Support, Janitorial/Office, Dog Tags, and Security System accounts. The selectboard felt that the OCSD can double their patrol, particularly on Tucker Road, and still stay within budget.
10. Discuss/Consider New Credit Card: Eastman explained that due to changing banks, the selectboard needs to authorize the acquisition of a new credit card with the card limits and name of the employees holding the card. On a motion by Stone, seconded by Holmgren, the board voted unanimously to get a new bank card from Community National Bank with a credit line of \$2,500 total -- \$2,000 for Angela Eastman and \$500 for John Barnes. Holmgren stressed the need to follow the town's Purchasing Policy when using the cards and requested the town's Financial Policy be on the next meeting's agenda.
11. Discuss/Consider Agreement for Services for Scoping Study: Eastman explained the Transportation Alternatives grant for a sidewalk and crosswalk at the school. The Agreement For Services is to hire a consultant to do the study up to \$4,000 and will be done by the CVRPC at an hourly rate. On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to sign the Agreement For Services for the Scoping Study.
12. Consider Payroll and Accounts Payable Warrants: After review, on a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Wilson, the board voted unanimously to approve the Accounts Payable and Payroll warrants.

13. Discuss/Consider Road Options for Tucker Road and Reservoir Road: Wilson gave an update on the Provencher Road repairs. Re: reclaiming, only one quote has been received --

- a) \$23,595 for Tucker Road (from Bedard's farm to the bridge by Child's farm)
- b) \$23,050 for Reservoir Road (from Route 302 to the pavement)

The board said if they feel the road work can't be financed this year, they will put it before the voters at Town Meeting as a separate article. It was discussed which accounts the funds can come from (Tucker Road grant money and \$10,000 from resurfacing account) to do Tucker Road this year and Reservoir Road next spring. On a motion by Wilson, seconded by Holmgren, the board voted unanimously to reclaim Tucker Road this year. Eastman will put an RFP together following the work description from the one quote to get at least one additional quote. Also, Wilson will check into the cost of fixing the collapsing culvert by Goulette's.

14. Consider Setting Dates for FY24 Budget Meetings: The board agreed to meet on Monday, October 30 at 6:00 p.m. to begin discussion of the upcoming year's budgets. They will also meet with the ARPA Committee in November.

15. Discuss Personnel Policy Updates: Holmgren asked each board member to review the Personnel Policy and bring back at the next meeting any suggestions to change or update it. They will also plan to meet with employees for their input.

16. Discuss/Consider Changing Town Clerk/Treasurer Position From Salaried to Hourly: Eastman requested her position be changed to hourly. There was discussion of what the total hours worked would be. If kept at salary, she would like to get flex time for all the extra meetings she attends after regular office hours. Holmgren said any flex time would have to be used within 2 weeks of earning. Eastman said she should be allowed to use it whenever she wanted. After much discussion, Stone will contact the VLCT for their recommendations and will be brought up at another meeting.

17. Discuss/Consider Approving Previous Meeting Minutes: Tabled.

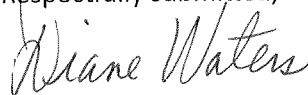
Executive Session:

On a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to go into executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) to discuss the employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee.

At 9:35 p.m. on a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to go out of executive session.

18. Adjourn: At 9:35 p.m. on a motion by Holmgren, seconded by Stone, the board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane Waters, Assistant Town Clerk