

TOWN OF ORANGE

SELECTBOARD MEETING MINUTES

November 25th, 2024

The Meeting of the Town of Orange Selectboard was called to order in person by Selectboard Chair Steve Simpson at 6:11pm in the Town Hall at Orange, Vermont. In attendance were: Selectboard Members Steve Simpson, Wayne Symonds, and Kevin Wilson. Other Town Staff present were Town Clerk Chelsea Magwire and Lister/Delinquent Tax Collector John McNeil. Members of the public present were Tim Stone, Sheila Stone, Gary Eggleston, and Lee Youngman.

Approve Selectboard Minutes

A. 11/13/2024 Special & Regular Meetings

* To the Regular Meeting Minutes, SB Member Wilson requested the Town Clerk change Mike Raboin, Sr. to Mike Raboin, Jr.

SB Member Wilson moved to add to the Special Meeting Minutes the motion to award Randy Pickel's bid of \$2,800.00. Seconded by SB Chair Simpson.

Approve Agenda

* SB Member Wilson requested to add Tree Cutting to the RC Report.

* SB Member Symonds requested to add "Discussion" to the item "Rec Committee Policy w/ Revisions".

SB Member Symonds moved to approve the agenda with corrections. Seconded by SB Member Wilson.

Road Commissioner's Report

A. Riddel Pond Culvert

- a. SB Member Wilson stated that the culvert replacement was finished on 11/25/2024, and all went well.
- b. SB Member Wilson proposed purchasing blocks or Jersey barriers until guardrails can be put in place.

B. Winter Sand

- a. SB Member Wilson stated that 30 loads of sand have already been hauled. He also shared that the sand will be billed to next year's budget (FY2025).

C. Bennett's Mill Tree Cutting

- a. SB Member Wilson shared that there is a tree hanging over the road, it is dangerous, and needs to be cut.
- b. The Board discussed a second tree on Cutler Corner Rd. for SB Member Wilson to investigate.

Town Clerk Report

- A. Election Results
 - a. Justices of the Peace, for the term starting February 1st, 2025, will be:
 - i. Tina Otis
 - ii. Lee Martensen
 - iii. Fred Kidder
 - iv. Kevin Wilson
 - v. Sue Perreault
- B. Work on the Town Report has begun.
- C. Discussion on HeyGov
 - a. SB Chair Simpson requested a comparison on how much staff time would be saved.
 - b. SB Member Symonds requested for a demo of the program to be scheduled.
 - c. Delinquent Tax Collector John McNeil spoke to a more easy reconciliation process because this program is already integrated with NEMRC.

FEMA Disaster Declared for 7/10-11/24 Flood

- A. FEMA Meeting, November 21, 2024
 - a. The Town has identified 24 separate sites and is working on identifying work hours and equipment use for each site.
 - i. SB Chair Simpson shared that each site requires GPS Coordinates, and anything over 100ft long requires GPS Coordinates for start and end points.
 - ii. SB Chair Simpson also shared that the Town has identified several culverts that will need to be replaced.
 - b. SB Member Symonds suggested that having good documentation of who did what and when will be helpful in completing required forms. SB Chair Simpson clarified that those records have been kept.
 - c. SB Member Wilson stated that the Town may be able to supplement funding with the Better Back Roads grant for the culvert on Cutler Corner Road.

Warrants/Payroll

- A. Lafayette Proposal for Signs
 - a. SB Member Symonds explained to the room how the contract is broken down, including price per area.
 - b. SB Member Symonds also requested for SB Member Wilson to contact Lafayette to determine if they are able to provide traffic control, as this project is grant-funded.

SB Member Symonds moved to approve Lafayette to do the Curve Signs with the amount not to exceed the grant that's covering this work. Seconded by SB Member Wilson.

SB Member Symonds amended motion to permit SB Chair Simpson to sign the proposal on behalf of the Board. Seconded by SB Member Wilson.

B. Payroll & Warrants

SB Member Symonds moved to approve both Payroll and Warrants. Seconded by SB Member Wilson.

SB Member Symonds moved to approve payment to Duranleau Construction for the Riddel Pond Bridge Culvert for \$75,900.00, pending State approval of the work. Seconded by SB Member Wilson.

Major MERP Grant Awarded to Orange

*For the sake of time, this item was exchanged in order with the following item pertaining to the Rec. Committee.

- A. SB Chair Simpson explained this is an “energy grant”, and a preliminary grant went toward scoping the Town Office, Town Hall, and Town Garage. This grant does not require a match from the Town, but there is a timeline. The Grants Committee is to meet with Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) on November 26th, 2024 at 10:30am to discuss further.
 - a. Town Garage – Study found a need for improvements to insulation and HVAC, and recommended the addition of motion lights.
 - b. Town Hall – Study found a need for updates to the windows, doors, and repair/venting to the roof, as well as lighting and HVAC upgrades. The addition of heat pumps was also discussed.
 - c. Town Office – Study found a need for updates to the walls, ceilings, windows, and repair/venting to the roof. The addition of solar to the roof was also discussed.
- B. SB Chair Simpson shared that Project Management is built into the grant. The grant must be signed by December 16th, 2024 in order to secure funding. The amount awarded to the town is \$402,731.00.
- C. SB Chair Simpson requested preliminary approval from the Board, so long as the Grant can satisfy the conditions the Town requires.
 - a. SB Member Wilson expressed concern with making the Town Hall too “air-tight”, with adding motion lights to the Garage, and with heat pump efficiency.
 - b. SB Member Symonds requested clarification on if the Grant is for 3 buildings for a total of \$400,000, is it required that an equal amount be spent on each building.
 - i. SB Chair Simpson stated that it is not.
 - 1. SB Member Symonds also requested clarification on if the Town is able to complete all recommended upgrades on one or two buildings and then some on others, would that be permitted.
 - c. SB Member Symonds inquired about budgeting that would limit the Town from hiring a qualified Project Manager to ensure timely bids, etc., and stated that it would be great if the Town could secure funding to do some of the upgrades.
 - d. SB Member Wilson inquired if the Town could use the grant on the structure of the buildings.
 - i. SB Member Symonds stated that roof repair and ADA improvements are permitted by the grant.
 - e. SB Member Symonds inquired if CVRPC is assuming they’ll fulfill the role of Project Manager for the Town.

- i. SB Chair Simpson stated that during the scoping project, management did go through CVRPC.
- f. SB Member Symonds stated that he would like to discuss once more after the Grants Committee meeting on 11/26 and before the Deadline.

Rec Committee Policy Discussion, w/ Revisions

- A. SB Member Symonds acknowledged not having a quorum at meetings causes additional stress, and inquired if there is a way to create a 2-tiered structure to avoid cutting people from the Committee, but amending the quorum requirements.
 - a. Lee Youngman expressed the Committee has no Chair, so there is no “point person”.
- B. SB Chair Simpson recommended sending the Policy back to the Committee
 - a. Lee Youngman expressed feeling that the Policy should stay with the Selectboard until finalized.
 - i. Discussion took place among Recreation Committee members present regarding whether this is the most appropriate action.
 - 1. SB Chair Simpson recommended leaving the Policy on the agenda so that it continues moving forward.

Finance Report

* The Finance Report was not available for this meeting, and will be on the agenda for the next.

Establish Delinquent Tax Policy, 1st Reading

- A. SB Member Symonds recommended removing the Town Clerk’s phone number from the Policy, and ordering the signature block to reflect the structure of the Board.
- B. Delinquent Tax Collector, John McNeil, advised that he will add parentheses around references to Statute.
- C. Tim Stone inquired about if there was a way for people to “work off their debt” to the town. He acknowledged that not all people may be able to provide services, but some may.
 - a. John McNeil stated that it is always possible for someone to do work for the town as a contractor and to have that payment go toward their taxes.
 - i. SB Member Symonds mentioned that this could be considered as “payment before the deadline”.
 - ii. SB Chair Simpson clarified that in order to do it this way, the Town would need to write a check to the individual, and they would then return the funds as tax payment.
 - 1. Lee Youngman suggested the Board discuss this with the Department of Labor to learn more about best practices regarding similar instances.

RFP for Tax Reappraisal (Anticipated Occurring 2029)

- A. John McNeil suggested that he will change the signature block to match SB Member

- Symond's request on the Delinquent Tax Policy.
- B. SB Member Symonds inquired about where the Request for Proposals would be posted.
- a. John McNeil advised that there is a list of approved vendors from the State.

SB Member Symonds moved to approve posting the request for proposals for property reappraisal. SB Member Wilson seconded.

Public Comment

- * Gary Eggleston stated that he had heard the town is "being sued" by a former Town Clerk. He inquired about a conflict of interest with two Selectboard members.
- * SB Chair Simpson clarified that there is no lawsuit.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39pm by a motion by SB Member Wilson. Seconded by SB Member Symonds.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea E. Magwire, Town Clerk