

Town of Orange
Recreation Committee Meeting
Minutes
Orange Town Hall
August 6, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.

In attendance - Janis Blais, David Gomo, Eric Holmgren, Michael Raboin, Emily Ruff, Sheila Stone, Kevin Wilson

1. Call the meeting to order - Sheila Stone called meeting to order at 6:35 pm
2. Approve agenda - Kevin Wilson made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Michael Raboin seconded. All members voted in favor.
3. Choose secretary - Emily Ruff volunteered to serve as secretary.
4. Approve minutes

Kevin Wilson made a motion to approve the July 2 minutes with the following amendment "*\$345 was made at the dinner. A \$900 donation from a resident directed to the Town Forest.*" David Gomo seconded. All in favor.

5. Work plan for the recreation field
 - a. Include budget in discussion

Kevin Wilson spoke with NEMRC representative on August 5th and reported that the Recreation account has \$41 currently, after payment of utility bill and mowing. Michael Raboin indicated that the Selectboard had moved to pay for the mowing out of a separate fund. Kevin Wilson will speak to the Selectboard to clarify the source of funds for mowing. Discussion ensued regarding a \$12,000 seasonal mowing bid and how installments are billed among the various mowing. Janis Blais asked if the Selectboard has ever considered hiring a student to mow. Kevin Wilson indicated that the Selectboard has only approved a one year contract this year, and has discussed purchasing a mower to hire a contractor to operate. Michael Raboin asked about disconnecting the electric utility until the recreation field is in service. Several members noted that there has been dumping at the field. Emily Ruff recommended obtaining copies of the recreation budget for FY 23, FY 24 and FY25 YTD in order to review the transactions in detail. Janis Blais inquired about the need for the recreation field given the trends among youth for activities. Michael Raboin indicated the increased request of funding allocation from the town for FY25 was to address the washout and ditches. He advocated for removing the ball field or moving it to the other side of the property, to open up the space and provide more opportunity for other activities, such as adding a picnic pavilion. Several members noted that some buildings on site need to be demolished or moved. Emily Ruff noted that the December 2024 Recreation Committee meeting minutes outlined \$8,000 worth of expenses the committee voted to request for our budget allocation, but that the minutes incorrectly totaled these expenses as \$7,000, and further noted that only \$5,000 was noted in the voted article for the committee's allocation at Town Meeting. Eric Holmgren recommended we obtain a copy of the Recreation Committee budget from the Town Treasurer for each committee meeting and include the *Recreation Committee Budget Review* as a recurring agenda item. Members agreed on the need to obtain clarification from the Selectboard and the Town Treasurer on the current actual budget for the committee's account. Michael Raboin inquired about using Road Crew to do some of the work at the Recreation Field. Kevin Wilson indicated that was not likely this year due to staffing issues and highway projects, but indicated his intention to mow the ditch in the Recreation Field in the meantime while the Town is working on hiring new staff. Michael Raboin suggested the committee schedule a work day at the Recreation Field. He suggested we

target the basketball court area as that might be a greater attraction. Kevin Wilson noted that he has communicated with some families in Topsham who may be interested in supporting the project in order for their youth to participate in, since that town does not have recreation facilities. Janis Blais asked if any of the grindings from recent road work stored at the Town Pit could be used at the Recreation Field. Kevin Wilson shared that there are already plans for much of the grindings and would determine what might remain for Recreation Field use after the current commitments are fulfilled. Kevin Wilson offered to brush hog some of the higher growth in the lower area of the field. Michael Raboin proposed Saturday September 27th for a recreation field workday. The time will be decided at the September 3rd committee meeting. Before that date, Kevin Wilson will bring his tractor to the field to do initial work to create access, and will communicate with the committee when he is planning to work. Eric Holmgren indicated that clearing the ditches should be reasonable work to start with.

6. Fundraising Consideration

- a. Pie for Breakfast
- b. Field Day @ recreation field
- c. Include budget in discussion

Kevin Wilson suggests that the committee meet with the Selectboard to discuss the budget. Sheila Stone proposed that we table this agenda item until after that time. The consensus was to request the Selectboard join us for our next meeting on September 3, to request copies of the YTD budget transactions, and to confirm meeting minutes where the Selectboard voted that mowing or utility was not going to be sourced from the Recreation Committee budget. Kevin Wilson advocated that the Town create a separate line item account for Recreation Allocation versus Recreation Fundraising, so that funds from activities such as Spaghetti Dinner, donations or Pie for Breakfast not risk being commingled with allocated funds for the ongoing expenses.

7. Town forest update

Michael Raboin indicated that there is a Planning Commission meeting at 4:30 pm on August 13, and public comment on the Town Forest proposed plan will be taken at 5 pm. There is supposed to be a link to the Forest Plan on the Town website, but it could not be located during the meeting. There are printed copies available for viewing at the Town Office. The Planning Commission will be taking input and will make a recommendation to the Selectboard who will then vote on the plan. Michael Raboin noted his support that the proposed plan should be supported and felt the forester was very thorough and covered a lot of different things. Eric Holmgren suggested that if the Selectboard accepts the plan then the Recreation Committee needs to work consistently with the Selectboard to implement it, informing the committee that plans have been adopted in the past but they have sat on a shelf. Kevin Wilson indicated there are changing rules regarding trails and hunting, and suggested that the Committee could invest a lot of work in the trails and then not be able to use them. Eric Holmgren suggested that between creating access to the forest and logging, development of trails would realistically be ten years down the road, after logging is completed. Kevin Wilson asked about the condition of the road. Michael Raboin noted that from the gate to where the road ends is good, but the other way is wet intermittently. He suggested that the Town should communicate with Woodwise based on their adjacent access. Eric Holmgren proposed that the revenue from the logging should go back into the Town Forest and recreation activities. Michael Raboin said that trailhead access should be down near where the old road ends and discouraged access higher up into the forest.

8. Checklist of required items for events and events list

Betzy Bancroft was going to work on this list but is not present at this meeting. There are no

imminent events, so this agenda item will be tabled until the next meeting.

9. Other business

There is no other business.

10. Select moderator for next meeting September 3, 2025

Kevin Wilson made a motion for Sheila Stone to serve as moderator. Michael Raboin seconded.

11. Determine agenda

12. Adjourn - Eric Holmgren makes a motion to adjourn at 7:39 pm. David Gomo seconded. All in favor.