

TOWN OF ORANGE
SELECTBOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
July 2nd, 2025

The Special Meeting of the Town of Orange Selectboard was called to order in person by SB Chair Steve Simpson at 5:10pm in the Town Clerk's Office at Orange, Vermont. In attendance were Selectboard Members Steve Simpson, Kevin Wilson, and Kristin Paya. Also in attendance were Sheila Stone, Tim Stone, Michael Raboin, Jr., Ginny Raboin, Eric Holmgren, and Gary Eggleston.

- SB Chair Simpson, upon calling the meeting to order, distributed to those present a copy of the report of an Ethics Complaint filed on May 9th, 2025, as prepared by Chelsea Magwire, Town Clerk.

A. Ginny Raboin requested the report of the findings of investigation be written into the minutes, and that the report be read aloud.

a. SB Chair Simpson requested clarification, to which both Mrs. Raboin and Sheila Stone stated they would like for him to follow the agenda.

b. SB Chair Simpson read the report aloud. Said report may be found at the end of these meeting minutes.

B. SB Chair Simpson opened the floor for public comment.

a. Michael Raboin inquired as to if SB Member Paya was going to address the findings and issue an apology for the accusations that were made.

i. Mr. Raboin inquired as to if SB Vice Chair Wilson was contacted about the meeting before it was posted. SB Chair Simpson stated that he had called SB Vice Chair Wilson and left voicemails.

ii. Sheila Stone stated that the report states that there is a Screenshot of SB Vice Chair Wilson's phone which shows no incoming calls from SB Chair Simpson. Mrs. Stone requested for SB Chair Simpson to share evidence of these phone calls.

iii. Mr. Raboin shared that the purpose of this meeting is troubling to him, and that he feels the elected officials of the Town should be working together well in order to function properly as a Town.

b. Tim Stone stated that the evening of the events in question, SB Member Paya had gone home for her Town Office keys and then returned to the office. He then inquired as to why the Board members present did not call SB Vice Chair Wilson for his keys. Mr. Stone also inquired as to the legality of some other Board meetings.

c. Mr. Raboin inquired as to if SB Chair Simpson was gathering information before making a decision, and stated that he feels the findings are clear.

d. Ginny Raboin stated that she finds it troubling that a member of the Board is seemingly going against another Board member, and that she feels that SB Member Paya has violated her Oath, as well as State law and Town policy. Mrs. Raboin then requested SB Member Paya's resignation, stating issues of trust from Town residents and the current Selectboard.

e. Mr. Stone stated belief that SB Chair Simpson had been holding meetings illegally before SB Member Paya was on the Board.

f. Sheila Stone stated that she would like to see the email that SB Chair Simpson and SB Member Paya have stated SB Vice Chair Wilson was carbon copied on regarding the warning of the meeting. She also shared belief that this is not the first instance of incorrect information being shared, but the first time it was documented, as well as feeling that SB Member Paya has demonstrated that she is not on the Board merely to represent the people that she was elected to represent.

i. Mrs. Raboin stated belief that based on the actions in the report considered, SB Member Paya is not in a position to serve.

ii. Mrs. Stone reiterated that members of the Board should be able to respect one another regardless of personal feelings of other members.

C. SB Chair Simpson stated that there will be no Executive Session, due to the fact that two Selectboard members are to recuse themselves on all votes during this meeting and shared the applicable Statute and Town policy. He also shared that he spoke with a number of attorneys and state officials for guidance on how to proceed.

a. Sheila Stone stated that in his role, SB Chair Simpson does have the authority to recommend corrective action.

b. Michael Raboin stated that with the Selectboard putting themselves in a position where a quorum of the Board is unable to vote, the Chair of the Board can request the Board member to resign. SB Chair Simpson stated that he is not able to do that unilaterally.

i. Eric Holmgren stated that per the Town's Ethics Compliance policy, the Chair of the Board may discuss the violation and potential resolution with the accused member. General discussion among the Public occurred briefly regarding this statement.

c. Ginny Raboin inquired of SB Chair Simpson how the Board will move forward. SB Chair Simpson stated that he is anticipating more information from the Town's attorney.

i. Mr. Raboin stated that there may be precedent and cited a similar situation previously in the Town of Chelsea where all but one Board member resigned voluntarily.

SB Member Paya moved to adjourn the meeting at 5:45pm. SB Chair Simpson seconded the motion. SB Vice Chair Wilson abstained from voting.

Respectfully submitted,
Chelsea E. Magwire, Town Clerk

Here is the full retyped version of the **Ethics Complaint Report** prepared by Chelsea Magwire, Town Clerk, exactly as it appears in your document:

Prepared by: Chelsea Magwire, Town Clerk
Date: 5/23/2025
Investigation of Ethics Complaint: Complaint #25-01

Summary:

Upon receipt of Complaint #25-01, involving the alleged spread of misinformation by Kristin Paya regarding an incident between Selectboard members Kevin Wilson and Steve Simpson on May 9th, 2025. The complaint was printed and read thoroughly. Other relevant information was obtained and reviewed immediately.

It has been found that the events outlined in the complaint are factual and that it is appropriate to bring this to the Board for review, and that the Board take appropriate action as outlined in the Ethics Compliance Policy.

Background:

On Tuesday, May 20th, 2025, I received an email containing an Ethics Complaint from Sheila Stone, an Orange resident. The complaint outlines an event in which Kristin Paya allegedly shared information that was incorrect regarding a discussion she was not present for. The Complaint describes the events that occurred—a conversation between Kevin Wilson and Steve Simpson—on the evening that a Special Meeting of the Selectboard had been scheduled.

The Complaint cites two sections of VT Statute, 24 V.S.A. § 1992 and 24 V.S.A. § 1993, which are part of the State of VT Municipal Code of Ethics. These two sections, respectively, discuss Conflicts of Interest and Prohibited Conduct. The Complaint also lists two residents who were also witness to the events in question and that there is a videotape which substantiates the claims made.

Methodology:

Upon receiving the complaint, it was immediately reviewed and the Statutes listed were printed and reviewed for relevant content. I reviewed the video taken by Tim Stone to ensure understanding of the events in question. Tim Stone and Gary Eggleston, who witnessed the events, were asked by email for written statements. Both did provide their statements in writing, which were reviewed and attached to the Complaint. Because Kristin Paya had also shared information on these events with me by text, in order to have a complete record of the incident, these texts were screenshotted and attached to the Complaint.

Kevin Wilson was aware of the Complaint made, and on May 21st, shared with me that he had also heard from a resident who Kristin Paya had shared the same information with. I have attempted to have that resident contact me with a statement, with no success. Mr. Wilson also submitted to me a screenshot of his outgoing and incoming calls from May 8th and 9th, 2025.

Factual Findings:

After reviewing the Complaint, both accounts from other residents present, and the video of the events, I have found the following:

On the evening of Friday, May 9th, 2025, Kevin Wilson and Steve Simpson were parked side-by-side and Mr. Wilson began a conversation regarding the legality of the meeting as all Selectboard members were not notified. The discussion occurred on the left side of Mr. Wilson's vehicle. At this point, neither party had raised their voice. There were several parking spaces to the right between Mr. Wilson's vehicle and the next vehicle, which had its windows up. Mr. Simpson approached that vehicle and notified the occupant that the meeting would be rescheduled. That individual left the parking lot at that time.

Around this same time, Kristin Paya parked beside the Town Hall and Mr. Simpson approached her vehicle. The two spoke briefly, and Mrs. Paya left. Mr. Simpson returned to his own vehicle and the discussion continued between him and Mr. Wilson, including discussion of whose responsibility it was to notify Board members of meetings. Mr. Wilson stated that it was the responsibility of the Board member calling the meeting. The two looked at their phones to prove whether Mr. Wilson had been contacted by Mr. Simpson to notify him of the meeting. The conversation ended shortly thereafter.

Later in the evening, Mrs. Paya contacted me by text to inform me that Mr. Wilson had caused a scene in front of someone scheduled for an interview and had mentioned that I had not warned the meeting properly, which caused the meeting to be cancelled.

Conclusion:

Having proven that Mrs. Paya was not present for these events, nor were her version of events factual, I do find that these actions are in violation of 24 V.S.A. § 1993(b).

b. Preferential treatment. A municipal officer shall act impartially and not unduly favor or prejudice any person in the course of conducting official business...

Recommendations:

It is my recommendation that the Legislative Body meet to discuss the conduct of the Municipal Officer in open meeting rather than in private, and as a Board rather than in a 1 on 1 conversation.

This recommendation is in pursuance of the Ethics Compliance Policy (Section 5(A)(2)), and with regard to the fact that the nature of the complaint involves all three Selectboard members.
