

Town of Orange
Selectboard Special Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2026
Town Complex – 6:30 PM

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Present:

Steve Simpson, Kristin Paya, Kevin Wilson, Diane Hallenbeck

2. Executive Session

At 6:31 PM, Kevin Wilson made a motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313 (Personnel). Kristin seconded the motion. All were in favor.

At 7:16 PM, Steve Simpson made a motion to exit Executive Session. Kevin Wilson seconded the motion. All were in favor.

No action was taken as a result of Executive Session.

3. Return to Open Session / Budget Meeting

Upon returning to Open Session, the following joined:

Eric Holmgren, John McNeil, Lisa Allard, and Scott Edwards.

The Board continued its review and discussion of the proposed FY2026 budget.

Review of 2025 Budget Lines

Board members reviewed 2025 budget line items in comparison to the proposed FY2026 budget. Discussion focused on historical spending patterns and whether proposed amounts accurately reflect anticipated needs. Discrepancies were noted between certain 2025 line items as previously reported and the figures reflected in the current Town Report.

Clarification was requested regarding how the figures were derived and whether adjustments or corrections would be necessary.

Delinquent Tax Discussion

The Board discussed delinquent tax revenue and its impact on overall budgeting. Consideration was given to collection trends, projected revenues, and how delinquent taxes should be reflected in the FY2026 budget.

Budget Articles Consistency

Eric raised the topic of reporting consistent budget articles from year to year.

Audit Update

An update was provided regarding the Town audit. The 2024 audit is currently being worked on. Prior years have been reconciled and are prepared for audit review.

The Board discussed the status of outstanding audits. At this time, a definitive timeline for completion of prior audits is not available.

MERP Discussion

The Board discussed the Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP), specifically the \$26,000 allocation for repairs in the Town Clerk's office.

Residents present expressed concern that the \$26,000 portion of the MERP project should have been presented as a separate article for voter consideration, rather than being incorporated directly into the proposed budget.

It was noted that the MERP grant had previously been described as 100% funded. Concern was raised that the amount now appears within the budget without additional explanatory narrative in the Town Report.

Clarification was provided that while the MERP grant itself is 100% funded, certain components of the overall project may not be fully covered by grant funds.

Road Maintenance – Cold Patch

The Board discussed the Road Maintenance line item related to “cold patch.” It was noted that the 2025 actual expenditure for cold patch materials was \$1,043, while the proposed FY2026 budget reflects \$35,000.

That expense should have been categorized under the paving.

4. Adjournment

At 8:57 PM, Kevin made a motion to adjourn. Kristin seconded. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 8:57 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Hallenbeck