

TOWN OF ORANGE
Grant Committee Meeting Minutes
April 3, 2026 | Orange Town Office / Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 A.M. Steve Simpson (SS) chaired the meeting; Emily Ruff (ER) served as vice chair. Members present: Lee Cattaneo (LC), Emily Ruff (ER), Steve Simpson (SS), Greg Colling (GC), Lee Youngman (LY), Sam Lash (SL).

2. Agenda Revisions

GC requested an opportunity to receive feedback on the RFP and bid set documents. Discussion clarified that the underground storage tank (UST) situation affects construction dates but not bid dates; environmental testing will be required as part of the UST removal process.

Motion: SS | Second: LC | Approved.

3. Approval of Minutes — March 20, 2026

Motion: LY | Second: LC | Approved.

4. Review MERP Project

a. Scope of Work and RFPs

i. Project Scheduling — Underground Storage Tanks (USTs)

SS and GC provided a detailed update on the two underground storage tanks on the property:

- Wheeler Engineering (a state-approved environmental engineering firm) previously surveyed both tanks. The tank adjacent to the town clerk office is estimated at approximately 500 gallons with a small amount of product remaining; the second tank is at the northwest/southwest corner of the town hall and is not expected to interfere with construction work.
- Fill pipes on both tanks enter at an angle, making it impossible to gauge contents by stick — all quantities are estimates.
- Wheeler Engineering estimated \$6,000 to \$10,000 to remove both tanks and complete required state-reported environmental work, assuming no significant contamination. SS also contacted Absolute Spill (recommended) for a competing estimate; that estimate is pending. SS will follow up this afternoon.
- The State does not require a permit or State presence for removal, but the removing contractor must notify the State before digging.
- Tanks were required to be removed within one year of the end of active use. They were last used when LP gas was installed (winter 2022-2023). Removal is therefore overdue. The committee agreed this is urgent and must proceed.
- GC recommended proceeding one tank at a time, beginning with the town clerk office tank, given its proximity to the planned exterior wall expansion (approximately 4 inches of added thickness).
- Any remaining product will be hauled to an approved disposal site. Tank shells, if clean, can be scrapped. Town backhoe can assist with excavation; Wheeler Engineering must be on-site throughout.

ii. Finalize RFPs — Bid Set and Scope of Work

GC prepared a complete draft bid set and invitation to bid, dated April 3, 2026, and is seeking committee and SL review. GC emailed the documents to all present. Key discussion:

- Fire Safety / Town Hall Occupancy: GC met with fire lieutenant Ryan Aremburg (RA) in March for a walkthrough of both buildings. RA identified concerns related to different occupancy classifications: the town office is a business occupancy (approximately 13-person limit); the town hall is an assembly occupancy subject to higher fire protection and public safety requirements. RA committed to a written

follow-up report but has not delivered it despite two follow-up calls. GC incorporated meeting notes into the bid set scope.

- Fire Alarm System: The most significant scope addition is a fire alarm system for the town hall. SS obtained a quote of \$27,682, inclusive of both buildings and a cell/internet communicator. The main panel would be installed in the town hall with a connection to the town office. This cost is included in the FY26 budget revision and is not covered by MERP; separate cost tracking is required. GC has labeled this item "by others" in the bid documents. The system will provide automatic notification to designated contacts (police, fire, members).
- Roofing and Insulation: The existing roofing contract will remain separate from the general contractor bid. The roofing contractor expressed willingness to expand scope to include ventilation, insulation baffles, and blown-in cellulose insulation to code; a revised scope and cost estimate will be requested. Roofing is not covered by MERP; insulation is. Separate invoices for MERP vs. non-MERP line items will be required.
- Soft Costs: SL clarified that while non-MERP items cannot be charged to the grant, the MERP soft cost allowance covers comprehensive project coordination. No concern was raised about allocation.
- BGS Amendments: SL noted that BGS is withholding full approval of budget amendments until a contractor is selected and budget distribution is clear. SL recommended proceeding per BGS preference. A meeting with BGS should be scheduled promptly after bid selection to confirm amendments in writing. SL offered to participate in the bid review process.
- BGS Agency of Administration Review: BGS has a May 15 meeting with the Agency of Administration at which municipal MERP projects may be reviewed for progress. Having the RFP posted and the pre-bid meeting complete before that date is important. SL noted that RPC has advocated for RPC representation at that meeting.
- Vermont Prevailing Wage: LY raised whether Vermont prevailing wage requirements apply. This needs to be verified. SL will check through their office. SL recommended contacting Megan Fuller at BGS promptly, as she is going on leave soon. SL noted that MERP directs towns to follow their own procurement policy; the town purchasing policy currently references Davis-Bacon, which may govern. VLCT may also be a useful resource. Vermont prevailing wage rates can be significantly higher than Davis-Bacon.
- Bid Process and Select Board Authority: The Grant Committee does not have authority to expend funds; only the Select Board (and Cemetery Commission) have that authority in Orange. The committee will review bids, make a recommendation, and bring it to the Select Board for final approval. A special Select Board meeting is warranted during the week of June 1 to avoid waiting for the regular June 8 meeting.
- Invitation to Bid: GC has been merging language from a BGS invitation-to-bid template and SL's earlier professional services RFP. SL confirmed use of the BGS template is optional. SL shared a link in the Zoom chat to MERP's contracting page, which includes examples of current bids from other towns.
- Posting and Bid Management: GC will serve as the primary point of contact for the bid process, managing the bidder list, collecting and responding to questions, and leading the pre-bid walkthrough. The town will post the bid on its website, three local public locations, and bidvermont.com. Diane Hallenbeck may assist with logistics. SL offered to walk a town staff member through the Vermont bid posting process.

Approved Bidding Schedule:

- Approve RFP: Friday, April 10 — Zoom, 11:00 A.M.
- Begin Posting: Monday, April 13 — Town website, three local locations, bidvermont.com
- Pre-Bid Meeting and Walk-Through: Monday, April 27
- Questions Due: Monday, May 4
- Questions Answered: Monday, May 18

- Bids Due: 5:00 P.M., Thursday, May 28
- Bid Opening: 11:00 A.M., Friday, May 29
- Select Board Approval: Week of June 1 (special meeting to be requested)

Note: BGS Agency of Administration meeting is May 15. SL requested advance notice if Zoom participation in the bid review or Select Board meeting is needed, as SL will be traveling internationally and operating 6 hours ahead.

Staff Relocation Planning During Construction

GC noted that a relocation plan for the town clerk, treasurer, and delinquent tax collector/lister during construction must be included in the bid documents so contractors can plan their work sequence. Discussion:

- GC suggested boxing in space in front of the stage in the town hall as temporary staff quarters.
- Careful coordination between staff and contractor will be required around timing of power and water shutoffs.
- GC will contact Mike at Computer Barn to coordinate technology needs during relocation.
- Staff will need to post a plan for temporarily restricted vault access. GC suggested limiting vault hours to one day per week, with access through the side door, until construction is complete.

b. Grant Tracking - Carried to next meeting.

c. Review Financials - Carried to next meeting.

5. Status Updates — Grants in Progress

- Better Roads (Dan Judkins) - SS and Road Crew met to plan
- Grants in Aid (Ashley Andrews) - SS and Road Crew met to plan.
- Municipal Planning Grant (Town Plan) carried to next meeting.
- Park and Ride Grant carried to next meeting.

6. Application Status

All items carried to next meeting.

- HSIP Grant (Guardrail and Ledge Removal)
- PACIF (Personnel Safety)
- Salt Shed

7. Grants for Consideration

- T-Mobile and AARP Grants for Recreation Facilities - ER reported these were submitted by deadline.
- Federal Grants for Emergency Response - Carried to next meeting.

8. Other Business

No additional business was raised.

9. Next Meeting

Next meeting: Friday, April 10, 11:00 A.M. via Zoom (RFP approval). All remaining agenda items are carried forward to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:10 P.M.