

TOWN OF ORANGE, VERMONT
Selectboard Meeting Minutes
May 7, 2026 – 6:00 p.m.
Orange Town Hall

Attendance

Steve Simpson, Kristin Paya, Carmella Tucker, John McNeil, Diane Hallenbeck, Michael Raboin Jr., Philo Raboin, Zach Handelman, Esq., Lee Cattaneo, James Burt, Kevin Wilson, Cheryl Farnum, Robert Maddock, Tim Stone, Simon Davies, Susan Childs.

Call to Order

Chair Steve Simpson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
Two agenda items scheduled for the end of the meeting were postponed to the next regular Selectboard meeting.

Executive Session

Kristin Paya made a motion to enter Executive Session at 6:01 p.m. Carmella Tucker seconded the motion. All in favor.

Kristin Paya made a motion to invite Attorney Zach Handelman to attend Executive Session.
Carmella Tucker seconded. All in favor.

Carmella Tucker made a motion to exit Executive Session at 6:27 p.m. Kristin Paya seconded. No action was taken during Executive Session.

The Board returned to regular session at 6:29 p.m.

Public Comment - opened at 6:30 p.m.

Residents discussed:

- Improving communication with residents, including website notifications and RSS feeds;
- Concerns regarding Town Meeting information and communication surrounding the grader purchase;
- Access to information shared online;
- Open Meeting Law posting requirements and public notice procedures.

The Board agreed to continue discussion regarding communication methods at the next regular Selectboard Meeting.

Discussion Regarding Open Meeting Law Complaint

Steve Simpson referenced a letter dated April 27, 2026, from Eric Holmgren alleging possible Open Meeting Law violations. Mr. Simpson summarized the concerns raised in the letter, including:

- Decisions potentially made outside a properly warned meeting;
- Possible final action taken in Executive Session; and
- Failure to properly record motions and votes in open session.

Mr. Simpson stated the matter related to a publicly warned interview conducted on April 15, 2026, for a potential Town Clerk candidate. He stated no formal decision had been made at that time and explained the position remained contingent upon completion of a background check.

Kristin Paya clarified the interview occurred on April 15, not April 27 as referenced in the complaint.
*Subsequent review determined the complaint was referenced correctly.

Kristin Paya made a motion to find that no Open Meeting Law violation had occurred. Carmella Tucker seconded. All in favor.

Additional public discussion followed regarding hiring procedures and public transparency.

Public Records Act Appeal

Discussion occurred regarding a Public Records Act appeal submitted by Kevin Wilson concerning a recording of the April 13, 2026, Selectboard meeting.

Kristin Paya made a motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the Town attorney's legal analysis would clearly place the Selectboard at a substantial disadvantage because the discussion would involve confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the Board. Steve Simpson seconded. All in favor.

Kristin Paya then made a motion to enter Executive Session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F), including Attorney Zach Handelman and Diane Hallenbeck. Steve Simpson seconded. All in favor. Executive Session began at 6:57 p.m.

The Board exited Executive Session at 7:29 p.m. No action was taken during Executive Session.

Public Records Request Determination

Steve Simpson stated the Board was discussing Mr. Wilson's Public Records Act appeal regarding the April 13 meeting recording.

Kristin Paya made a motion to deny the appeal. Carmella Tucker seconded.

Ms. Paya stated the Public Records Act does not require records to be disclosed in a specific format and noted the requested recording was available on the Town website. She also stated the Town's updated cybersecurity procedures prohibit the use of private external hardware on Town equipment which was the request of Mr. Wilson.

All in favor.

Kristin Paya made a motion authorizing Steve Simpson to provide a written denial of the appeal to Kevin Wilson. Steve Simpson seconded. All in favor.

Additional public comment followed regarding access to Town records and meeting recordings.

Adjournment

Kristin Paya made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Carmella Tucker seconded. All in favor.
Meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

