Town of Orange
392 US Route 302
Orange, Vermont 05641
orangevt.org

Selectboard Meeting
June 22, 2026

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:04 PM**
Present: Carmella Tucker (CT), Kristin Paya (KP), Steve Simpson (SS), Diane Hallenbeck (DH), John McNeil (JM), Jonathan Danchik (JD), Eileen Houle, Chuck Houle, Kevin Wilson, Eric Holmgren, Janis Blais, Joseph Blais, Jim Burt

2. Public Comment

Public comment included discussion regarding a pending request to approve a fireworks-related permit. A comment was made reminding the Board and Staff of their obligation to maintain accurate meeting minutes. Concerns about Town finances and the accuracy of previous meeting minutes were also voiced.
No action was taken.

3. Approval: Prior Meeting Minutes

Motion by KP, seconded by CT, to approve the June 8, 2026 meeting minutes.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

Motion by CT, seconded by SS, to approve the June 10, 2026 meeting minutes.
Vote: Motion passed
- **Aye: SS, CT**
- **Nay: none**
- **Abstain: KP (on the grounds that she was not present for the June 10 meeting)**

4. Approval: Agenda Adjustments

Agenda adjustments included the addition of a fireworks permit for the 27th of June at 9:00.
Motion by KP, seconded by CT, to approve the agenda adjustment as presented.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously
(Addendum: A unanimous vote to approve the permit was taken immediately following its addition to the agenda)

5. Introduction: Jonathan Danchik, New Town Clerk

The Board briefly introduced JD, who started work on June 16, 2026. SS permitted a few questions to JD from the public regarding his background and qualifications for the position.
No action was taken.

6. Approval: Warrants & Payroll

The Board discussed fire-related expenses recently incurred by the Town. SS directed the DH to inquire about recouping response costs through insurance. The Board discussed the issue of jurisdiction and liability on multiple roads, and whether they were primarily a state or local responsibility.
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to approve warrants dated June 22, 2026.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

One week of payroll was presented for approval due to ongoing training for Town Staff. There will be an additional week of payroll presented for approval during the next Selectboard meeting to compensate.
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to approve payroll dated June 22, 2026.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

7. Approval: New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) Bulk Time Purchase Agreement
The Board discussed updates to the current agreement for NEMRC services, including adjustments to hourly service rates and travel compensation for on-site assistance. Per the proposed changes, the Town also would also agree to purchase at least 96 service hours in the coming year.
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to approve the NEMRC Bulk Time Purchase Agreement as presented.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

8. Approval: Driveway Permit for Jordan Blais
The Board discussed an application for a driveway permit, and reviewed relevant drawings, documents, and diagrams pertaining to its proposed construction.
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to approve the driveway permit as described.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

9. Discussion: Grader Finance Options
SS described differing interest rates available to the Town for the Highway Department's grader. DH discussed the state of ongoing audits and their relative impact on available financing options. Of four total options, two (M&T Bank and Community Bank) were roughly equivalent in total anticipated expenditures. SS stressed the importance of having current audits to secure favorable financing terms for Town equipment, and CT discussed work undertaken to get the Town current on its audits after a period of delinquency spanning several previous years. Multiple questions were asked about specific features of the new grader.
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to direct DH to move forward in pursuing grader financing through M&T Bank at an interest rate of 4.8%.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

10. Update: Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) Grant
SS explained that the Grant Committee's process in selecting a primary contractor for renovations to the Town Hall and Town Clerk's Office. The architect and primary contractor, he explained, will attend a future Selectboard meeting to present their proposed work in greater detail. He stated that the construction will tentatively begin on August 1st. SS also warned that due to construction, the Town Clerk's Office will be forced to relocate temporarily to the basement of the Town Hall. He also indicated that there will be interruptions to vault access and records requests until construction concludes. SS explained the process by which the Town will conduct payments for services. The question was raised if it would be more cost-effective to build a new Town Clerk's Office outright instead of conducting renovations on an existing building. SS stated that the Board had not examined the possibility of a complete rebuild, as the verbiage of the grant did not permit it. Concerns were raised about the Town's financial

preparedness to handle additional unexpected costs during renovations, such as replacing any rotting wood discovered. The Board described the process by which they published the RFP and solicited bids.
No action was taken.

11. Discussion: RFP for Cutler Corner Culvert Repair
SS described different ways ahead to fix the culvert located on Cutler Corner Road. The Board is currently reviewing potential contractors and discussing financial details with FEMA, and expects to have a more substantial update for the public at the next Selectboard meeting. Questions were raised about why certain roads may not appear to have culverts.
No action was taken.

12. Update: Reservoir Road
The board discussed a grant for the purpose of addressing culverts and re-paving along Reservoir Road. Residents raised concerns and suggestions about cost-sharing with the State and nearby municipalities. The Board and residents discussed potential adjustments to the scope of work to rectify longstanding issues. More updates to follow in future meetings, pending additional feedback from contractors.
No action was taken.

13. Discussion: Purchasing Policy
CT explained that this policy had been tabled in previous meetings to allow for further review. The board agreed that it would be beneficial to take additional time for review prior to approval. CT requested that it be included on the next meeting agenda.
No action was taken.

14. Approval: Lister Control Document
There was an attempt to approve this document in a previous meeting; however, it was missing JM’s signature. It was brought before the board once again with the required signature for final approval.
Motion by CT, seconded by SS, to accept the signed Lister Control Document.
Vote: Motion passed unanimously

15. Town Clerk Report
JD briefly outlined his efforts to learn the duties and responsibilities of his position since starting work on the 16th. He spoke about upcoming elections, and reminded the Board that forthcoming renovations for Town Hall will preclude its traditional use as the Town’s polling location. He presented potential courses of action to the board in selecting alternate polling locations. The Board directed JD to reach out to the school to inquire about using it as a polling location until Town Hall renovations are complete.
No action was taken.

16. Road Foreman Report
The Board reviewed recent road and highway developments, and congratulated Mike Utton on the recent birth of his grandson.
No action was taken.

<u>17. Adjourn</u>
Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to adjourn.
Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at **7:45 PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Danchik
Town Clerk