



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

Selectboard Meeting July 27, 2026

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at **6:03 P.M.**

Present: Steve Simpson (SS), Carmella Tucker (CT), Kristin Paya (KP), John McNeil (JM), Jonathan Danchik (JD), Kevin Wilson

2. Public Comments

SS asked if any members of the public had any comments. None were offered.

No action was taken.

3. Approval: July 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

SS distributed copies of the draft minutes from the July 13 meeting. He indicated that he would entertain a motion to approve them after discussing agenda adjustments for the evening.

No action was taken.

4. Approval: Agenda Adjustments

Three agenda adjustments were presented for consideration:

- Approval of paperwork to add the names Town Treasurer and Assistant Town Treasurer to the Town bank account, thus conferring the ability to sign checks and access online banking resources.
- Approval of Justice of the Peace (JP) elections to coincide with the General Election in November.
- Approval of adjustments to the tax rate.

Motion by SS, seconded by CT, to approve the agenda adjustments as presented and place them sequentially on the agenda following approval of the prior meeting minutes.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

5. Revisited Approval: July 13, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Motion by SS, seconded by KP, to approve the prior meeting minutes as presented.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

6. Approval: Addition of Town Treasurer and Assistant Town Treasurer to Bank Account

CT reminded the Selectboard that the bank did not accept meeting minutes showing the appointment of the Town Treasurer, and that this paperwork is of great significance.

Motion by SS, seconded by CT, to approve the measure adding the Town Treasurer and Assistant Town Treasurer to the bank account.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously. Document circulated for signature.

7. Approval: Addition of JP Nominees to the November Ballot

SS asked JD to explain conversations he had with the Secretary of State Elections Division regarding the process to add JP nominees to existing ballots. JD explained that the Town has the right to add JP nominees to the General Election ballot in November, but that state law requires Selectboard approval beforehand. While it appears that the Town has historically conducted JP

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elections this way, there does not appear to be any previous record of approval to do so for the upcoming elections.

Motion by CT, seconded by SS, to add JP nominees to the November ballot.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

8. Approval: Tax Rate Adjustments

JM explained that the homestead education rate provided to the Town was given in error, and that adjusting taxes to accurately reflect it would result in a downward adjustment totaling roughly \$15,000. He also explained that he was working to validate the database from which the data was derived. Given the fact that the education rate is provided in July, and July 15 is the current deadline to get bills in the mail, JM suggested that the Selectboard examine the possibility of changing the ways in which the Town collects taxes. He also noted increased transit times for intrastate mail, and delays in processing large deposits.

Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to approve the new tax rate and veterans exemptions as presented.

SS asked about date adjustments, and discussed the costs of re-billing (postage, envelopes, staff time, et cetera). JM suggested the possibility of billing external entities responsible for providing erroneous data. SS asked if those who already paid in full would get a refund check reflecting downward adjustments; JM affirmed.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

-SS asked about possibilities for date adjustment; JM and CT offered input

Motion by CT, seconded by SS, to issue refund checks for overpayments, and credit first-installment overpayments to November payment.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

9. Warrants & Payroll

The Selectboard reviewed invoices, and asked about recent repairs to the vault door in the Town Clerk's Office. A member of the public expressed concern about procedures in-place to help anyone who might get locked-in, and SS directed JD to investigate. The Selectboard also discussed diesel and propane bulk purchase options, as well as the expenses for hazardous material removal.

Motion by KP, seconded by CT, to approve the warrants as presented.

SS also directed JD to contact the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund (VLCT PACIF) about training and inspection requirements for emergency equipment within Town facilities, such as defibrillators. CT suggested placing any requirements identified on a centrally-located calendar quick for reference by Town staff.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by CT, seconded by SS, to approve payroll dated July 17 - 24 – 31.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

10. Approval: Procurement Policy

Errors were identified in the updated policy. The document was tabled for a future meeting, pending future updates.

No action was taken.

11. Signature: Previously Approved Policies

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The following policies were presented for approval during the July 13 Selectboard meeting, but were marked as drafts at the time. No further approval was required; however, final versions of the documents were circulated for signature:

- Town Park & Ride Policy
- Town Public Records Request Policy

No further action was taken.

12: Discussion: Highway Department Clothing Stipend

CT relayed concerns from Highway Department personnel that they were not provided fire-resistant clothing, and had purchased their own at personal expense in the interest of occupational safety. Additionally, they mentioned complications with washing their work clothes, citing frustrations with contracted services. CT clarified that the current contract was signed before her tenure, and had a set length of five years. Instead of entering into another long-reaching agreement, it was suggested that the Town provide a stipend to the Highway Department directly.

Tabled pending a consolidated list of concerns in writing from the Highway Department.

13. Washington Electric permit

SS explained that the Highway Department had already conducted an on-site inspection. He circulated a map and sketches.

Motion by SS, seconded by CT, to sign the permit as presented.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

14. Lister Errors & Omissions

JM presented 2 corrections to the Grand List – both of which were combinations of adjacent parcels – for approval. He also discussed value adjustments and property transfers.

Motion by SS, seconded by KP, to change the Grand List as specified by the Lister.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

15. Update: Act 162

SS provided an update on the implementation of Act 162, and discussed additional information provided by the state in a recent Q&A. He discussed how Act 162 imposes additional complications on the process by which Towns may appoint Forest Fire Wardens. To that end, SS put forth Mr. Ben Shaw for consideration. He cited Ben's previous involvement with the Town and subject matter expertise as a firefighter.

Motion by CT, seconded by KP, to appoint Ben Shaw as the Town Forest Fire Warden

SS discussed the possibility of future arrangements to compensate fire wardens. CT mentioned the certification and professional development which further qualified Ben for the role. CT reiterated her motion, but suggested that Ben keep track of his time to better formulate a payment structure for approval in the future. KP expressed a desire to compensate for mileage, given the nature of the work expected of a Forest Fire Warden.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

SS acknowledged that the structure by which fire and burn permits are requested and conferred is a work in progress, and instructed JD to connect Ben with the Town's contracted IT support to explore the possibility of setting up an official Town email address for use in the course of his official duties.

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16. Approval: MERP Contract

SS discussed the processes by which funds are requested and conveyed to the Town through grants.

Motion by CT, seconded by SS, for SS to sign on behalf of the Selectboard in his capacity as Chairman.

SS stressed that the grant was written four years ago, and discussed the overall scope of work. He also suggested that the installation of heat pumps would allow the Town to designate the Town Hall as a cooling shelter once installed.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

CT asked about the start date for renovations to the Town Hall and Town Clerk's Office. SS replied that the original target date was August 1; however, the no-later-than date to begin work is August 15. SS reiterated how big of a factor inflation is, citing the rising cost of building materials. He directed JD to scan the MERP document and return it to the firm. He mentioned previous work that the contractor had performed for the Town, as well as several interactions they have had with the Grant Committee

Motion by CT, seconded by KP, for SS to sign the contract on behalf of the Selectboard in his capacity as Chairman

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

CT discussed complications of relocating Town staff to the Town Hall basement during renovations.

17. Update: RFP for Reservoir Road

SS informed the Selectboard and those in attendance that he had no new documents to share. He also explained that the Town did not receive the grant it requested, and that of eighteen total applicants, only seven were selected to receive grants. The Selectboard discussed potential ways forward to perform road work with the financial resources currently available to the Town.

No action was taken.

18. Town Clerk Report

JD took a moment to acknowledge the passing of long-time resident and Justice of the Peace Fred Kidder. He explained that he will post a public notice of vacancy for the positions Fred held soon, and that the Town has until the 30th to do so; however, posting notice immediately felt disrespectful. He informed the Selectboard that different residents using a variety of devices were unable to access full-length meeting recordings on the Town website, and advised that he would continue to look into the issue, which he suspects is a back-end issue with *DropBox*. In the meantime, he explained, full-length recordings will continue to be available for review and inspection at the Town Clerk's Office during business hours. JD reminded the Selectboard and attendees that the Primary Election will be conducted on August 11, from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. in the school gym. He also said that upcoming construction will most likely necessitate schedule adjustments for vault access.

No action was taken.

19. Road Foreman Report

SS briefly described the progress of road work on George Street, and discussed rising input costs for road work.

20. Adjourn

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Motion by CT, 2nd by KP, to adjourn.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Danchik

Town Clerk