

*Office of the Select Board  
Town of Orange, New Hampshire  
Minutes of December 10, 2019*

*Present:* Dorothy Heinrichs, Chair; Tamara Fairbank, Aaron Allen, and Sandi Pierson (clerical).

*Others:* Doug Weekes, Judith Lindahl, Richard Remacle, Mark Stetson (Avitar Associates of New England), Brenda Pabon (DRA), Lisa Mudge (DRA) and Scott Sanborn

*Meeting opened at 6:00 PM. Attendance taken by the secretary.*

*Minutes:*

- The minutes of November 12, 2019 were approved by Tam and Dorothy. (Aaron was not on the board at the time.)
- The minutes of November 26, 2019 were unanimously approved
- The nonpublic minutes of November 26, 2019 were unanimously approved.

*Revaluation and office audit:* The Board met with Mark Stetson to review the town-wide assessment procedure. Brenda Pabon and Lisa Mudge from the DRA spoke about the five-year office records audit (tax credits, exemptions, current use). Mark recapped the State requirement for municipalities to do a town-wide assessment, including utilities, every five years to assess market values.

Mark explained the purpose of a letter they planned on sending to all owners of improved property. The letter informs the property owner of their forthcoming site visit and purpose and gives property owners the option of declining the visit. Property owners that choose to respond to the letter will do so through the Select Board's office. Property owners also have the option of scheduling a prearranged time for a site visit with the assessor. The cost of the mailing is included in the reval contract (approved and signed at a previous meeting).

Subsequent to the town-wide assessments (that are expected to begin after mud season), all property owners will be notified by mail of their revised assessments and will be given the opportunity to meet with Avitar in regards. At the end of the reval process, the town will get a manual of the review, which will be scrutinized by the DRA.

Mark stated that there are two properties with solar panels in Orange, and the protocol now is to include them in the overall value of the property. The Board discussed with Mark the option of a warrant article that would give a tax credit for solar panels. For an uncomplicated tax credit process, Mark recommended the credit be based on the true value of the solar panels. If the town adopts the credit, applications will need to be approved by April 15, 2020 to get the credit on the 2020 tax bill.

DRA representatives Brenda Pabon and Lisa Mudge briefed the Board on the forthcoming office audit. They will be examining all tax credit and exemption applications for accuracy and the completeness of current use files. Brenda stated that if paperwork from current use property

owners are not received, as long as the town has requested them by letter, they consider the town to have done their due diligence.

*Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (UVLSRPC):* The Board reviewed and signed letters of support for two grants the UVLSRPC are applying for. One is for a solid waste grant, the other for a water protection grant.

*7/11 Flood:* The Chair signed a letter of acknowledgement and appreciation to Aaron Allen for his donation of \$2,200 for the emergency work he did on the roads following the July 11 flood.

*Treasurer's report:* The Board reviewed the November 2019 treasurer's report and Select Board reconciliation. The reconciliation was on target and the Chair signed the report.

*Intent to Cut:* The Board was in receipt of an Intent to Cut from Bobby Senter/Burnt Hill Road/Map 8, Lot 1-A. The Intent was for an anticipated one day cut for 15 cords of firewood for personal use. Referencing RSA 79:1,II (b), the Board concurred that a property owner is exempt from filing an Intent to Cut and timber taxes for up to 20 cords of firewood for personal use. No action was taken; Sandi will notify Mr. Senter that an Intent was not necessary.

*Highway contract:* The Board discussed with Road Agent Scott Sanborn and road contractor Richard Remacle the status of a maintenance contract. After discussion, it was agreed that Scott and Richard will review and update the earlier contract, and Scott will present it to the Board at the next meeting for their review. Dorothy stated that she would like for Richard to submit invoices on a timely schedule. She noted that though Richard is the sole contractor for regular maintenance, during an emergency, such as the July flood, the town needs to have the option of using additional contractors. Tam agreed that the circumstances of the flood were overwhelming and more contractors were necessary. She commended the contractors for their excellent response and work. Aaron said he was under the impression that the previous contract was drafted by Richard; it was clarified that it was drafted by a former selectman and a former road agent. Aaron said that it may be a FEMA requirement that the major, forthcoming reconstruction work resulting from the Disaster Declaration be put out to bid.

*Other business:*

- Regarding the invoice from Phil Salvail, both Aaron and Scott agreed the bill coincided with the work done, though in the future, the financial aspect of work to be done on roads should be review and discussed ahead of time.
- The Board discussed with Scott the allowable usage of Class 6 roads by OHRVs (ATVs and snowmobiles). Sandi said there was a public hearing about ten years ago and that she believed the townspeople subsequently voted on a policy at a town meeting. After discussion it was agreed Sandi will find the documentation of the public hearing and see if there was a warrant article that was presented and voted on.
- Aaron asked if a Select Board member can take on jobs for the town where there is compensation. Sandi will follow up with the Local Government Center's legal counsel. Tam said the Board needed to begin drafting a town purchasing policy, and that questions such as those should be included.
- The Board discussed honoring at town meeting those residents who have stepped down from municipal positions after serving the town for a substantial number of years.

*Other:*

- A notice was received from NH DES Wetlands Bureau that a forestry notification was received from Judi and Robert Kuhn in regards to their cutting of timber.

*Secretary's report:*

- The Budget Committee secretary would like the Board to consider an appointment for the vacancy on the Budget Committee prior to the 2020 budget deliberations.
- The Board voted unanimously in favor that a computer should be purchased for the Select Board's office that will adequately accommodate the software programs being used. Sandi will follow up at Systems Plus.

*Reports from other boards and committees: n/a*

*Public comment:*

- Judith Lindahl distributed to the Board a copy of an Executive Order from the U.S. President regarding the State and local involvement in refugee resettlement. She said that both the State of NH and officials from municipalities need to put in writing whether or not they will allow the resettling of refugees in their town. Judith also submitted to the Board a copy of a letter from NH Governor Chris Sununu to Secretary Michael Pompeo dated November 25, 2019, which read in part, "As Governor of the State of New Hampshire, I consent to initial refugee settlement in New Hampshire as per the terms of the Executive Order." Judith requested the Board sign a letter she prepared that stated in part, "As the Select Board of the Town of Orange, New Hampshire, we consent to initial refugee resettlement in the Town of Orange." After discussion, the Board tabled the discussion until the next meeting so they could explore the issue further. Judith said the deadline for submitting the signed letter is December 26. Aaron said he was unsure if he could attend the next meeting and chose to sign the letter now.

*Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.*

*Nonpublic session:* At 7:35 p.m. the Board unanimously voted in favor of going into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3-c on request of Health Officer Doug Weekes. Motion to come out of nonpublic session at 7:45 p.m.

*Nonpublic session:* At 7:45 p.m. the Board unanimously voted in favor of going into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3-c to review a tabled Tax Deferment application. Motion to come out of nonpublic session at 8 p.m. Dorothy stated that a decision was made by the Board to approve a tax deferment application.

*Meeting adjourned 8 p.m.*

---

Dorothy Behlen Heinrichs

---

Tamara Fairbank

---

Aaron Allen