

*Office of the Select Board  
Town of Orange, New Hampshire  
Select Board Minutes of December 19, 2023*

*Present:* Aaron, Allen, Betsy Coble, Catherine Souza (clerical)

*Absent:* Tamara Fairbank, chair

*Others:* Doug Weekes

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

*Pledge of Allegiance*

*Minutes:*

Betsy Coble motioned to approve the minutes of the public meeting of December 5, 2023, seconded by Aaron Allen. Motion passed 2/0/0.

*Michael Powers, Regional Forester: Discussion class VI road:*

Topic postponed to January 16, 2024.

*Health & Safety Policy for Town of Orange:*

On October 3, 2023 Doug Weekes, Emergency Management and Health Officer, discussed the following requirement with the Select Board.

- The NH Department of Labor requires employers with 15 or more employees to file a Safety Summary Form with the Department. Employees, under labor law, are considered as every Selectmen, Planning Board members, Town Clerk, Tax Collectors, Road Agents, any other Board or Committee members, full time and part time workforce. The Town of Orange does not have a Safety Form on file.

The Select Board directed Doug to complete the form on behalf of the town after input from the NH Municipal Association. The action required a Town of Orange Health and Safety Policy and the creation of a Town Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC). It is noted that other towns also have a Joint Loss Management Committee.

Doug Weekes presented a document that ensures the town is compliant for the State's request. Doug used Canaan, Enfield and Hanover as a template. Doug shared the requirements for the Joint Loss Management Committee. The committee is required to meet four times per year to review the safety protocols. There is an annual report requirement for the State.

Motion made by Aaron Allen, seconded by Betsy Coble to accept the Town of Orange Health & Safety Policy. Motion passed 2/0/0. The Select Board signed the Health and Safety Policy. Doug Weekes will submit to the State.

Motion made by Betsy Coble and seconded by Aaron Allen to establish a Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC) and to appoint the Select Board chair to represent the employer (the town) and appoint the Health Officer to represent the employees. Motion passed 2/0/0.

*Other:*

- One-time Bridge Payment notification
  - The Select Board reviewed a letter from the NH DOT.
  - The Town received a one-time bridge payment of \$7,110.86 based on the passage of House Bill 2 (HB2) effective July 2023. HB2 directs the Department to divide and distribute a one-time \$10 million payment between all NH municipalities that have municipally owned bridges per state definitions. The one-time payment is not related to the block grant aid payments that a municipality receives. This one-time payment can only be used on the maintenance, construction, or reconstruction of municipally owned bridges.
  - No further action is required.

*2023 September and October Treasurer's report and Select Board Reconciliation:*

- The document was reviewed by the Board and approved.

*Action Item list review:*

- Action Items Completed:
  - Obtain advice from NHMA on next steps for Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Action Items open:
  - Change locks and combinations: Exterior doors, SB office, TC office
  - Disposal of old safe in Town Clerk's office
  - ARPA Grafton Co funds: Septic project. Secure bids
  - ARPA Grafton Co funds: Bathroom renovation. Secure bids
  - Question: Why the Historical Commission funds are separate from the Town funds
  - Establish new email for Town Clerk
  - Catherine to communicate date January 3, 2024 Select Board meeting change to residents
- Action Items New:
  - Draft Select Board letter to residents about change in Town Clerk phone and email due to new internet provider

*Secretary's Report:*

- Change of Internet & Phone –
  - New phone and internet provider (NH Broadband) will be on the premises to survey what is required for installation on January 8th at 9am.
  - Once an installation date is known the following is required 1) cancel Consolidated service 2) Draft a Select Board letter to alert resident to the change.
  - ACTION: Catherine to draft Select Board letter to residents
- 2024 Budget & Town Report Schedule– Catherine presented a timeline that follows the State guidelines for Traditional Town meetings.
- An email arrived about a grant opportunity called the Community Facilities Disaster Repair Grants Program. The GrantMatch Corporation is asking if the Town is interested in participating. The Select Board instructed Catherine to gather further information.

*Reports from Boards and Committees:*

- *Cemetery trustees:* None
- *Road Agent (Marcello Shelzi):* Updates were sent via email on December 18 and 19 to inform residents of the road conditions during and after the recent storm.
  - December 18: The section of Cardigan Mountain Road that is between where the road turns to dirt (just past the New Colony/Peaslee intersection) and the entrance to Cardigan Mountain State Park is closed to through traffic at the current time. There is a large tree across the road hanging on a powerline, as well as a significant washout. The State DOT is currently working on the washout, and the power company has been alerted but has no timeframe on when they will be out here, as they are dealing with a significant number of incidents. I will be checking on road conditions again tomorrow and will keep in contact with the DOT. The town's dirt roads are saturated with water. Please drive with caution as conditions may vary. Drive slower than usual to avoid damage to your vehicle and the roadway. The majority of roads in town had trees and branches down. If you see any more, please let me know, and if you see any other road issues, feel free to contact me. I am often in areas of limited cell signal so please leave a message if I am unable to answer. As always, thank you for your patience during times of severe weather.
  - December 19: Cardigan Mountain Road is now open to through traffic. I met with the DOT this morning. They did some repairs when I was with them last night to prevent further damage, they will be doing more soon to keep the road passable. They plan on bringing in a grader and some material later this week to fully repair the road but due to the severe amount of damage statewide they cannot confirm or guarantee a time frame. The power company has cut the tree that was on the line on Cardigan Mountain Road and has restored power to residents. Please exercise caution when driving on this section, the DOT has cones and flagging out. As many of you know, the northeast got hit extremely hard by this storm. Please drive carefully, and count our blessings that we got away with minimal damage to our roadways. Canaan is still dealing with multiple road closures and flooding. As always, I cannot be everywhere at once, so if you see anything please reach out to me.
- *Planning Board:* none
- *Conservation Commission:* none

*Public comment:* None

A resident notified the Select Board about a concerning incident. A black Silverado pickup truck (with no plates) was seen cruising the Tug Mountain area. The residents surmises that the group of men were looking for the homes to vandalize or rob. Please call the NH State Police if you are concerned.

*Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.*

*Next Select Board meeting date confirmation:* WEDNESDAY January 3, 2024

*Meeting adjourned at 6:30pm.*

\_\_\_\_absent\_\_\_\_\_  
Tamara Fairbank, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Aaron Allen

\_\_\_\_\_  
Betsy Coble