

*Office of the Select Board
Town of Orange, New Hampshire
Minutes of December 20, 2022*

Present: Tamara Fairbank, Aaron Allen, Betsy Coble, Sandi Pierson (clerical)

Other: n/a

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

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: Aaron motioned to approve the minutes of December 6, 2022. Betsy seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

2022 Tax abatement reviews:

- Wavecom (telecommunications equipment on Cardigan Mountain fire tower): Tamara shared a letter from the NH Department of Forest and Lands stating that Wavecom was notified on April 20, 2021 that they needed to remove their equipment from the tower. Sandi notified Wavecom in 2021 that the 2022 tax year ended on April 1, 2022 and if the equipment was still on the tower after that date they would receive a 2022 tax bill. They removed the equipment on June 1, 2022. Betsy motioned to deny the abatement on the grounds of RSA 76:21 which states that the tax year ends on April 1, that the owners were notified of this, and they did not remove the equipment until June 2022.
- Aaron Allen and David Allen/127 New Colony Road/Map 3, Lot 31: This abatement is a duplicate of the 2021 abatement of which a hearing with the Bureau of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) is scheduled for April 19, 2022. The dispute is the category of land topography. Tamara motioned to table the abatement until a decision on the 2021 abatement is made by the BTLA. Betsy seconded. Aaron abstained. Motion passed 2/0/1.
- Hilary Allen/211 New Colony Road/ Map 3, Lot 36-A: Avitar has listed that the home has gas heat with duct work. The home has neither and is heated wholly by wood. This inaccuracy has resulted in unsubstantiated taxes of \$184.51. Tamara motioned to table a decision on the abatement until the Select Board visits the property to confirm the error. Betsy seconded. Aaron abstained. Motion passed 2/0/1.

LCHIP: Tamara announced that on December 14, in Concord, Doug and Trish Weekes attended the Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) awards ceremony with Governor Chris Sununu and LCHIP officials. Orange has received an LCHIP grant of \$43,501 to help pay for improvements to the structural support for the Town House roof. Monies are also designated for chimney repair and painting the exterior siding and trim. Prior to receiving the LCHIP award, Orange received a Moose Plate grant of \$20,000 which can be used as matching funds to the LCHIP grant. Work will begin on the project as soon as the weather permits in 2023.

Treasurer's report: The Board reviewed the November 2022 Treasurer's report and Select Board reconciliation. All figures were on target and the Chair signed the report.

FEMA loan: Scott Sanborn inquired by email if unspent revenue from the 2022 highway budget could be dedicated to the FEMA loan. Sandi said that the same question came up last year and the DRA disallowed it, explaining that expenditures from the municipal budget are decided by the voters at town meeting.

Optional Veterans Tax Credit: The Optional Veterans Tax Credit passed by the town in 2020 has been expanded by the state legislature to include active duty veterans. For the tax credit to remain in place, the town must vote on it again in March 2023. The Board reviewed the language of the article as it will appear on the 2023 warrant. Tamara stated that the town would not be voting whether or not the tax credit should include active service members. She said it is either adopted as expanded by the legislature or not at all.

Bridge revenue: The Board received a notice from the NH Bureau of Planning and Community Assistance that Orange would be receiving a one-time bridge payment of \$26,507.49 in accordance with Senate Bill 401 for the maintenance, construction, and/or reconstruction of municipally-owned bridges. Scott Sanborn inquired by email if the revenue could be put into a capital reserve fund specific to its purpose. Sandi said she contacted the Bureau and they reported that there is no deadline in spending the revenue and that it could go into a capital reserve fund. The Board concurred to draft an article for the 2023 warrant to place the funds in a newly-established capital reserve fund.

Other:

- The Board received a request from the Bridge House in Plymouth, NH asking for a 2023 donation. The Bridge House supports Grafton County veterans with housing, employment assistance, hospice, etc. After discussion, the Board concurred to request that the Budget Committee support a \$250 donation.

Other Select Board business and action items:

- Action items:
 - Updating tax maps: Sandi will follow up with Avitar to get a quote for them to generate and maintain the tax maps.
 - Changing all Town House locks: Tamara to follow up with Gatekeepers by January 15.
 - 9-11 signs: Sandi is working on generating a list of all properties having a structure on them.
 - Disposal of the old safe in the town clerk's office: June 1 target date.
 - Richard Remacle's contract expires on December 31; needs to be renewed.
- 9-1-1 sign order: The Board continued their discussion on 9-1-1 signs. They concurred to order 100 signs out of this year's budget. After discussion, Aaron motioned to generate a voucher to order 100 signs from Interstate Sign Products and to process the voucher before the end of the year. Tamara seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor. Sandi will prepare the voucher the next day for the Board to sign.

Secretary's report:

- Donald Burke asked if Wheeler Road was ever going to get repaved. He said the town's highway department took up the pavement about five years ago. Sandi noted the Wheeler Road was originally paved because it was once a section of Route 4 before the 1948 realignment through Grafton and Orange.
- Donald Burke said he was penalized on his tax bill for not returning his inventory form. He said he has been in Florida and did not receive it. Sandi email him another but it was not returned.

Reports from Boards and Committees: n/a

Public comment: n/a

Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.

Meeting adjourned 6:30 p.m.

Tamara Fairbank, Chair

Aaron Allen

Betsy Coble