

*Office of the Select Board  
Town of Orange, New Hampshire  
Minutes of December 7, 2021*

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

*Others:* Budget Committee members Dave Stacy and Bob Proulx; Treasurer Trish Weekes; Kathy Stacy.

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

The Board met to discuss the shortfall of the Mascoma FEMA Recovery Anticipation Note (FRAN) in regards to paying the remaining FEMA bills. Pike paying invoices totaling approximately \$86,000.00 need to be paid. It is anticipated that there will be no more FEMA-related bills to be paid. Trish gave an overview of the FRAN, including the interest that is incurring each month. Sandi gave the Budget Committee and Select Board spreadsheets showing the FEMA bills paid to date and the municipal budget report ending November 30, 2021. Dorothy reported that the Road Improvement and Repair Capital Reserve Fund had a balance of \$69,962.02. Dorothy said that the municipal highway budget has a balance of \$71,506.08 and that Road Agent Scott Sanborn emailed the Board and said that all but \$15,000.00 may be used to help make up the FEMA shortfall.

After discussion, Tam motioned to dedicate \$50,000.00 of the highway budget toward the remaining FEMA-related invoices. Aaron seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor. After discussion, Aaron motioned for the Board to authorize the withdrawal of \$36,000.00 from the Road Improvement and Repair Capital Reserve Fund. Tam seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

The Board and Budget Committee discussed strategies for the town to eventually pay their 25% share of the FEMA costs. All agreed that they will not know what the town's liability is until reimbursement by FEMA is complete. Aaron explained that some of the projects, when closed and accepted by FEMA, will be reimbursed to the town at the projected cost instead of actual, which may be a higher dollar amount. He said he hoped the school portion of the tax rate will remain at their lower level so the town might absorb their FEMA liability without a noticeable increase in property taxes. (The school rate decreased in 2021 by \$1.96 per thousand dollars of valuation. The monthly payments to the school decreased by \$8,983.13.) School Board member Kathy Stacy explained how the school budget is drafted and that continuing lower rates cannot be certain. Federal COVID relief funds helped the budget this year.

Sandi said that Scott had not yet picked up copies of the November vouchers. The Board directed Sandi to mail them to Scott asap. Sandi will also mail the Pike vouchers to Scott after they are signed at the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tam said she was going to contact Senator Guida to see if he could assist in speeding up the reimbursement process. After discussion it was decided to hold off on that until all the town's documentation to the FEMA was complete.

*Meeting adjourned 6:25 p.m.*

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Dorothy Behlen Heinrichs

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Tamara Fairbank

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Aaron Allen