

*Office of the Select Board  
Town of Orange, New Hampshire  
Select Board Minutes and Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee  
January 16, 2024*

*Present:* Tamara Fairbank, chair, Betsy Coble, Catherine Souza (clerical)

*Others:* Gulley Dunlap , Anita Garland, Sharon Proulx, Scott Sanborn, Kathy Stacy, Doug Weekes, Trish Weekes

*Budget Committee:* Dave Stacy, Bob Proulx, Louis Shelzi

*Absent:* Aaron, Allen

*Guest:* Ed Morris, Enfield Town Manager

*Meeting opened at 6:30 p.m. Attendance taken by the secretary.*

*Pledge of Allegiance*

*Minutes:*

Betsy Coble motioned to approve the minutes of the public meeting of January 3, 2024, seconded by Tamara Fairbank. Motion passed 2/0/0.

*FEMA anticipation loan & new debt options:*

Trish Weekes, Treasurer, presented status of the FEMA Anticipation Loan. The original amount of the loan was \$980,356.00. FEMA has made payments of \$745,024.14. Moving forward the town would need to incur new debt for a total of \$151,945.43. The loan is to be taken out on April 4, 2024, at an interest rate of 6% from Mascoma Bank. During the Joint meeting, the Select Board and Budget committee will make a decision about the three options for length of the loan and repayment.

*Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC):*

The Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC) was established to carry out the provisions as required by RSA 261-A:64 and LAB 603.01. At the December 19, 2023 Select Board meeting, the Select Board approved the establishment of the Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC) and appointed the Select Board chair to represent the employer (the town) and the Health Officer to represent the employees.

Doug Weekes as Health Officer stated that the January 16, 2024 Select Board meeting contains the first annual meeting of the JLMC. No incidents were reported. A request was made by Doug Weekes to purchase Safety vests and Safety helmets.

Motion by Tamara Fairbank, second by Betsy Coble to purchase four vests and four helmets. Motion passed unanimously.

*Timber Application:*

- The Select Board approved and signed a Timber Intent to Cut application for Terhune parcels Map 3 lot 10 and Map 3 lot 7. Motion to accept by Tamara Fairbank, seconded by Betsy Coble. Motion passed 2/0/0.

*Other:*

*Historical Commission and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor heater:*

A quote from Inov8v Energy for a Rinnai heater is \$2600. If required, additional copper tubing cost is \$300. During the Joint meeting, the Select Board and Budget committee will make a decision.

*Town House Use request:*

Tamara Fairbank has submitted a Town House Use request for Saturday February 3 from 1-4 pm. Tamara Fairbank as Select Board member will abstain from the decision, In the absence of Aaron Allen, the request will be handled at a later time.

*Ed Morris Enfield Town Mgr: Sports Presentation and funding request:*

Ed Morris presented information and a funding request for the Mascoma Youth Sports League (MYSL). Currently MYSL is a parent run volunteer organization to serve the children of the Mascoma School District for children grades K-6. Enfield's Recreation Director will administer and manage the youth sports program and the parents will take on a volunteer booster role.

The funding request from Orange is \$400 based on the percentage of children from Orange who participate. During the Joint meeting, the Select Board and Budget committee will make a decision.

*Action Item list review:*

- Action Items Completed:
  - Question: Why the Historical Commission funds are separate from the Town funds

Further information on the Historical Commission funds situation and decision to be shared at a future meeting.

- 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
  - Select Board review of nonpublic minutes
  - Establish new email for Town Clerk
  - Draft Select Board letter to residents about change in Town Clerk phone and email due to new internet provider
  - Research what other towns the size of Orange do in the Parks & Recreation Committee
  
- Action Items New:
  - None

*Secretary's Report:*

- Printer/Copier for Tax Collector – The Tax Collector needs a new printer/copier. Motion made by Tamara Fairbank and seconded by Betsy Coble to purchase a printer/copier in the range of \$500-\$700. Motion passed 2/0/0.
- Quote for 2023 Town Report – Catherine shared a quote of \$550 from Gnomom in line with last year's cost of \$524. Motion by Tamara Fairbank and seconded by Betsy Coble. Motion passed 2/0/0.

*Reports from Boards and Committees:*

- *Cemetery trustees:* Recent meeting on January 8, 2024. A large pine tree fell in the Church Cemetery near Cardigan Mountain Rd during the recent storm. Aaron Poland also completed the tree trimming & brush removal in December, but the town was invoiced in 2024.
- *Road Agent (Marcello Shelzi):*
  - Updates were sent via email on January 9 to inform residents of the road conditions during and after the recent storm.
    - Tonight a Winter Storm warning will be in effect. Expect 5-8 inches of snow, followed by rain. Please use extreme caution when driving, and please do not be on the roads unless it is absolutely necessary as conditions will be poor. Tomorrow morning please exercise the same amount of caution. We will be plowing early morning but please stay alert. Due to the heavy and wet snow, as well as the high wind gusts, expect trees and branches to be down. If you see a tree on a power line, please alert the utility company and then myself. For trees and branches on the road please contact me and I will address it. Stay safe.
  - Road Agent report:
    - Catherine read the Road Agent's report which was sent via email because the Road Agent was not in attendance due to illness.
    - Summary points:
      - The Highway department budget is in desperate need of a substantial increase.
      - Budget for 2023 was spent at 101% for a total of \$111,335.86.
      - Only the minimum was done in regards to maintenance. Unfortunately, the current budget does not allow for the level of maintenance that the residents seem to expect. There were many requests for the roads be graded multiple times over the summer. This represents a considerable cost, as both use of a grader and the materials are expensive. The price of gravel is set to increase due to inflation and increased demand. The town cannot currently afford to grade the roads more than 2 or 3 times a year. A few residents complained about Burnt Hill Road. It would cost tens of thousands of dollars to completely resurface Burnt Hill to alleviate the pothole issues, as Burnt Hill has been a problematic road for years. In addition, the extreme weather this year has caused even more issues. The constant rainstorms damaged our dirt roads, flooded ditches and culverts, and led to a near perpetual mud season. If this becomes the new normal, Orange is woefully unequipped to deal with this.
      - Remacle will probably be retiring in the foreseeable future. He has been giving the town a decent discount, so once we go to a new contractor expect the price of work to increase significantly.
      - What needs to be addressed:
        - About 2/3rds of culverts in town could stand to be replaced. Many are too small or rusted out.
        - The dirt roads need complete resurfacing. The budget only allows for temporary fixes that barely last a season. If people want the dirt roads to be as good as paved then the budget will need to increase.
        - The end of Peasely Road must be paved. The lack of paving earlier this fall has just made it worse. I assume during the spring thaw the rest of the pavement will start cracking apart. There are many other spots on paved roads that need patching or crack filling.
        - The town should investigate purchasing a Backhoe or Tractor. Relying on residents' equipment in a pinch is all well and good, but during an actual

emergency the town needs its own equipment. This will save money in the long run too with basic road maintenance.

- The town needs a true town pit, with at minimum a simple structure to house equipment.
- In summary, the town stands at a turning point. Either the budget is significantly increased, or residents need to lower their expectations for road maintenance. Inflation and increasing weather events mean the cost of maintaining our towns roads will only keep going up.
- And finally, as much as I'd rather say this in person, I want to give the town enough notice to make arrangements. I will not be seeking re-election to the Road Agent position. I am looking at moving out of Orange this year and thus cannot accept a yearlong position. I want to thank my Select Board and the residents for their continued support and appreciation.
- *Historical Commission:* none
- *Planning Board:* Notice for meeting Tuesday January 23 to review a boundary line adjustment request for Eastman Rd Map 1 lots 4&5. The Planning Board will meet in the Select Board office since Primary Voting will take place in the Town Hall.
- *Conservation Commission:* none

*Public comment:* None

*Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.*

*Next Select Board meeting date confirmation:* Tuesday February 6, 2024 at 6pm.

At 7:23pm, Tamara Fairbank closed the Select Board meeting and opened the joint meeting of the Select Board and the Budget Committee.

*Second Joint meeting between the Select Board and the Budget Committee:* The group agreed the meeting will take place on Tuesday January 23, 2024 at 9am at the Town House.

*Informational packets:* Handouts were available prepared by Bob Proulx which included a working draft of the MS-7 (showing all 2023 appropriations and expenditures) and a packet of general budget information.

*Budget Committee officers:*

- Bob Proulx motioned to elect David Stacy as Budget Committee Chair. Louis Shelzi seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.
- Dave motioned to elect Bob Proulx as Budget Committee secretary. Louis Shelzi seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.

*2024 Proposed budget:* (All proposed figures were unanimously approved by all members on the Select Board and Budget Committee.)

- Salaries: \$39,000. Level funded.
- Elections and registrations: \$1,475. Level funded.
- Deed recordation: \$200. Level funded.
- Revaluation of property: \$5,000. Level funded.

- Legal Expense: \$2,500. Level funded.
- FICA: \$3,500. Level funded.
- Planning and Zoning: \$300. Level funded.
- General Gov't Buildings: \$9,500. Level funded.
- Cemeteries: \$7,000. Increase of \$1,000 to cover additional tree work.
- Insurance: \$3,200. Increase of \$484 to cover expected increase.
- Memberships: \$1,850. Increase of \$50 to cover expected increase in membership fees.
- Officer Expenses: \$7,500. Level funded.
- Ambulance: Missing data from the Canaan town budget. Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Fire: Missing data from the Canaan town budget. Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Building Inspector: \$1,000. Increase of \$500 to cover expected increases.
- Emergency Management: \$1,600. Level funded.
- Highway: Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Solid Waste: Missing data from the Canaan town budget. Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Health Agencies: \$3,900. Level funded.
- Direct Assistance (Welfare): \$3,000. Level funded.
- Parks & Recreation: \$900. New category to cover expected costs for Town activities.
- Library: Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Culture and Recreation: \$0. Decrease of \$200 and moved to Parks & Recreation.
- Timber Harvest Monitor: \$1. Level funded.
- Conservation Commission: Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Tax Anticipation: Tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting.
- Buildings Capital outlay: \$1,000. Level funded.

*Proposed Capital Reserve deposits for 2024:*

Final appropriations and Year End balances to be finalized at the Tuesday January 23, 2024 meeting.

<i>Capital Reserve Fund</i>	<i>CRF balances December 31, 2023</i>	<i>2024 Appropriations</i>
Highway Equipment CRF		
Town House CRF		
Revaluation CRF		
Town Roads CRF		
Cemetery CRF		

*Anticipated Revenue:*

- Land Use Change Taxes: \$0.00. Land coming out of current use is not anticipated.
- Yield taxes: tabled until January 23, 2024 meeting
- Interest & penalties: \$3,000. Estimated by tax collector.
- Inventory penalties: \$2,300. Based on average amount collected.
- Business licenses & permits: \$100. Based on 2023 figures.
- Motor vehicle permit fees: \$70,000. Based on 2023 figures.
- Other licenses, permits & fees: \$500. Based on 2023 Town Clerk figures.
- Building permits: \$300. Based on 2023 figures.
- Meals & Rooms distribution: \$20,000. Based on 2023 figures.
- Highway Block Grant: \$30,000. Based on figures from the state
- State Land Reimbursement (Cardigan State Forest): \$3,000. Based on traditional revenues received.
- Voter checklist: \$0.00. Based on 2023 figures.

- Interest on Investments: \$50. Based on 2023 figures.
- Municipal Fees: \$1,000. Based on 2023 Town Clerk figures.

*Budget Summary to be deliberated at the public hearing:*  
 To be finalized on Tuesday January 23, 2024 meeting.

	2023	2024	Note decrease/increase
Appropriations	\$252,463		
Capital Reserves	\$37,000		
Total of above	\$289,463		
Less revenue estimates	\$122,880		
<i>Estimated tax effort</i>	\$166,583		

Next joint meeting between Select board and Budget Committee scheduled for Tuesday January 23, 2024, at 9am.

Public Hearing on the Budget: Tuesday January 30, 2024 at 7pm at the Town House

*Meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm.*

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

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

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