

*Office of the Select Board  
Town of Orange, New Hampshire  
Select Board Minutes of January 3, 2024*

*Present:* Tamara Fairbank, chair Aaron, Allen, Betsy Coble, Catherine Souza (clerical)  
*Others:* Kathy & Dave Stacy, Jana Mackay, Donald McFarlane

*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 19, 2023, seconded by Aaron Allen. Motion passed 2/0/1. Tamara Fairbank abstained as she was absent

Nonpublic minutes of December 5, 2023. Motion Aaron Allen, seconded by Betsy Coble. Motions passed 2/0/1. Aaron Allen abstained as he was not present for the full meeting.

*Hazard Mitigation Plan Update & approval:*

Motion made by Aaron Allen and seconded by Betsy Coble to accept the final version of the Orange Hazard Mitigation Plan Update and sign the Certificate of Adoption. Motion passed 3/0/0. The final report will be posted on the Town website. The next steps are for the consulting firm to secure signatures from the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources for the State of NH.

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE ORANGE, NH HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE 2024

WHEREAS, the Town of Orange has historically experienced severe damage from natural hazards, and it continues to be vulnerable to the effects of those natural hazards profiled in this plan, resulting in loss of property and life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Orange has developed and received conditional approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its Orange, NH Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024 under the requirements of 44 CFR 201.6; and

WHEREAS, public and committee meetings were held between April 12, 2021, to January 31, 2022, regarding the development and review of the Orange, NH Hazard Mitigation Plan Update 2024 and

WHEREAS, the plan specifically addresses hazard mitigation strategies and plan maintenance procedures for the Town of Orange; and

WHEREAS, the plan recommends several hazard mitigation actions/projects that will provide mitigation for specific natural hazards that impact the Town of Orange with the effect of protecting people and property from loss associated with those hazards; and

WHEREAS, adoption of this plan will make the Town of Orange eligible for funding to alleviate the impacts of future hazards; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Select Board:

1. The plan is hereby adopted as an official plan of the Town of Orange;
1. The respective officials identified in the mitigation action items of the plan are hereby directed to pursue the implementation of the recommended actions assigned to them;
2. Future revisions and plan maintenance required by 44 CFR 201.6 and FEMA are hereby adopted as a part of this resolution for five (5) years from the date of this resolution;
3. An annual report on the progress of the plan's action items shall be presented to the Select Board by the Emergency Management Director.

*Preliminary DRA Assessment:*

The Select Board reviewed and signed the Preliminary DRA Assessment to Sales Ratio that was provided by Avitar Associates of NE.

*Upper Valley Humane Society Contract:*

The Select Board reviewed the 2024 contract between the Town of Orange and the Upper Valley Humane Society. Motion was made by Tamara Fairbank to accept the contract for 2024, seconded by Betsy Coble. Motion passed 3/0/0.

*2024 Annual Town Meeting Dates & Draft Warrant Discussion:*

Catherine shared the 2024 Budget and Town Report Schedule with the Select Board. The calendar follows the NH Traditional March Town Meeting Calendar.

Important Dates to remember:

- Tuesday, January 16                      Joint budget meeting with Budget Committee and Select Board
- Tuesday, January 30                     Public budget hearing
- Tuesday, February 6                     Select Board meeting. Board to sign warrant (if approved by the DRA)
- Friday March 1 (latest)                 Mail town report to all residents
- Tuesday, March 12                        Voting at Town House 11am – 7pm
- Wednesday, March 13                    Town business meeting at Town House 7pm

A discussion ensued about possible Town Warrant Articles. Further discussion to continue in the joint meeting with the Budget Committee and Select Board on January 16, 2024.

*2023 Budget review and expenses to date:*

The Select Board reviewed the municipal budget report for Year End 2023. Total 2023 expenses are \$265,328.94 versus a budget of \$275,889.00 which is 96% spent.

*Action Item list review:*

- Action Items Completed:
  - Obtain advice from NHMA on next steps for Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission
  - Catherine to communicate the date change for the Select Board meeting of January 3, 2024
- 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
  - Draft Select Board letter to residents about change in Town Clerk phone and email due to new internet provider
- Action Items New:
    - Research what other towns the size of Orange do in the Parks & Recreation Committee

*Following up on Action Item related to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission:*

- Clarification on the RSA from the NH Municipal Association Legal team:
  - Towns are not required to establish a recreation or park commission. RSA 35-B:4 states that the selectmen SHALL appoint members to this commission. The decision whether or not to create such a commission lies with the governing body.
- Kathy Stacy originally requested the Select Board to establish a Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission at the October 17, 2023 Select Board meeting. The Board directed Kathy to obtain a Warrant article. Kathy objected on the basis of RSA 35-B:4 which grants the authority to the Select Board to establish the Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission.
- Kathy presented the Board with information from the 2014 Orange Master Plan, which highlighted examples of Land Use, Community Facilities & Service, and overall Community Survey Results to support the establishment of a Recreation or Parks Advisory Commission. The overall sentiment is that residents in favor of outdoor recreation services and want activities and facilities to connect residents.
- Kathy shared a Timeline documenting a Recreation Director appointment and salary funding:
  - 2005 March 8<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting: article 9 Town to establish a position for Recreation Director for \$600.
  - 2006 March 14<sup>th</sup> Town meeting: \$600 budgeted for Recreation Director
  - In the last several years the budget has funded a line items called “Culture and Recreation”
  - The Board chair asked 1) what happened to the \$600 and if it was used or not and 2) why the funding for the Recreation Director salary ended. No one present could answer the question.
- Discussion ensued with the Select Board about the details of what Kathy shared. The Select Board is concerned about the ability to solicit residents to participate in the Parks & Recreation Committee. Kathy would like the Board to first establish the Parks & Recreation Committee.
- Four people in attendance at the Select Board meeting are interested in participating on the Parks & Recreational Committee: Kathy & Dave Stacy, Jana Mackay and Donald McFarlane.
- Motion made by Tamara Fairbank to support establishing the Parks & Recreation Commission if there are interested residents in staffing the committee. Second by Aaron Allen. Motion passed 3/0/0. The Select Board would like to research what other towns the size of Orange do in the Parks & Recreation Committee.

- Concern over use of Williams Park – Kathy added that the Town needs to address the non-compliance to RSA 31:91-e Acceptance of Personal Property Donated to Towns and RSA 35-B:6 Use of Public Property relating to the Williams Park area.

*Secretary's Report:*

- Catherine shared the proposed Q1 Select Board meeting dates and the Select Board approved. Meetings are the first and third Tuesday of each month unless communicated differently.
- US Census Bureau request – The US Census Bureau is requesting that the Town complete a survey related to data for zoning permit requests issued for new privately owned housing units. It is the same information that will be submitted to the State of NH on the Dwelling Unit Response Form. The Board approved Catherine to complete the survey.
- NH Electric Coop has notified the Town that a Right-Of-Way re-clearing project is scheduled in 2024. Residents will be notified by automated phone call prior to the clearing.

*Reports from Boards and Committees:*

- *Cemetery trustees:* Next meeting Monday January 8, 2024 at 6pm.
- *Road Agent (Marcello Shelzi):*
  - Marcello was able to pre-buy gravel for 2024. The gravel was secured at a set price and will remain in the vendor's gravel pit in Grafton until the Town needs it.
  - Updates were sent via email on December 30 to inform residents of the road conditions during and after the recent storm.
    - We unfortunately are experiencing mud season conditions in December. There has been an unprecedented amount of rain this past month (technically, this past year as well) and the ground has become saturated. Please, drive with caution and treat this as you would the spring mud season. Road conditions may vary. I am working with our contractor to try and get some gravel and crushed stone out to help mitigate the ruts. We are also trying to source a mini grader to spot grade some problem areas, as right now a full size grader and full size dump trucks would actually do more harm than good. I thank you all for your understanding as we try to make it through unexpected challenges such as this. We have some cooler temps on the way that will hopefully allow the road to firm up and the necessary repairs can be made. Normally this time of year snow would be the major concern for road conditions, but that is obviously not the case. Snowfall is much easier to deal with than the precipitation and conditions we are currently experiencing.
    - In addition, the town has recently received a one-time highway payment from the State of NH for \$6k. I have used this to pre-purchase \$6k worth of gravel, for use at the beginning of next year. Due to the amount of road damage New England had this past year (and with the prediction of a bad mud season) the demand for gravel is high and the price of gravel is expected to keep increasing. By pre-purchasing, I was able to lock in a lower rate and save the town some money in the short run. I will expand upon this and many other things in the yearly report that I am currently working on and will be released in early 2024.
    - Thank you all for your patience. As always, your emails are appreciated.
  - Road Agent report read to the audience:
    - Remacle has made repairs to a few of the dirt roads in town. Marcello is going to try and get Remacle to hit a few more spots before this weekend's storm.

- A new vendor has expressed wanting to take over for Remacle as the town's contractor because Remacle has expressed he may not be working for much longer. Marcello will need to follow the Town Purchasing Policy and secure that the interested vendor has the insurance and equipment needed to perform the work.
  - Remacle has also been doing the work for the town at a discount. Marcello is concerned about sticker shock once a new contractor is onboard. Further discussion to take place at the January 16<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting.
  - The Select Board is pleased with Marcello's work to keep the town updated on road conditions.
- *Planning Board*: none
  - *Conservation Commission*: none

*Public comment*: None

Question on Historical Commission funds action –More to come at the next Select Board meeting.

Donald McFarlane expressed concern over the status of the roads particularly related to the drainage on Burnt Hill Rd. The drainage work was not done in the summer and then the washout happened. He is very concerned about the status of the road once snow comes. He asks the Road Agent to post the concern over the road with either cones or signage before the coming snowstorm. Catherine to text Marcello with the request.

*Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.*

*Next Select Board meeting date confirmation*: Tuesday January 16, 2024 at **6:30pm**.

*Meeting adjourned at 7:18pm.*

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Tamara Fairbank, Chair

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Aaron Allen

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Betsy Coble