

*Office of the Select Board
Town of Orange, New Hampshire
Minutes of July 5, 2022*

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

Other: Kathy and Dave Stacy, Michelle Goffreda

Meeting opened at 5:45 p.m. Attendance taken by the secretary.

As required by the NH Bureau of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA), the Board met with Aaron Allen for a final mediation of his abatement application. Aaron, being the applicant, recused himself and stepped down from the Board. Aaron submitted a statement from an independent realtor that concurred with his opinion of what the assessing category should be for the two-acre building lot portion of the property. The Board also reviewed the original assessment rationale prepared by the town's assessing firm, Avitar. After discussion, Betsy motioned to have the litigation proceed to the BTLA. Tam seconded. Motioned passed 2-0-0.

Regular business meeting at 6 p.m. Aaron stepped back onto the Board.

Pledge of Allegiance

Minutes: The minutes of June 14, 2022 were approved as submitted.

School district: Kathy Stacy spoke to the Board on how the school residency list is compiled. She said students who graduated in 2022 will be listed on the fiscal year calendar (2021-2022) even though the town gets the list after they graduate. New enrollees for the coming year will be on the 2022-23 student residency list.

Kathy spoke on how the school district is funded by the five Mascoma district towns. She explained that it is a misconception that the town's annual tax commitment to the school district is based on a tuition amount (how many students from each town are enrolled) but, instead, the tax commitment is formulated by Department of Revenue Administration based on the value of the individual towns. That Orange does not have industry is a property tax detriment.

Kathy also shared a number of school initiatives and events:

- Lunches provided over the summer were funded by COVID grants.
- Before the next school year starts, parents will get a card to fill out in regards to the no-cost or reduced-cost lunch program. Regardless if parents are going to enroll, they should return the card so the district can meet the 40% student threshold in order to acquire funding.
- Comcast generously donated low- and no-cost internet service for families during online learning during the COVID shutdowns.
- The new school faculty very much appreciates the school renovations.

- Kathy is on the Education Committee.
- The district now has two pre-school programs.
- Kathy gave the Board copies of the Curriculum and Assessment Updates.
- Kathy said she would attend a Select Board meeting three or four times a year to give school district updates.

Town Clerk's office: Town Clerk Michelle Goffreda spoke on the State requirements for the office security for specific documents and materials. She said there are no laws that mandate a safe, only that specific items must be kept under lock and key, such as a filing cabinet. After discussion, the Board agreed that they should continue to explore the acquisition of a safe for the town clerk's office. The Board asked Michelle to find out what the retention policy is for her office and to share the information with the Board.

Building permit: The Board reviewed a building permit for a 8x 10 utility building: Aaron Allen/211 New Colony Road/Map 3, Lot 36-A. The permit was already signed by the building inspector. Betsy motioned to approve the permit. Tam seconded. Aaron abstained. Motion passed 2-0-1.

Cardigan Mountain State Forest: The Board signed a request for 2022 (tax) reimbursement from the State for the forestland owned by the State. It is 5,507.0 acres valued at \$3,611,200.00.

Inventories: The Board signed an order for the 2023 inventory forms (PA-28) provided by the DRA at no cost.

Other:

- An email was received from Attorney Mitchell advising the Board to stay on top of the Lemere trash agreement to be sure there is action and follow-through, rather than just words of agreement.
- The municipal budget report ending June 30, 2022 was reviewed. The town has expended \$120,998.91 of the \$256,704 2022 budget (47%).
- A copy of an approved State road forestry access permit was received for Terhune's logging operation. Access is on Cardigan Mountain Road.
- The Board received information about the Household Hazardous Waste collection day on Saturday, July 16 at the Canaan Transfer Station. Orange has prepaid for this; there is no charge for residents. The Board directed Sandi to send the information out as a town-wide email.
- A notice was received from the Dorchester ZBA that they will be acting on an application on July 8 from Vertex Towers, LLC for variances to land use and maximum building height regulations.
- A sample forbearance agreement was received from Mike Sampson on request of the tax collector. This is a tax payment agreement between a property owner and the town when property is at the point of being tax-deeded. The Board asked Sandi to get sample forbearance agreements from a couple of other towns.
- The Board received a lien notice list and deed notice list from the tax collector.

Other Select Board business and action items:

- New action items: Explore acquisition of safe for town clerk's office, retention policy for town clerk's office, other forbearance agreements
- Action items still pending: large trash disposal, finalize Remacle contract
- The Board affirmed they would like the monthly road agent report to be in hand on the second meeting of each month.
- The Board revisited the 9-1-1 sign request from Canaan. Tamara felt that given the cost, it could be included in the 2023 municipal budget instead of as a separate warrant article. The Board discussed if the town can require residents to post the 9-1-1 address signs provided by the town, and if the requirement can be incorporated into the building permit regulations. The Board asked Sandi to check with LGC. Kathy Stacy said definitive house number signs would help clarify the bus routes.
- The issue of cars being continually parked within the limits of New Colony Road was discussed. Aaron shared with the Board pertinent RSAs on cars being parked on a traveled, public roadway. Sandi will draft a letter for the Board to sign.
- After discussion, Aaron motioned for the Board to purchase the two LGC publications, Knowing the Territory and A Hard Road to Travel. Tamara seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.
- The Board discussed if Jay has turned over the website www.orangenh.us to the town as previously arranged and if he has registered the new administrator, Michael Skuhersky. Aaron to follow up.

Secretary's report:

- Emergency radios: The Board signed an approval of purchase of four radios. Sandi said the cost has gone up by about \$1,500 since the original quote. This increase will include FCC licensing for Orange to have its own two-way frequency. The State Equipment grant will reimburse 90% of the originally quoted cost. Total commitment: grant: \$11,947; town: \$3,537.52.
- Next month's electric bill will be lower because the NHEC Board has approved capital credit payments.
- School payments: Sandi said the July 2021 through October 2021 school commitment set by the DRA totaled \$224,359.68. Reviewing the voucher registry and SAU's payment request letter, it showed that the town paid \$62,063.77 for each of those months. This resulted in a \$23,895.40 overpayment. Sandi has asked the SAU to review the matter and report back to the Board.
- An inquiry was received regarding if we were having the Orange Harvest Festival. Sandi will check with Anita.

Reports from Boards and Committees:

- Sandi, secretary to the ZBA, said the ZBA now has a full Board and is meeting on July 9 to elect a Chair and Vice Chair and to review meeting and public hearing procedures. They will meet on July 16 to take up the Collins/Morrill application for a variance to the subdivision regulations.
- Tamara said the Cemetery Trustees are scheduling a meeting in the near future.

Public comment:

- Kathy Stacy spoke of her concern of people living in a camper on Razor Hill with no septic facilities. The Board will follow up.

Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.

Meeting adjourned 7:15 p.m.

Tamara Fairbank, Chair

Aaron Allen

Betsy Coble