

*Office of the Select Board
Town of Orange, New Hampshire
Minutes of November 12, 2019*

Present: Dorothy Heinrichs, Chair; Bob Ells, Tamara Fairbank, and Sandi Pierson (clerical)

Others: Bev Ells, Aaron and Hillary Allen and daughter Autumn, Bruce Ells, Jay Heinrichs, Gully Dunlap, Judith Lindahl, Sharon Proulx, and Doug Weekes.

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

Minutes:

- The minutes of October 22, 2019 were approved. Dorothy abstained because she was not at the meeting.
- The nonpublic minutes of October 22, 2019 were approved as amended. (Dorothy was listed as present, but she was not at the meeting.) Dorothy abstained from the approval.

2019 property taxes: After discussion, the Board concurred to set the overlay amount at \$2,000.00. (Revenue included in the budget for possible abatements.) This set the tax rate at \$26.60 per thousand dollars of valuation. The Board will meet on Thursday, November 14 to print and sign the tax warrant to the tax collector.

Highway: The Board revisited the question if Remacle's road maintenance contract allowed the town to use other vendors. The question was referred to the town's legal counsel. Dorothy recapped the attorney response, which in part read that there are numerous contracts and extensions, and it is unclear what contract is in effect because the most recent one was not signed by Remacle. It is uncertain if there is a fully-executed contract in the town's files. After discussion, the Board concurred that Sandi should look in the files to see if there are other contracts that were executed and for the Board to meet with Scott and Richard at the December 10 Select Board meeting to establish an up-to-date contract.

Purchasing/procurement policy: The Board discussed the drafting of a purchasing policy for the town. They will review an article in regards published by the NH Municipal Association and review sample policies from other towns.

Financial:

- The Board reviewed an email from Treasurer Trish Weekes explaining the present cash flow balance.
- The Board reviewed the October treasurer's report and Select Board reconciliation. The figures were on target and the Chair signed the report.
- The Board signed correspondence to the treasurer authorizing the withdrawal of \$44,000.00 from the general fund to be deposited into the following capital reserves as voted on at the March 13, 2019 town meeting:
 - Town Highway Equipment Capital Reserve Fund: \$6,000.00

- Town House Capital Reserve Fund: \$4,000.00
- Revaluation Capital Reserve Fund: \$4,000.00
- Town Road Improvement Capital Reserve Fund: \$30,000.00
- The Board unanimously voted to authorize the treasurer to open a checking account under the name of Town House Restoration Fund, with the Select Board being the authority to expend from the account. Deposits into this account are solely to benefit the Town House, including using them for an anticipated LCHIP matching grant. Deposits are expected to be grants and donations. Two donations have already been received: \$500.00 from the Harvest Festival Committee and \$60.00 from Hillary and Aaron Allen. Dorothy and Treasurer Trish Weekes will be the authorized signatures for the account.
- The Board signed a Land Use Change Tax (DRA form A-5) and tax warrant to the tax collector for 0.02 acres taken out of current uses on land owned by Erik Pietrowicz (Tuttle Hill/Map 4, Lot 14-E). The land was taken out of current use due to the placement of a shed. The tax is \$20.00.

Equalization ratio: The Board reviewed Avitar's sales documentation and recommendation to submit to the DRA their preliminary assessment to sales ratio. Their preliminary analysis indicated a median assessment to sales ratio of 106.5%. The Board approved and signed off on the recommendation. Sandi will upload it on the DRA portal.

Correspondence from Sharon Proulx:

- On behalf of the Historical Commission, Sharon gave the Board a letter expressing appreciation for the Harvest Festival Committee's \$600 donation to the commission.
- Sharon gave the Board a letter recommending that no other town correspondence be included with the tax bill. Health Officer Doug Weekes had suggested including a flyer about an upcoming water testing program. (See below). After discussion, the Board concurred with Sharon.

Water testing: Doug submitted to the Board a handout on the well water testing program that townspeople will have the opportunity to partake in. Endyne Laboratory Services of Lebanon, a NH-state certified lab, is offering the town a discount on water test packages to Orange. Answering a concern from Sharon about town funds being used to give business to a private company, Doug responded that the State no longer offers residential water testing. After discussion, the Board and Doug agreed that the handout can be included in the town reports when they are mailed out. He will also give a more detailed description of the water testing program in his annual health officer report, which will be in the town report.

Veteran's Tax Credit: The Board revisited the request made to the Select Board's office to have an article placed on the warrant that would expand the qualifications for the veteran tax credit, which is \$200.00. Presently the eligibility is pursuant to NH RSA 72:28, which limits the qualifications to specific war and conflict periods. The legislature now allows towns to vote to offer the credit in accordance with NH RSA 72:28-b, which are those who served a minimum of 90 days and were honorably discharged. After discussion, the Board concurred to put the article on the warrant and let the voters decide.

Town-wide assessment: The Board reviewed and approved the contract for Avitar's 2020 assessing work, which includes the town-wide revaluation mandated by the State for municipalities to do every five years. The contract cost is \$21,900.00.

Other:

- Planning Board Secretary Hillary Allen requested a key to the Town House so she can post notices in the foyer as required. The Board concurred. Sandi to follow up.
- Building Inspector Doug Weekes submitted to the Board the recommended wording pertaining to driveway permits, which will be an amendment to the Orange Building Regulations. The amendment is put before the voters in March.
- A notice was received from the Mascoma School District that the next eight school payments are \$56,089.92 each. This is a decrease of \$51.99.
- A notice was received from Young's Propane that the contract with the town has been renewed and the area index of propane is set at \$1.264 per gallon, plus taxes, fees, rates, and charges. Dorothy thanked Bob for originally following up on the contract, which has saved the town a substantial amount of money.
- A notice was received by the State of NH that they have electronically deposited the October Block Grant payment of \$9,103.50 into the town's account.
- A notice was received from the NH Municipal Association that their annual meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14.
- A notice was received from the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission that the dues for fiscal year 2021 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021) will be \$459.10. This will be forwarded to the Budget Committee.
- A notice was received from the NH Municipal Association that the 2020 dues will be \$1,082.00. This will be forwarded to the Budget Committee.
- The following health agency requests will be forwarded to the Budget Committee:
 - Visiting Nurse and Hospice: \$1,300.00 (Same as 2019)
 - WISE: \$400.00 (A new request)
 - Grafton County Senior Citizen Council: \$450.00. (Increase of \$50.00)

Secretary's report:

- A reminder to the Board that they need to draft warrant articles for the amendment to the Building Ordinance in regards to driveway permits and frost wall depth.

Reports from other boards and committees:

- Dorothy said the Orange and Canaan Conservation Commissions are hosting a home energy program on November 20th at 6 p.m. The sponsor is NHSaves.

Public comment:

- Sharon asked if all roads were reconstructed enough to allow winter plowing. Dorothy said that Road Agent Scott Sanborn reports that they are.

Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.

Resignation: With regret, the Board accepted Bob Ells' resignation from the Select Board. Dorothy spoke of Bob's 42 years of service to the town, the last eight being on the Select Board.

She said she especially appreciated that Bob stepping back into the position when the town was the experiencing turmoil during the unanticipated Select Board turnover of 2015. Others remarked on Bob's unfailing courteousness, friendliness, and being a go-to person for people in town needing something. Sandi said that he has made here time here in the Select Board's office a very positive experience. Sharon said that she has appreciated his passion for the town and that he has always been a gentleman, a friend, and a neighbor.

Select Board appointment: After Bob stepped down, the Board unanimously voted in favor to appoint Aaron Allen to the Select Board until the March 2020 elections.

Nonpublic session: At 6:57 p.m. the Board unanimously voted in favor of going into nonpublic session with Health Officer Doug Weekes pursuant to RSA 91-A:3-c re: tax dedeed property. Motion to come out of nonpublic session at 7:10 p.m.

Meeting adjourned 7:00 PM.

Following the meeting, all present gathered together to enjoy refreshments and to wish Bob the very best for the future.

Dorothy Behlen Heinrichs

Tamara Fairbank

Aaron Allen