

*Office of the Select Board
Town of Orange, New Hampshire
Minutes of October 8, 2019*

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

Others: Bev Ells, Aaron Allen, Scott Sanborn, Karen McFarlane and son Cameron, Jessie Stark, and Doug Weekes.

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

Minutes: The minutes of September 24, 2019 were unanimously approved.

Highway:

- Road Agent Scott Sanborn updated the Board on the pre-winter work being done to the flood-damaged roads. At present, New Colony Road is being worked on. Tug Mountain Road will follow.
- Scott will be meeting with the FEMA team on Friday, October 18 for a comprehensive site review of flood work to be done and the projected costs.
- Dorothy recapped the Board's meeting with the State regarding assistance with paying for FEMA work. To date the town has spent \$96,044.45. Any money received from the State would be paid at the time federal FEMA money is received.
 - Scott expects it will take an additional \$60,000 to complete emergency roads ready for winter maintenance. He estimates the necessary embankment repairs to four sites will cost \$100,000, with areas on New Colony and Williams roads being critical. He hopes to have these two sites worked on before the spring thaw.
 - The State will loan money to the town at a 2.25% interest rate; the municipality would be responsible for the payment of the interest.
 - The State will disburse funds to the town for money already spent, an option called "Public Assistance Reimbursement." Funds could be expected six to eight weeks after copies of invoices are received from the town.
 - Not related to the State, the Mascoma Savings Bank will loan money to the town with a comparable interest rate as the State. It was unclear if they would wait until federal FEMA money was received before the town has to pay on the principal.
 - Scott felt that the Town Roads Capital Reserve Fund should not be considered for funding flood repairs because its intent is for general paving in the future.
- After discussion, it was agreed that at this time, the Public Assistance Reimbursement of monies spent for FEMA work is the more practical option for the town. The Board voted unanimously in favor of using this option and asked Sandi to scan and send the \$96,044.45 worth of invoices to the State.
- Jessie Stark asked if the highway department planned on installing larger culverts on the flood damaged roads. Scott said that even though FEMA only reimburses for the culverts that were there at the time of the flood, he plans on replacing them with larger ones when the permanent work is done. He said that this work might come under State mitigation

grants, but that we need to keep in mind that the town would be responsible to pay for 25% of State mitigation grants. Jessie asked what work will be done to restore the brook bed. Scott said that as road agent, his responsibility is having embankment work done in accordance with what is appropriate for the well-being of the roads. Jessie said that her inquiries have led her to believe that there is DES funding available to address problems with the brook.

- Aaron Allen asked the Board to consider the quality of work on the roads by the contractor and to explore hiring an onsite supervisor if Scott does not have the time to be onsite when the work being done. Dorothy to follow up.

Flood property damage: Jessie Stark said that her home on New Colony Road has sustained considerable damage from the flood, and that she has been unsuccessful in getting financial assistance from State or federal agencies. She asked about an abatement of taxes in 2019 because the value of her property has decreased. Sandi said that all 2019 assessments for tax purposes are as of April 1, the only exception being that the Selectboard may prorate property taxes after the cutoff date if a home was accidentally and completely destroyed by fire. Jessie requested the phone number to the Department of Revenue Administration so she can ask them more about abatements. Sandi to follow up.

Conservation Commission: Dorothy stated that Aaron and Hillary Allen have asked to join the Conservation Commission. The Board unanimously voted in favor of appointing them to the Conservation Commission.

Treasurer's report: The Board reviewed the September 2019 treasurer's report and Select Board reconciliation. The reconciliation was on target and the Chair signed the report.

Building permit: The Board reviewed and signed a building permit application for a handicap access ramp for Philip and Charlotte Smith/52 Eastman Road/Map 1, Lot 4. The application had already been reviewed and signed by the building inspector.

Veterans' Tax Credit: An inquiry was received at the Select Board's office asking if the Board would consider putting an article on the 2020 warrant asking the voters to approve giving the veteran tax credit to all veterans in town pursuant to NH RSA 72:28-b, which are those who served a minimum of 90 days and were honorably discharged. Presently the eligibility is pursuant to NH RSA 72:28, which limits the qualifications to specific war and conflict periods. Tamara said she would like to review the RSAs prior to a Board discussion. The discussion was tabled to a future meeting.

Other:

- The Board received a request from West Central Behavioral Health for a \$400.00 contribution in 2020. This amount is the same as 2019. This will be forwarded to the Budget Committee.
- The Board received a request from the Public Health Council for a \$250.00 contribution in 2020. This is an increase of \$2.00 from 2019. This will be forwarded to the Budget Committee.

- A notice was received from the Holderness Planning Board re: there will be a public hearing in Holderness on October 15 to review a site application for a cell tower proposed to be erected on Old Mountain Road in Holderness.

Resignation: Select Board member Robert Ells tendered his resignation from the Select Board, effective at the adjournment of the November 12 meeting. Dorothy and Tam accepted the resignation with regret. Dorothy thanked Bob for his many years of service, especially stepping into the position at the time when the entire Orange Select Board had resigned. The Board requested that any person interested in serving on the Board as an appointee until the March 2020 elections to contact the Select Board.

Welfare: Welfare Agent Karen McFarlane stated that there is a voucher in tonight's batch for a welfare situation. She explained the numbering system she is using.

Other business: n/a

Secretary's report:

- Area churches are offering Thanksgiving dinners for those in need. Welfare Agent Karen McFarlane and the Board thought it was good idea to post the information on the town's email listserv in order to get the word out. Sandi to follow up.
- The request for a 2020 donation from Tri-County CAP needs to be revised; they are asking for a donation per capita, but have the Orange population at 3,920. Sandi to follow up.

Reports from other boards and committees:

- Tamara recapped the success of the Historical Commission's program on Nathan Waldo, which included a hay ride from the Town House to the Common Cemetery for the unveiling and dedication of the memorial stone. The Terhunes donated the stone (from property once owned by the Waldos), David Como moved it to the cemetery site, and Hannah Grove, a direct descendant of Nathan Waldo, donated the funds for the engraving. Hannah and her daughter Evangeline were present at the dedication. Dorothy noted that Nathan Waldo, one of the first settlers in Orange—then called Cardigan—was once a prosperous resident in Orange, but died poor, and was buried in an unmarked pauper's grave. While a member of the Selectboard, Nathan Waldo paid the Town's legal expenses, leaving his family in poverty. Dorothy motioned for the Select Board to formally absolve all debt that may have been incurred by the town by the Waldo family. Tamara seconded. Motion passed unanimously in favor.
- Tam said that the next Historical Commission meeting is November 4, 2019. Upcoming programs include the contradance on October 26 and the Veterans Memorial Dedication on November 10.

Public comment: n/a

Bills and vouchers were reviewed and signed.

Nonpublic session: At 7:20 p.m. the Board unanimously voted in favor of going into nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3-c re: school residency list accuracy and tax deeded property. Motion to come out of nonpublic session at 7:25 p.m. Dorothy stated that a decision was made to send a certified letter to the previous owner of a tax-deeded property notifying them that the tax deed has been recorded, and to include printed copies of all RSAs pertaining to their rights of repurchasing. The school district will be notified of a student on the residency list that no longer resides in Orange.

Meeting adjourned 7:26 PM.

Dorothy Behlen Heinrichs

Robert Ells

Tamara Fairbank