

## **Meeting Minutes: February 20, 2025**

### **Meeting held in person at the Niles Room in the Town Offices and via Zoom**

**Present-in-person:** Commission Members: Ted Cooley, Harry Pease, Bob Hedges (chair), Chris Gothberg. Alternates: Emily Bryant and John Miller. Representing the Selectboard: Kevin Follensbee. Other: Shawn Washburn, Casey Washburn, Lauren Zielinski (Connecticut River Conservancy), Adair Mulligan, Jess Steketee, Earl Johnson.  
Attending via Zoom: Gabe Bolin (Base Flow, LLC)

Meeting called to order 7:00 PM.

Emily Bryant and John Miller were seated.

1. **Minutes from 1/16/2025:** *Motion* (Harry/John) to accept the minutes of 1/16/25 as written. Motion passed.
2. **Presentation on Washburn bank stabilization project – application for expedited wetlands permit.** Lauren Zielinski of the Connecticut River Conservancy gave an overview of the proposed project to stabilize the bank of Jacobs Brook in the oxbow just downstream of the Brook Road bridge. Gabe Bolin of Base flow gave comments via Zoom. Soil is eroding from the river bank in this area and there is risk that flood waters could break through the current bank and cut off an oxbow, which would mean losing extra stream length. The plan uses root wads (felling local trees), then soil, and then plant with native species on the bank, and planting native vegetation on top of the bank as well. The flood channel will be armored with rock. Preserving the extra stream length in the oxbow helps slow the water down. The plan is to implement this in August- September of 2025 when the water is low. The project cost is about \$250K - \$270K and is being funded through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, with some backup options.  
*Motion (John/Ted):* To accept the expedited wetlands application for the project on the Washburn property. The motion passed.  
Bob signed the application.
3. **Events:** Harry reported that the January hike up to Brackett Falls went well. A hike up Stonehouse Mountain is planned for this Saturday, Feb 22. Snowshoes will be needed.
4. **Kiosk at Lower Baker Pond:** We have already approved building it - Harry volunteered to do the building. He will come back at the next OCC meeting with an estimate of cost for materials. We will need to approve expenditures.
5. **Reconciliation of the Conservation Fund.** When land is taken out of current use, the owner pays a penalty. Currently, 50% of this penalty goes to the Conservation Fund for conservation projects. Harry reported on his research into how much money is in the fund (approximately \$167K) and whether everything that should be in it is in fact in it. He has a bit more work to do on this. He suggested that we plan on how we might want to use the funds.
6. **Class VI roads.** Bob researched some information on Class VI roads and whether/how they can be converted to Class A or Class B trails, and whether a landowner who owns both sides of a class VI can make the Town throw it up. Of particular interest is the south end of Baker Road. Other Class VI roads that might be of interest are the old Grimes Hill Road from Rte 25A toward Indian Pond Road, and middle Stonehouse Mtn Road. Kevin mentioned that the book “Hard Road to Travel” (from the NH Municipal Association) has information on this.
7. **Events Calendar:** is all set up except the Upper Valley Trails Alliance can't help with the long hike from Mt Cube to the River on the originally planned day, Sept 5. All agreed that moving this hike to Sept 12-14 when they can help is a good idea.

8. **Social Media.** Chris has reviewed OCC's presence on social media. Facebook: He suggested that we can promote the Hike Orford events, post photos, and tag and share with other sites. X page: delete it. Instagram: link to Facebook page. We should follow other conservation organizations like CRJC, CRC, Hanover Conservancy, etc. to get some presence in the conservation community.
9. **Town Meeting:** Bob has planned a 4-page handout on hikes, and will have 100-200 copies printed up. He will circulate a copy to OCC before it is printed. Ted will organize the slide show again – send photos to him. Bob will arrange to have some photos printed to put on the trifold display that Emily has. We will meet on the Monday before Town Meeting to set things up. Harry will check to see if the brochures about invasive species control, which he ordered from the Extension Service, have arrived.
10. **Closed session:** *Motion* (John/Harry) to go into closed session. The motion passed. The meeting went into closed session at 8:06pm. *Motion* (John/Harry) to return to open session. The motion passed. The regular session reconvened at 8:22 pm. *Motion* (John/Harry) to seal the minutes of the closed session. The motion passed.

*Motion:* (Ted/John) To adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:24pm

Minutes taken by Emily Bryant.