

# TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Fred Kidder II, Tom Steketee

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Steve Allen, Terry Straight, Jason Bachus, Ann Green, Eva Daniels, Ted Cooley

## Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30

## Approval of Minutes

*Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kidder to accept the minutes of 08/11/2020 (as amended)*  
*Motion Passed*

## Reports

- A. **Assessor**-Steve Allen has been working on the revaluations and verifying past sales. Once values are finalized, notices are sent to property owners with their new assessed values. This allows property owners to contact Allen if they have questions on the reassessed value. After this, property values are set and are finalized in the assessors' system and taxes will be calculated on the new values.

Allen said during the revaluation year, the deadline to file the MS-1 with the NH DRA has been extended to October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Allen is hoping to upload prior to this date, as the tax rate can't be set until the MS-1 is filed.

The Selectboard asked how he becomes aware of construction that occurs in Town, specifically in remote areas. Allen said the information is taken from the inventory cards, and when he's driving the roads in Town he makes notes of new construction. The Selectboard want to discuss construction off Class VI roads in a future board meeting.

- B. **Fire Department** – Chief Straight reported there were 12 calls in July (7 medical, 5 fire). To date there have been 65 calls compared to 70 this time last year. The department has started to get back on track for trainings, with two trainings in July – one training was combined with a work session. As part of the 2020 budget, the department is looking to purchase a thermo-imaging camera. The trucks will be going in for their annual service next month.

The fire department is looking at adding several dry hydrants in Town, including one on Orfordville Road which the Conservation Commission has been working on with Horizons Engineering for filing wetland permits. The property owner that abuts this project agrees with the project.

*Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kidder to support the installation of a dry hydrant on Orfordville Road. Motion passed*

The installation of two additional dry hydrants will be installed on Dame Hill (Terry Dyke's property) and Mud Turtle Pond (Dave Rondo's property). Each property owner will pay for the installation, and the Fire Department will provide the labor, and the Town will pay

for the hydrants and other materials using the Fire Equipment expendable trust. As Rondo's property is in Lyme, any costs will be split 50/50 between Orford & Lyme.

Sale of the Fire Truck – Straight is waiting to hear from the Fire Fighters Association for a status on the purchase of the trailer. Once the fire truck is sold, any equipment on that truck will need to be stored somewhere, and without the trailer, the equipment will be stored on the fire station floor. Adams will contact the association to determine a date of purchase. Straight said he will have this truck inspected, but not serviced, this fall.

- C. **Highway Department** – Terry Straight presented his report for July to the Selectboard. Equipment – Truck #2 is back from Reeds. The anticipated cost of \$10,000 was reduced by a warranty credit, resulting in a net cost of \$2,597; Truck #3 had an air valve replaced earlier in July, and will need cab mounts replaced. All trucks will be inspected next month. Straight discussed having the department start doing oil changes themselves on trucks no longer under warranty. Oil changes need to occur a few times during the year, and this would save on a trip to Reeds saving time and money. The Selectboard will discuss at a future meeting. Straight had some hands-on training for operating a grader, by the State of NH, as well as taking an on-line class.

On-going work projects-Straight had a trapper remove the beavers from the dam at the Indian Pond culvert. Roadside mowing has been completed, as was the crack sealing on Archertown Road. Gray's Electric has started the electrical upgrade at the garage, and Thomson Fuels installed the new propane heater. The Highway department worked on brush chipping along roadsides, grading, and cleaning out culverts. The department will return to five 8-hour days as of September 7<sup>th</sup>, and will begin winter prep on the departments' equipment.

Help wanted ads only generated a few resumes, and Straight has or will contact each applicant. Kidder asked about the issues on Mud Turtle Pond road and Sawyer Brook road that Straight & Steketee visited. Straight said the department cleaned ditches and graded on Mud Turtle Pond road which should help with the driveway issue. Steketee will contact the property owner regarding this. On Sawyer Brook road, the department cleaned ditches and graded, and will do additional work to better shape the road. Steketee will contact the property owner regarding the work completed.

- D. **Police Department** – Chief Bachus reported there were 86 calls in the month of July (8 by the NH State Police). The remaining calls included 2 arrests (outstanding warrant and domestic abuse) and 26 motor vehicle stops – 4 summons and 22 warnings. Other items of note – 2 calls for service of theft of personal property, 1 motor vehicle accident, 3 emergency response assistance and 3 criminal threatening complaints. Recently there have been several complaints of OHRV use on roadways. Currently there are no regulations in Orford to prohibit this – Bachus will work on language for the Selectboard to review regarding a possible policy or ordinance for the Town.

Currently there are no grants available that apply to the needs of the police department, but Bachus continues to monitor various sites for grant opportunities. He anticipates possible federal or state level grants in the near future due to ongoing hearings regarding fair & impartial policing, de-escalating techniques and other specific recommendations around standards of conduct including mandatory trainings on implicit and explicit bias, cultural diversity and use of force. Also, there is discussion of a

statewide individual accreditation requirement, which would include periodic audits and feedback on needed attention and/or improvements.

Bachus discussed the possibility of hiring a part-time officer to cover Rivendell sporting events (100% reimbursed by RISD), and to provide coverage when Bachus is on vacation. Bachus said this would be a less expensive option than having the NHSP cover the Town when he's not available. If hired, the officer would not have a set schedule, but would be on an as needed basis. Currently he has funds budgeted for part-time officer's wages. Several concerns were addressed – would the Town need to pay for uniforms, training and certifications? Who would supervise this officer is covering for vacations? How long would this person stay in this capacity with no specific time table for work? The Selectboard agreed while there are some issues of no depth when a town has a 1-person department, the voters voted several years ago not to hire a part-time officer. Therefore, the Selectboard agreed to deny the hiring of a part-time officer at this time, and will continue using the NHPD and the Sheriff's office for coverage as needed. If the need arises to hire contracted help, the Selectboard will need to approve and sign the contract.

Bachus reported the Piermont Police Chief is unexpectedly retiring as of September 1, 2020, and the Piermont board is actively pursuing his replacement. They have requested assistance from the NHPD and the Grafton County Sheriff during the interim, and also asked if Orford could assist with contracted hours for coverage. Bachus told the Piermont board his primary role is to provide services to Orford, and if the Orford Selectboard approved, the hours worked for Piermont would be prior and after his regular shift in Orford. Orford and Piermont would have a contract (similar to the one between Orford and Rivendell). The hourly rate paid by Piermont to Orford would cover the costs of Bachus' hourly rate and use of Orford's equipment. The Selectboard discussed concerns within the community with Bachus being stretched too thin and also regarding the amount of time he was not on duty while at training and while on desk duty due to an injury. However, Bachus said the NHSP and Sheriff's department would fill the majority of Piermont's needs. The Selectboard agreed helping a neighboring town is the right thing to do.

*Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kidder to support Chief Bachus' request to assist Piermont to help maintain their accreditation. A contract between the two towns will be agreed to, and his work in Piermont will not be a detriment to his work in Orford. Motion passed.*

## **Old Business**

**A. Water Testing procedures** – Ted Cooley presented the e-coli readings as of 08/25/20. As the readings at the 3 ponds were below 88 colonies/100mL (NH DES level), Steketee will pull the warning signs previously posted, Cooley will post the readings on Listserv, and Dobbins-Marsh will update the Town's webpage. The next test date will be on 09/01/20 and again, the results will be posted as soon as received. The Selectboard asked Dobbins-Marsh to draft a policy on the process for testing and posting of results to be reviewed at a future Selectboard meeting.

## **B. Update of Outstanding Projects**

a) **Illegal Junkyards** – the Selectboard requested Dobbins-Marsh schedule a site visit for the week of September 14, 2020 to review the property at 601 Route 10.

Adams reported on a website “NOAA” that provides a background satellite view that clearer views of areas that might be categorized as illegal junkyards due to the number of non-operational vehicles and scrap metal accumulated in an area. Adams requested the other board members take a look at this site.

Ann Green sent the Selectboard information on about a building in Lebanon, NH the town razed under RSA 155-B because of “inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, physical damage, abandonment and conditions which constitute a fire hazard and a hazard to public safety and health”. Green requests the Selectboard consider similar measures be applied to the Patton property on Route 10 (the old Orford Inn), and possibly other locations as well. Dobbins-Marsh will pull this RSA and report back to the board at the next meeting.

- b) **Historical Barn Review Schedule** – annually the Selectboard reviews the Historical Barns in Orford. Dobbins-Marsh asked if she should schedule these visits, or if on off years, the Selectboard can request these property owners submit a letter stating the work completed since the September 2019 visit. The Selectboard agreed a letter from the property owners would be sufficient for this year. The Selectboard discussed one Historical Barn that doesn’t meet the criteria to qualify for the tax credit, and will be issuing a letter to this property owners notifying that they are in violation of the Historical Barn agreement, and once the credit is removed, they will be responsible to pay back the credit from the date applied.
- c) **Town Garage Grader cover** – Kidder will be meeting with Brad McCormack this weekend to finalize the project design so work can begin.
- d) **Town Garage Addition bids** – A bid was received from Paxor Construction, but was rejected as the estimate was too high. Kidder said we need to re-think the addition. Prices for wood products are increasing, and product is getting difficult to find. Kidder will look into the cost to add a metal building to serve at the addition.
- e) **High Bridge Road Bridge** – Dobbins-Marsh asked the status of the specs for this project as prior conversation indicated the Selectboard would put the project out to bid, and that would determine the amount of a Warrant Article to put to the voters in March 2021. Steketee will work on the specs to review and discuss at a future meeting.
- f) **FEMA Updates/ Completion of FEMA Projects**
  - 1. **Town Road #100**-The project was awarded to JP Sicard – they will be contracting the concrete culvert to Michie Corp. DuBois & King will complete the final design this week, with the completion date estimated to be November 2020.
  - 2. **Quinttown Road Culvert** – CSI is working to complete the design of the headwalls. Once approved, construction will begin. The estimated date for the project to start is the last week of September 2020.
- g) **Town-wide Internet** – Grafton County has formed a broadband committee that consists of 5 town administrators and/or managers from several towns to address concerns around broadband services. Dobbins-Marsh will contact the committee to see if other towns officials or residents can join. Steketee received notice from NH Electric Coop that they are looking into using their infrastructure to offer broadband services to its customers, which would help some of Orford’s population. Hopefully this will encourage other utility companies to follow suit.

**C. Sawyer Brook Road** – discussed as part of the Road Agent’s report

## New Business

- A. Approval of received “notices of intent to cut wood”** – none to review
- B. Review and Approval of the 2020 MS-434 Estimated Revenue report** – the Selectboard reviewed the MS-434 draft. *Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kidder to accept the MS-434 as presented, Motion Approved.*
- C. Review and Approval of the 2019 Audited Financial statement** – The Selectboard reviewed 2019 Financial Audit prepared by Roberts & Greene, PCCL. *Motion made to accept the 2019 Financial Audit. Motion Passed.* Dobbins-Marsh will upload the MS-535 on the DRA Portal, prepared by Roberts & Greene, for NH DRA’s approval.
- D. Review and Approval of the Capital Reserve Expenditure report** – Dobbins-Marsh presented the list of expenses eligible to be reimbursed to the Town from the Trust Funds. *Motion made by Kidder, seconded by Steketee to accept the list of expenses to be reimbursed from the Trust Funds. Motion passed.* Dobbins-Marsh will send the itemized spreadsheet to the Trustees of the Trust Funds, along with copies of all invoices.
- E. 2021 Budget Timeline/Process planning** – Dobbins-Marsh presented the timeline used in 2020 for the budget process. Due to COVID-19, the Selectboard agreed meetings will be virtual and can follow the 2020 dates. Dobbins-Marsh will update the planned meeting dates and present at a future board meeting to finalize.
- F. Contracts** – none to review
- G. Correspondence** – Debbie Hadlock, Tax Collector, provided a list of unpaid taxes to the Selectboard. Many residents with past due taxes are on a payment plan. The Selectboard request Hadlock attend a Selectboard meeting to answer specific questions on the past due balances.
- H. Other**
  - 1. Set up for the NH Primary** – the Selectboard will set up for the NH Primary Election on September 7, 2020 at 4:00 pm
  - 2. Appointing a Selectboard Rep for the 09/08/20 Election** – *Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kidder to appoint Dobbins-Marsh as the Selectboard Pro Tem for the 9/8/2020 NH Primary Election. Motion Passed.*

## Manifests, Payroll and Accounts Payable folders

The manifest, payroll and accounts payable folders were reviewed and signed where necessary.

## Topics for Future Discussion

- A.** RRC Impact Study
- B.** Employee Handbook Revision

## Non-Public Session

*A motion was made by Kidder, seconded by Adams to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(a) for personnel matters at 9:07 pm. A roll call vote of member’s present was taken with a decision in the affirmative*

*The Board resumed the regular meeting at 9:20 pm. A motion was made by Kidder, seconded by Steketee to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session. Motion Approved.*

**Adjourn**

*Motion made by Kidder, seconded by Adams adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh