

# TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: John Adams, Jen Carter, Chase Kling

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

## Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm

**Review Outstanding Project & Action Items list** – the Selectboard reviewed the combined list of outstanding projects and action items. These items were broken down for short term (2023), and long term (2024 and beyond), with a few additional items added. The list will be updated as needed, and will be used at future board meetings as agenda items.

**Newsletter** – the Selectboard reviewed the draft newsletter that will address work in progress following the results from the annual meeting. The newsletter will be processed and mailed the week of March 10th

**Contract** – Affinity LED, LLC submitted the contract between themselves and the Town of Orford to allow the start of the streetlight project.

## Document Signatures

- **Purchasing Policy** – The Purchasing Policy was revised based on the changes approved at the Annual Meeting. The policy was presented to the Selectboard for their signatures. Kling addressed his concern around language that employees are not allowed to order personal items using the Town of Orford accounts for billing. What impact does it have on the policy when it's violated? This led to a conversation about if employees should be allowed to have personal orders delivered to their work location vs their home. Carter felt this would be a part of the Employee Handbook, not the Purchasing Policy but also stated she didn't feel it was an issue of concern and should not be added to the Handbook. Adams agreed.
- **Right to Know request** – the Selectboard received a Right to Know request that will require our IT contractor to search several email addresses. IT required signed documentation from the Selectboard giving him the authority to pull these emails, which the Selectboard provided.

## Correspondence

- Tax Collectors certification that the tax bills were mailed out for the 2022 fiscal year on November 23, 2022
- DuBois & King will be conducting sampling at the landfill on April 6<sup>th</sup>
- Email received from Christine Johnston, Town Attorney regarding the 3M PFAS Subpoena. Originally it was filed in US Federal District Court, but the case was recently remanded to the NH State trial court in Merrimack County. She fully expects new subpoenas will be issued to NH Towns, but the original subpoena is now void &

unenforceable. Any data gathered to submit for the original subpoena can be held until future notice.

- “How Neighbors Impact the Value of your home” was sent to the Selectboard to review
- “Flood Lines” newsletter produced by the Business & Economic Affairs (BEA)
- Grafton County Commissioners have authorized a portion of their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to be allocated to Grafton County municipalities with eligible projects. Dobbins-Marsh will contact Grafton County to determine how “Road Building & Maintenance” under the category of “Lost Public Sector Revenue” can apply to Orford.

**Other** – Kling left a book on Covered Bridges for the board members to read over. He feels this could be a good option for the High Bridge Road bridge project.

Kling also discussed looking into a wooden bridge for the Mousley Brook culvert project, and felt it could be less expensive than the FEMA route. Currently FEMA is looking for cost analysis from DuBois & King to allow FEMA to work the project costs from their end. If the Selectboard want to go in the direction of a wooden bridge, an engineer will need to create a plan and cost analysis so the board can decide between the two options – wooden bridge or FEMA. Kling will speak with Project Engineer Erin Darrow about this project.

**Complaints** – Three (3) complaints were filed by Janice Follensbee regarding being blocked from the Orford Fire Department face book page. Retaliation (upon legal advice will be addressed in a closed session), Access to health & safety information, First Amendment Rights violation.

- Access to Health and Safety Information

As of March 23, 2023, I, Janice Follensbee, have now been completely blocked from the Orford NH. Fire Department Facebook (FB) page. I am unsure of the exact date of being blocked, but I can say I had access up until the end of February 2023, where I was able to comment and view all posts. I have not, since leaving the Orford Fire Department on June 21, 2021 posted a negative comment on this FB page. Now I cannot even see their FB page at all.

As Chief Straight uses the Orford NH. Fire Department FB page as a way to disperse vital health and safety information to the residents of Orford and surrounding communities, blocking me from the above referenced FB page poses a breach to the health and safety of myself and my family members living with me.

- First Amendment Rights violation

As of March 23, 2023, I, Janice Follensbee, have now been completely blocked from the Orford NH. Fire Department Facebook (FB) page. I am unsure of the exact date of being blocked, but I can say I had access up until the end of February 2023, where I was able to comment and view all posts. I have not, since leaving the Orford Fire Department on June 21, 2021 posted a negative comment on this FB page. Now I cannot even see their FB page at all.

According to the Federal Court, in multiple court cases, the blocking of any individual by any public official (which a Fire Chief is) is an infringement upon a persons' First Amendment rights. I feel my First Amendment rights are being violated. I am not able to view or comment on, due to Chief Terry Straight blocking me completely from the Orford NH. Fire Department FB page.

Carter asked if the Town has a Facebook page. (No) Does the Town have a Social Media policy? (No). Carter said that is a policy the Town definitely needs. Carter said the Town should be the manager of all social media pages, with department heads given the authority to post to the site by the Selectboard. Dobbins-Marsh will start working on a draft of a Social Media policy. While the Orford NH, Fire Department FB page may not be an official town sponsored page, (because the Selectboard don't manage the page), it appears to be. The Selectboard will address the above listed complaints with Chief Straight at the meeting on 04/12/23.

**Manifests, Payroll and Accounts Payable folders**

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

**Adjourn**

*Motion made by Adams, seconded by Kling adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 3/0*

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh