

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 22, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Chase Kling

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Kling to accept the minutes of 10/26/2023 (as amended) Motion Passed 2/0*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, accept the minutes of 11/08/2023 – Kling wanted the minutes to include the discussion pertaining to the complaints Terry Straight received. Follensbee withdrew his motion*

Reports

- Assessor** – Todd Haywood completed matching the sales for the Department of Revenue Administration's equalization ratio study which covers sales that occurred in Orford from October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. The preliminary results are not for publication because the DRA staff will have to add sales from the previous year into this year's study due to an insufficient amount of qualified sales (20). Haywood submitted 13 qualified sales. Currently, as it stands before the DRA makes any additional changes, the coefficient of dispersion (COD) is barely within the acceptable range and the Price Related Differential (PRD) is outside of the acceptable range. The overall ratio, which is much less than market value and outside of the Assessing Standards Board (ASB) range, is a less consequential factor. The statistic to be most focused on is the COD which the final outcome is still determined. The next reassessment must be completed in 2025. The information required to make that decision may not be available prior to setting the 2024 budget. Consequently, the Town will be compelled in any case to re-assess the entire town in 2025. We have started the cyclical inspection process here in Orford and expect to continue the process until the end of the year.
- Selectboard attended meeting recap**
 - Parks & Playgrounds – Follensbee attended their meeting on 11/15/23. Primarily they discussed the bandstand condition and that to date have not receive estimates for the repairs.
 - Conservation Commission – Follensbee attended their meeting on 11/16. The commission discussed the possibility of paying the engineering fees for several culvert replacement projects. They are also working on recruiting new members to serve on their commission. The Commission has been asked if there is a way to determine the appropriate water level of the bog/pond at the Outlet Stop (spillway) for the Orfordville Road bog.

Old Business

A. Update of Outstanding Projects

- Archertown Road Phase I – As of tonight, the paving is completed, with shoulder work scheduled for tomorrow, and guardrails to be installed on Monday 11/27/2023. Signage will be added on the road, and some of the inside ditches may have additional stone added. Phase II will include ditching, culvert replacements, removing ledge (or relocating the road), and paving (which will include the top coat for Phase I and II)
- Archertown Bridge at Jacobs Brook – Engineer Megan Ooms, DuBois & King, will attend the Selectboard meeting on 12/13/2023 to present the current project status to the Selectboard and the public.

B. Other

- Highway Trucks – The slot to add the plow package for the Western Star 6-Wheel truck has been pushed back to April/May 2024. The slot to add the plow package to the F-550 will be delayed until after the annual meeting in March 2024.

New Business

A. Opening Surplus Equipment bids – no bids were received; therefore, the Highway crew will work out how to dispose of the items as scrap metal.

B. Sidewalk Plowing – Charlie Pierce snow plows the bridge sidewalk. In order to avoid having him purchase an expensive insurance policy for plowing coverage, the Town will hire him as a seasonal temporary employee. The hourly rate will be determined based on historical data. Follensbee will speak with Pierce regarding paperwork the Town will need.

C. Town of Orford Facebook Page – because the Selectboard adopted a Social Media Policy, it was discussed having a Town of Orford Facebook page as the master page, then departments and committees would attach their pages to it. This was an introductory topic and will be discussed in greater detail at a future meeting. Follensbee requested all employees, volunteers, committees and commission members be given the Social Media policy to read and officially sign off that's it's been read. Dobbins-Marsh will send out these documents.

D. Policy Introduction – Electronic Communications – Follensbee is researching what other NH towns use for a similar policy. Currently, the Employee Handbook addresses "Computer Use and Communication Equipment", but the Town doesn't have a stand-alone policy. The Selectboard discussed email addresses for all committees, commissions and Town Employees as it's important for individuals not to use personal emails for correspondence in the event of a Right to Know request.

E. Complaints - none

F. Review of received "Notice of Intent to Cut Wood" – none received

G. Correspondence

- Municipal Tax Rates by Town was generated by the NH DRA. While not all Towns are listed on the report, Orford has the highest Local Education Tax rate (\$20.87) and has the 5th highest overall tax rate (\$32.70)

- Elderly Tax Exemptions – an email was received from Rusty Keith regarding the Elderly Tax exemptions for qualified property owners in Orford. The Selectboard will discuss further at their meeting on 12/13/2023
- Complaint Responses – Shawn Garran emailed the Selectboard regarding the responses he received from Chase Kling. He feels when Kling uses “Selectman” in his signature block, that makes it an official response and copies can be given to those requesting them. Kling wants to address complaints filed on behalf of the Orford Fire Department, because as far as he knows, Garran isn’t authorized to speak on behalf of the Fire Department. Kling also said he was responding personally even when his signature block names him as a Selectman in Orford.
- Planning Board Resignation – Harry Osmer submitted his letter of resignation from the Planning Board. The decision to accept or deny was postponed until the 12/13/2023 Selectboard meeting.
- Planning Board Members – Vickie Davis, the Planning Board Assistant, emailed the Selectboard requesting them to hold a Public Hearing to remove an alternate, under RSA 673:2 II. Kling said the Planning Board must submit an official request reflecting just cause to remove an alternate. Davis also expressed concern with the number of members currently serving on the Planning Board. The Selectboard agreed in order to reduce the # of members serving to 4, a warrant article will be needed for voters to address at the March 2024 annual meeting.

H. Other – a work session may be scheduled for December 6th to address several policies, as the agenda for 12/13 is pretty full.

Manifests, Payroll and Accounts Payable folders

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

Adjourn

Motion made by Kling, seconded by Follensbee adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 2/0

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh