

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

November 27, 2024

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Chase Kling, Larry Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh,

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Public Comments None

Tax Abatement – Don Polaski asked to reschedule the meeting as an interpreter couldn't be scheduled for this date. Kling briefly discussed other business in Orford and asked the other Selectboard members to review the information prior to the rescheduled meeting.

Approval of Minutes

- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 11/13/2024 (as amended) Motion Passed 3/0*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 11/20/2024 (as amended) Motion Passed 3/0*

Reports

- A. **Highway Department** – Kling reported on the Highway department's recent activity. The beavers are back near the Archertown Road and Town Road #100 intersection. The Road Agent has contacted a certified animal control person to have them removed. There are additional areas where the beavers are on private property, which the Town can't access, however, the Road Agent will contact these property owners to discuss options for them to take. The Road Agent received a text from R&D paving stating their company will be on site in the spring of 2025. However, no letter has been received from R&D confirming the information in the text. The Selectboard will send a letter to R&D requesting it. The blocks added to restrict access to the High Bridge Road bridge have tilted and need to be moved back. The buttresses look ok, but there are trees growing near the area and may become problematic in the future. There is still concern with the berm on Mud Turtle Pond road but the area where the trucks turn is cleared. It's possible when the department is plowing it may impact the berm – Taylor will discuss with the Groff's.

The loader's fuel tank will be replaced at an approximate cost of \$2,000. Len Gray worked with the highway crew to make repairs to the salt shed. The Highway crew will be adding more erosion stone into the ditches on Phase I of Archertown Road. The Road Agent Nutter received an estimate of \$70,540 to pave the Archertown Road from the Newcomb Hollow Bridge to Norris Road. Nutter is waiting for an estimate from Wanner Earthmoving to rehab that same section of Archertown Road which will be used to finalize the warrant article for 2025.

B. Selectboard attended meeting recap

- Conservation Commission – Follensbee attended their 11/21 meeting – the group reviewed their winter activities and plans for summer events for next year. They will have a table at the annual meeting with a possible slide show of the hiking events.
- Parks & Playgrounds – Taylor attended their 11/20 meeting. The group discussed the work needed for the Community Field for repairs due to deferred maintenance.
- Road Committee – Taylor attended their 11/21 meeting. The committee discussed the Highway Block Grant, Archertown Road punch list for Phase I, and the Indian Pond Culvert project. The group was also concerned with the amount of ledge (316 yds) that was removed from Phase II of the Archertown Road project. Kling asked Taylor to remind the committee of their bylaws (#1-6) and when will these be addressed.

Old Business

- A. Indian Pond Dual Culvert project update** – the Selectboard discussed the lack of communication from the engineering firm. The Selectboard should have seen the preliminary design draft by now. It was agreed that a letter will be sent to Right Angle Engineering to request the status of the plan design, wetland permit application and the specs to put the project out to bid.

New Business

- A. Bid for 2019 Ford F-550** – the bids are not due until December 11th, but currently the high bid is \$20,000. Originally Claremont Ford offered \$35,000 (when Steve Williams was the Highway Supervisor) – should we contact them to see what they would offer? Because the truck is on Municibid.com the Town can't advertise the sale of the truck with anyone else, so the Town will have to wait for the bid to end, then decide what to do.
- B. Long Term Disability coverage** – The Selectboard discussed the Long-Term Care coverage and premium and approved adding this coverage effective 1/1/2025. Dobbins-Marsh will update the budget worksheet.
- C. Review of received “Notice of Intent to Cut Wood”** – none received
- D. Action Folder**
- Resignation Letter – Larry Duffy resigned from the Budget Advisory Committee. *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the resignation. Motion Passed 3/0*
 - The Bandstand Committee presented a Scope of Work to repair the bandstand. The Selectboard reviewed it and agreed it was okay to use. Dobbins-Marsh will place the work out to bid
 - BTLA Abatement – Dobbins-Marsh prepared the documents to respond to the BTLA Timber Tax appeal filed by Tim Cook. The Selectboard reviewed the information and approved. Dobbins-Marsh will email and mail out the documents.
 - Grafton County ARPA grant application – Grafton County has additional funds from ARPA in the amount \$500,000 that is available for Towns to apply for. Orford

will apply under "Road Building and Maintenance". If all 39 towns apply for funds, the minimum each town will received will be \$12,820. Dobbins-Marsh will complete the grant application and submit to Grafton County for consideration.

- Orford ARPA Funds – The Town received \$136,201 in ARPA with \$130,000 allocated to Broadband costs. Dobbins-Marsh suggested using the balance of our ARPA funds from the category "modernizing of cybersecurity" which includes upgrading general software programs. The upgrade from BMSI to G-Works will qualify under this category, but the contract will need to be signed by 12/31/2024. The Town will need to upgrade eventually as G-Works will not be supporting BMSI for much longer. The Selectboard authorized her to sign the contract.

E. Signature Folder - none

F. Correspondence

- The City of Lebanon will be changing the Landfill fees, with proposed changes including a 15% increase in the tip fee, minimum scale load fee for MSW, C&D and Bulky of \$40 and bag rate increases.
- After receiving the "Donations and Gifts to Municipalities" document from Kling, Charlie Smith sent an email to the Selectboard expressing his frustration for not being told about the donation process over the last 18 months.
- Herb Austic submitted a letter to the Selectboard addressing comments made by Kling during the October 23, 2024 Selectboard meeting. He requested the letter be read into the minutes. Kling was not prepared to read it into the minutes, but Follensbee and Taylor agreed if not read, it should be typed into the minutes.

*To the Town of Orford Selectboard 11/08/24
Concerns and corrections of the 10/23/24 Orford select board meeting*

I would like to start by thanking the select board members for their time and efforts for the town of Orford. This letter is not indicative of the select board as a whole. I would light to bring to light some disturbing erroneous comments and statements made by Chase Kling at the 10/23/24 meeting. These statements were incorrect as Kling was not present at the meeting I had with road agent Ted Nutter on 9/20/24

In those convoluted statements by Kling at that select board meeting it was said that I met with Ted Nutter at Townshed road. Kling said" Herb Pressured, Theatend, Intimidated Ted to sign a document to the point of making him feel uncomfortable" He also stated I should be Very Careful, as he felt my actions were possibly illegal in some form!

Kling was not at that meeting and so he had no first-hand knowledge of what happened. I will give you the FACTS of that meeting which I'm sure can be verified by those who were actually there. On 9/16 at a road committee meeting I was tasked by the committee to give a written recommendation from the committee to road agent Nutter. On 9/20 I called Ted and told him I had a letter from the committee that I was tasked to get to him. I asked if there was a good time and place to do so? Ted replied that he was just down the road on Archertown rd. and he could just stop up to see me at my property at 93 Blackberry Hill Rd. (I did not meet him at Townshed road) Shortly after Ted and Zack arrived at 93 BBH in the towns ford explorer. They got out and commented on a large hole I was digging to repair a

well pump. I got the document out for Ted. He read it and said he didn't want to sign it. I said that's fine, I will get it back to the committee chair. We had a friendly discussion of the progress of phase two and the road mowers headway. Shortly after Ted and Zack left my property.

I find Kling's negative and erroneous statements and accusations of me slanderous. These comments are an insult to my intelligence, integrity and character! I have no concerns of the legitimacy in regard to my action with Ted which Kling brought into question! I am very concerned about the senseless rantings of the select board chair at a recorded official meeting! The town should have concerns of legitimacy and the liability to the town and its taxpayers for his actions. I hope the seriousness of his wrongful actions of the select board chair can be addressed. These actions undermine the trust and relationship between elected officials and the town's residents.

In closing I would expect an amended account of my meeting to be documented in the town minutes. Since the false accusations were made by Kling at a recorded town meeting. I would accept an apology from him under those same conditions. I thank you for your time and understanding of the seriousness of this improper conduct by select board chair Chase Kling.

Respectfully, Herb Austic, Town resident and taxpayer

G. Other

- Kling asked Dobbins-Marsh to follow up on the Final Plat Notice of Decision of Mountainview Hideaway LLC's with the Planning Board chair.

Manifests, Payroll and Accounts Payable folders

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

Adjourn

Motion made by Taylor, seconded by Follensbee to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 3/0

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 am

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh