

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

February 12, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Chase Kling, Larry Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Steve Sanborn, Jason Bachus, Terry Martin, David Ricker

Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Hearing to accept unanticipated revenue – the Town of Orford received \$19,046 of APRA funds. These funds will be classified as Deferred Income to be used for road improvement projects. There were no public comments. The Public Hearing was closed.

Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept \$19,046 of unanticipated ARPA funds. Motion Passed 3/0

Public Comments - none

Approval of Minutes

- *The minutes from the 01/21/2025 Work Session were not approved – they will be addressed at a future meeting*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 01/22/2025 Motion Passed 3/0*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 01/28/2025 Budget Public Hearing (as amended) Motion Passed 3/0*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Kling to accept the minutes of 01/30/2025 Motion Passed 2/0*
- *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 02/05/2025 Motion Passed 3/0*

Reports

- Fire Department** – Chief Sanborn reported the department responded to 17 calls for service in January. Calls included 12 medical calls, 1 motor vehicle accident, 1 illegal burn, and 1 fire alarm activation and 2 mutual aid calls. Chief Sanborn is working on a 50/50 grant for forestry equipment (the state will match up to \$2,000). The department is looking for funds for safety equipment, chain saw gloves and updating hand tools.
- Police Department** – Chief Bachus report the department responded to 87 calls in January, with the Orford PD responding to 81. These calls included 2 criminal investigations, 4 animal complaints, 1 motor vehicle accident, 2 assists to other agencies, and various other non-criminal activities. There were 10 traffic summonses issued out of 43 traffic enforcement stops.

- C. **Selectboard attended meeting recap** – Kling attended the Planning Board meeting on 02/11 where they approved a major subdivision. The Planning Board continues to review the Cell Towner ordinance. The members are working well together.

Old Business

- A. **Orford Academy Building** – Terry Martin and David Ricker, RISD Board Members discussed the Academy Building. The school board has done a lot of research to come up with options for the building. They would like to clean up the deed to allow the school to expose the building to the market. This would require subdividing the property so the Academy Building is on its own deed. The Town and School don't have the funds to rehab the building, and potential buyers are hesitant to purchase the building because of how the deed is written. Currently, the options are to:
1. Do Nothing, which leaves the building an attractive nuisance and a huge liability
 2. Tear down the building (which can be done, even if it's on the Historical Registry)
 3. Transfer the building to the Town of Orford, but at the March 13, 2018 annual meeting, voters defeated a petition warrant article for the Town of Orford to purchase the building from Rivendell.
 4. Have the Town of Orford relinquish the right of ownership, which would revert the building back to the Orford School Board. Should the building be sold, all proceeds would be used to reduce Orford's school tax burden.

There are several issues with subdividing this building from the rest of the property on the deed, specifically the Right of Way and Easements. Martin asked for direction from the Selectboard on how to deal with the building. It's dangerous to leave as it is – either the Town or Rivendell needs to take control of the building.

Follensbee is concerned about the cost to Orford to take on the building, but is reluctant to give up the land the building sits on.

Kling says the Town of Orford should not give up its option, especially the land the building sits on. Subdividing will be very expensive and difficult due to the shared septic and water systems with Memorial Hall. Also, it will create an issue with access. If Rivendell breaks up or dissolves, all the Orford land and structures on this parcel revert back to Orford. He feels that Rivendell has made no attempt to preserve or maintain the building – it should have been mothballed, windows boarded up and the Bell Tower enclosed.

Ricker said the biggest concern is the safety factor. Rivendell boards up the entrances, and kids break in anyway. The school board has received an estimate to takedown the building – approx. \$85,000, but the school board would like to find a way to preserve the building vs having to tear it down. It may be possible to offer a 50-year lease, but the cost for rehab would most likely be close to \$6M. Martin said they realize no decisions will be made tonight - Rivendell is looking for a way to simplify the process to sell the building.

B. Update of Outstanding Projects

- a) Mousley Brook FEMA project – Dobbins-Marsh attended a Zoom meeting with Brenda Lewis, NH Homeland Security, and Kellie O'Brien, FEMA rep to discuss the next step to get this project going. Currently this project is classed as an Improved Project, with a max cost of \$522,000. The Town needs to follow their purchasing policy and request an RFQ and RFP for the project from various engineering firms. Dobbins-Marsh will work on these two documents and submit to engineering firms, included those pre-approved by the State of NH DOT
- b) Indian Pond Road Dual Culvert project – Morello Construction questioned the bid submitted by Paige Excavating. They felt it may not include the cost to reconstruct the road. However, Paige confirmed that they presented their bid based on the plan that was generated by Right Angle Engineering. Dobbins-Marsh will relay this to Morello.

New Business

- A. Review of received “Notice of Intent to Cut Wood”** – the Report of Wood Cut submitted from Smarts Mountain Realty was voided. Rick Evans at the NH DRA Timber division said to attach the Supplements Intent to Cut to the original Intent to Cut, and once the cutting is complete, a new Report of Wood cut will be submitted. Evans will discuss with the logger.
- B. Action Folder** – n/a for this meeting
- C. Signature Folder**
 - The Selectboard signed the Preliminary Ratio Study, which was sent back to our assessor to file with the state.
 - The Selectboard signed the MS-636 which will be posted along with the Warrant Articles on the 14th of February at the Post Office, Town Office, and Town Website
- D. Correspondence**
 - Floodplain Trainings – the Selectboard was notified of a training in Littleton, NH on March 4th – Board members will decide if they can attend or not.
 - BTLA Donald Polaski vs the Town of Orford – the BTLA denied Polaski's request for another abatement hearing, due to lack of facts to substantiate duress at any point during the tax mediation process.
 - Email received from the State regarding SB 240 and SB 188 – neither seem to apply to Orford
- E. Contracts** – n/a for this meeting
- F. Complaints** – n/a for this meeting
- G. Other** – Bandstand Repair – to date we have not received the estimate from Jarret Olsen regarding the cost to repair the bandstand. Taylor will reach out to him again.

Non-Public Session

A motion was made by Kling, seconded by Follensbee to enter into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3, II(c) for matters that may adversely impact a person's reputation at 7:28 pm. A roll call vote of member's present was taken with a decision in the affirmative

The Board resumed the regular meeting at 7:58 pm. A motion was made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to seal the minutes of the nonpublic session. Motion Approved 3/0

Kling reminded the Board members that there is only one Board meeting before the Annual Meeting. Follensbee said he will set up the voting booths himself the day of the meeting.

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 8:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh