

TOWN OF ORFORD

Board of Selectmen

Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2025

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kevin Follensbee, Charles Smith, Jr., Larry Taylor

OTHERS PRESENT: Esther Dobbins-Marsh, Chief Sanborn, Chief Bachus, David Bischoff

Call Meeting to Order

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

Public Comments - None

Approval of Minutes

Motion made by Smith, seconded by Taylor to accept the minutes of 11/26/2025 (as amended)

Motion Passed 3/0

Reports

- A. **Fire Department** – Chief Sanborn reported there were 19 calls for service in November (10 Medical, 1 each for a Motor Vehicle crash, Fire Alarm, Service call, 2 each for tree/wires down, Co Alarm and Mutual Aid). Filters have been ordered for the Engine and Tanker, and the body construction has started for the new rescue truck. The SCBA's (air paks) have all been tested as well. The Fire Department (OFD) is taking on a new program in conjunction with the Orford Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. (OVFD) The OFD has key boxes that will be provided free of charge to Orford resident that have medical or mobility issues in case they may be unable to unlock the door to their home due to a medial emergency. The OVFD will provide financial support to purchase the boxes. This program is in the final stages and will be rolled out after the first of the year. These will use Blue Tooth to access the lock box, and when they are no longer needed will be returned to the OFD. Anyone interested in one of these boxes should contact the Fire Chief at the department.
- B. **Police Department** – Chief Bachus reported there were 70 calls for service in November (1 each for an Assault, Alcohol Violation, Dumping Complaint, 2 each Alarm Calls, Motor Vehicle collisions, 3 Suspicious Activity, 4 Medical Calls, 5 Animal Complaints, and 29 Vehicle Stops resulting in 5 summonses issued. The remaining calls were non-criminal and administrative. There was one arrest for an illegal kindling of fire without the owners' permission, kindling a fire without a permit and kindling a fire during the burn ban. Bachus is working on two ongoing investigatory cases, with one involving a juvenile.
The new Animal Control officer, Shannon Oliver, has started. Her first call will be assisted by Bachus as needed. She will primarily respond to lost, found and other animal complaints involving domestic canines only. She will attend the Animal Control training next year and her scope may expand after that.

C. **Selectboard attended meeting recap**

- Budget Advisory – Follensbee attended the 12/2 meeting – the group asked for current process for vehicles and large equipment to help estimate the projected funding needed for the Capital Reserve Accounts.
- Planning Board – Smith attended their 12/9 meeting – they discussed a conceptual minor subdivision for McGoff’s Grime Hill property, and one for Ron Taylor’s property off 25A. The group continues to discuss the Wireless Communication ordinance. There is a pending House Bill 501 that was introduced pertaining to 5G towers.

Old Business

A. Review 2026 Warrant Articles

- **Paving Project Costs** – cost we received from R&D was used for the paving Warrant Articles – Smith expressed concerns on water running down Archertown Road where the road was reclaimed. He’s concerned that if paved, this water will erode the underlying road bed. Taylor felt that ditching along this area will take care of the water runoff issue.
- **Elderly Tax Exemption revision** – the Selectboard agreed to add a Warrant Article to amend the Elderly Tax Exemption income level to qualify, as well as the Tax Exemption amount for those over 65 that qualify. (65-74 \$50,000, 75-79 \$75,000 and 80 and older \$100,000)

B. Review Upcoming Meetings

- **Budget Committee Meetings** – The Selectboard and the Budget Advisory will meet on 12/16 at 10:00 am, and the Budget Advisory will meet on 01/12 at 10:00 am
- **Line of Credit Public Hearing** – this public hearing will be on January 20th at 7:00 pm in the Niles Room
- **Budget Public Hearing** – this public hearing will be on January 27th at 7:00 pm in the Multi-Purpose room at Rivendell.

New Business

A. View Assessment – David Bischoff discussed his concern with the increase in his view assessment, as it increased over 300%. The Selectboard agreed that this is regulated by the assessing firm, and feel as long as the assessment is consistent with other view assessments it’s probably fair. However, they agreed to provide a report to Bischoff so he can compare other view assessment increases to his own. Bischoff also feels it’s important for the assessor to go into houses to make sure the interior matches what has been reported.

B. Review of received “Notice of Intent to Cut Wood” - none

C. Budget vs Actual Expenditures – Smith asked if over spent line items can be applied to an under spent line item. Departments should not over spend their budgets; however, it does happen for various reasons. As long as the total budget isn’t over spent, the NH DRA has no issues. Smith asked what happens when the total budget is underspent – the funds fall into the unassigned fund balance and these funds can be used to lower the tax rate, but the DRA does look for Town’s to keep a minimum balance in this account – the balance is a percentage of the total expenditures for the budget year.

D. Contract Folder – Mowing Contract for Town Properties and Community Field – Before the contracts are sent to the contractor, the Selectboard took copies of the contracts and will be adding additional language. Once the Selectboard agrees on the language to be added, Town Council will review and comment.

E. Correspondence

- The Town Moderator sent an email requesting the Selectboard approve a change in voting hours at the Annual Meeting. *Motion made by Follensbee, seconded by Taylor to amend the hours for voting at the Town’s Annual Meeting to 4:0 pm – 8:00 pm. Motion Passed 3/0*
- Due to increased fees at the Lebanon Landfill, Floyd’s Rubbish Removal will remove the pay in full credit that was previously offered to the Town. The contract price of \$13,500 will remain the same.
- An email was received from David Carr regarding his property that abuts a Class VI road, and his concern of liability as he’s not allowed to block the road, and therefore doesn’t want to sign the permit to construct. All residents that want to construct a building on property that abuts a Class VI road must be approved by the Selectboard - the Permit will be sent again for his completion.

F. Other

- Concern was expressed about the condition of the sidewalk along Bridge Street. As this abuts a State Road, the State is actually responsible for the sidewalk, however, as the State does not maintain sidewalks in the winter, and usually Towns take on the work, however, the Town is not liable if sidewalks are not maintained, or not maintained timely.

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 Smith to adjourn the meeting. Motion Passed 3/0

The meeting adjourned at 8:11 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh