



Board of Selectmen Meeting – March 10, 2021

# Town of Orange, Connecticut

TOWN HALL  
617 ORANGE CENTER ROAD  
ORANGE, CONNECTICUT 06477-2499

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## REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M. ZOOM MEETING

ORANGE, CT  
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE  
RECEIVED  
2021 MAR 11 PM 3:07

**NOTICE: In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic, this meeting will be held remotely with no In-person attendance. The meeting will still be broadcast live on OGAT Optimum channel 79 and Frontier channel 6063 and streamed on YouTube and OGAT on the following links:**

YouTube - <https://youtu.be/fH4ON0yYr9A>

OGAT 24/7 Stream

<https://videoplayer.telvue.com/player/BUJHRRxhCf0u3AtXMrx7Sx7CjdW8zUFT/stream/851?autostart=true&showtabssearch=true>

Any comments for public participation or an agenda item must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday March 10, 2021 to: [jzeoli@orange-ct.gov](mailto:jzeoli@orange-ct.gov)

### UNAPPROVED MINUTES

#### Present on-line:

First Selectman James Zeoli  
Selectman Judy Williams  
Selectman Mitchell Goldblatt  
Selectman Margaret Novicki  
Selectman Ralph Okenquist

John Cifarelli, Finance Director  
Vincent Marino, Town Counsel  
Chris Kelly, OGAT  
Ann Denny, Secretary

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 P.M. by First Selectman Zeoli, followed by introductions.

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(2 minutes per person)

Three emails were received by First Selectman Zeoli and the Board of Selectmen that were read into the record regarding the task force on racism as a public health crisis from:  
Dr. William Sherman 347 Knight Lane Orange, CT  
Jody Dietch 601 Harborview Road Orange, CT  
Beverly Propen 185 Crocker Court Orange, CT

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Selectman Goldblatt announced shredding day is on Saturday April 10<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at High Plains Community Center. The Recycling Committee asks that residents form a single line in their vehicle and that residents remain in their vehicle and pop the trunk and members of the recycling committee will remove your stuff. They recommend you put your shredding in paper bags or boxes you do not need back, but if you cannot they will return the container to you. There will also be mattress recycling if you cannot bring it there the Orange Lions Club will pick it up for a \$10 donation, please call Ken Lenz to schedule a pickup at 203-795-3906. The Simple Recycling bin is in the back of the building at High Plains if you have any items to donate. The Fair Committee is holding a food drive that day under the pavilion. The recycling committee is working with the Rotary Club to secure a permanent structure for plastic bag recycling at the transfer station. The temporary shed did not survive the winter. Please do not put them in your recycle bin, either hold on to them or you can find a store with a collection bin.

First Selectman Zeoli made the following announcements:

- The Public Works Department has asked that if you decorated a street sign at the holidays to please remove the decorations. You are welcome to change them to St. Patrick's Day or spring decorations if you wish.
- Happy St. Patrick's Day to all our residents.
- Covid-19 Vaccines: The OVNA is running clinics on Wednesdays for Orange residents and Thursdays for anyone at HPCC. The State has opened the vaccine for age 55 and over as of March 1st. Johnson & Johnson vaccines are coming soon. There is going to be a special clinic for teachers in March.
- The Orange Lions Club will be modifying their Easter Egg Hunt by holding a drive thru event on Saturday March 27<sup>th</sup> from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with a rain date of April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Lions club members will be handing out candy to passing vehicles by either placing it in the trunk or handing it to the occupants.
- A Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Agnes Hanson on Sunday March 28<sup>th</sup>
- Friday April 2, 2021: All Town Offices will be closed in observance of Good Friday. The transfer station will remain open.
- Wishing a Happy Passover and Happy Easter to all those who celebrate.
- This Weekend March 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> is Daylight Savings please remember to set your clocks ahead 1 hour, and now is a good time to change the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- The referendum for the Race Brook Country Club passed 1704 in favor and 772 against. About 22% of the 10,745 registered voters voted.

## MINUTES

***On a motion*** made by Selectman Williams, seconded by Selectman Novicki, ***the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen on February 10, 2021.***

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Consider and act on adding Liberty Bank to the list of approved depositories for the Town of Orange** - Finance Director John Cifarelli explained the Town Treasurer has asked to add Liberty Bank as a depository for the town. *On a motion* made by Selectman Okenquist, seconded by Selectman Goldblatt, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved adding Liberty Bank to the list of approved depositories for the Town of Orange.*
2. **Consider and act on the approval of the contract between the Town of Orange and Seward & Monde-** Finance Director John Cifarelli presented the last three contracts to the board stating much of the increase was due to the one-time charge because of the change in accounting software. *On a motion* made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Williams, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved the contract between the Town of Orange and Seward & Monde.*
3. **Consider and act on the request to approve the re-appointment of Denise Stein as the Municipal Agent for the Elderly** - First Selectman James Zeoli stated this is a requirement of the State that the board appoint a Municipal Agent for the Elderly. *On a motion* made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Novicki, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved the request to re-appoint Denise Stein as the Municipal Agent for the Elderly.*
4. **Consider and act on the Agreement Between the Amity Education Association and the Amity Regional Board of Education July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024-** First Selectman Zeoli explained the board could vote to approve it, vote against it, or take no action and after thirty days the contract stands. *On a motion* made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Novicki, and carried 4-0-1 Selectmen Zeoli, Goldblatt, Novicki, and Williams voting aye, and Selectman Okenquist abstained, *the Board approved the Agreement Between the Amity Education Association and the Amity Regional Board of Education July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2024.*
5. **Consider and act on the dates for the Annual Town Meeting and Budget Referendum-** First Selectman Zeoli presented the dates for the Annual Town Meeting and Referendum for the Town Budget. The Board felt the Town Referendum and Amity Referendum should be held during the same times 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. for continuity to not confuse voters. *On a motion* made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Williams, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved the proposed dates for the Annual Town Meeting to be held in person on Wednesday May 12, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. in the High Plains Gymnasium and the Town Budget Referendum on Thursday May 20, 2021 in the High Plains Gymnasium with confirmation of the time of the Town and Amity Referendums as 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.*

6. **Consider and act on the request to authorize the First Selectman to sign a tax assessment agreement** - First Selectman Zeoli presented the information received from Hartford Lodging Partners who are taking advantage of the tax abatement program. They qualify for the \$4,000,000 threshold tax abatement program. *On a motion* made by Selectman Okenquist, seconded by Selectman Williams, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved the request to authorize the First Selectman to sign a tax assessment agreement with Hartford Lodging Partners.*
7. **Tax Refunds for the month of March-** *On a motion* made by Selectman Williams, seconded by Selectman Okenquist, and unanimously carried, *the Board approved the tax refunds in the amount of \$1,883.50 for the month of March.*

### **COMMITTEES**

1. **Pension Board** – Selectman Goldblatt reported at the meeting last month the year end numbers for 2020 showed a 14.3% increase on investments, and the fourth quarter was up 11.8%. The pension plan is doing very well. The Board of Finance has requested to meet with the Pension Board. The next meeting on Monday May 20<sup>th</sup> will be a joint meeting, and both our actuary and investment adviser will be present to discuss the pension plan and defined contribution plan.
2. **Emergency Management** - Selectman Novicki reported that the last meeting of the Emergency Management Subcommittee on COVID was 02.26.21. Covid cases are declining and looking more stable now. There were 19 cases reported in the beginning of March. The total number of cases from last March to this March were 886 cases and 17 deaths. The Orange vaccine clinics are running well and approximately 25% of Orange's population have been vaccinated. You can register on the Town website, there is an online scheduling tool. There will be a dedicated clinic for the school system educators and employees on Friday March 19<sup>th</sup> from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The high school and middle schools are expected to return to in school full time learning no more hybrid or abbreviated schedules by the end of March. The subcommittees main concern now is the sustainability of the COVID services currently being provided to the Town. The clinics have been successful due to the many volunteers that have helped. The Orange Department of Health will need help because the current schedule under state guidelines is ages 45-54 will be eligible as of March 22<sup>nd</sup>, ages 35-44 will begin on April 12<sup>th</sup>, and ages 16-34 as of May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Selectman Novicki requested that the Personnel Committee meet to address the budgetary needs of the Health Department. The committee feels Dr. Mohammed will need more hours as the health director and the hiring of a Public Health Nurse is needed.
3. **Personnel** – First Selectman Zeoli had no report.

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At 8:15 P.M., Selectman Okenquist made *a motion to adjourn the meeting*. Selectman Williams seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Denny  
Secretary to the Board of Selectmen

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Sent: Monday, March 8, 2021 9:11 AM

To: Jim Zeoli <[jeoli@orange-ct.gov](mailto:jeoli@orange-ct.gov)>; Mitch Goldblatt <[mitchgoldblatt@aol.com](mailto:mitchgoldblatt@aol.com)>; Margaret Novicki <[margaret.novicki@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.novicki@gmail.com)>; Judy Williams <[jamawms@icloud.com](mailto:jamawms@icloud.com)>; Ralph Okenquist <[rgokenquist@gmail.com](mailto:rgokenquist@gmail.com)>; John Carangelo <[judgejic@hotmail.com](mailto:judgejic@hotmail.com)>

Subject: Task Force

To First Selectman Jim Zeoli and the entire Board of Selectmen,

At your November 2020 meeting, after a lengthy discussion, you voted to appoint a Task Force in lieu of a declaration that Racism is a Public Health Issue. That was four months ago. I believe the discussion also indicated that the Task Force would be a small group of perhaps 10 or less members.

Myself, and others I know, sent emails asking to be appointed to this Task Force and we have heard absolutely nothing. The silence coming from this body is deafening. It indicates a complete disregard for the well-being of our residents of color. It took less time to spend \$8.5 million of taxpayer money to buy a golf course than it is taking to put this task force together.

If you are too busy to carry out this task, perhaps you could delegate it to Dr. Mohammad, as I am sure he is keenly aware of the issues facing our town regarding race. I, too, would be more than happy to help you appoint this task force.

I look forward to hearing the appointments so this important group can begin their work.

Please read this email at the Board of Selectmen's meeting Wednesday, March 10, 2021 and make it part of the minutes.

Thank you.

Regards,

Jody Dietch  
601 Harborview Rd

## Ann Denny

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**From:** Jim Zeoli <jzeoli@orange-ct.gov> on behalf of Jim Zeoli  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 10, 2021 3:21 PM  
**To:** Ann Denny  
**Subject:** FW: Orange Racism Committee

**From:** SHERMAN <[wsherman@optonline.net](mailto:wsherman@optonline.net)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 6, 2021 12:12 PM  
**To:** [jzeoli@orange-ct.gov](mailto:jzeoli@orange-ct.gov); [judgejic@hotmail.com](mailto:judgejic@hotmail.com); [margaret.novicki@gmail.com](mailto:margaret.novicki@gmail.com); [mitchgoldblatt@aol.com](mailto:mitchgoldblatt@aol.com); [rgokenquist@gmail.com](mailto:rgokenquist@gmail.com); [jwworange@hotmail.com](mailto:jwworange@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Orange Racism Committee

Dear Mr. Zeoli and the other Orange Selectmen:

First, I'm requesting that this email be read out loud at this coming week's BOS meeting and officially entered into the minutes.

I am under the impression that the appointment of Orange's ad hoc Racism Committee is not currently on the agenda for this coming week's BOS meeting. Perhaps this is merely an oversight that will be corrected in the First Selectman's opening comments and remarks. If not, I believe this to be a serious abrogation of the duty and responsibility of the First Selectman.

I, along with several other residents of Orange, first brought up the topic of Racism as a Public Health Crisis back in September 2020. My first email to you on this issue is dated 7 September 2020. This issue was finally brought up for discussion at the November 2020 BOS meeting where it was voted to appoint an ad hoc Orange Racism Committee and that the First Selectman would appoint the chairperson and, perhaps, the other members of that committee. Next week will mark 4 months since that vote and charge. I personally believe that one-third of a year is more than sufficient time for the First Selectman to appoint that committee as voted on and agreed to by the BOS.

If this ad hoc committee is not announced at this coming week's BOS meeting, I am respectfully asking that the First Selectman name that committee's chairperson no later than the April BOS meeting or, at that meeting, publicly and on the record state why he has not followed through with this.

Sincerely,

William M. Sherman, Ph.D.    347 Knight Lane    Orange, CT  
06477    [wsherman@optonline.net](mailto:wsherman@optonline.net)