



Town of Orange, Connecticut

TOWN HALL
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**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2026
TOWN HALL
LOWER- LEVEL MEETING ROOM
7:00 P.M.**

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Present:

First Selectman James Zeoli
Selectman Mitchell Goldblatt
Selectman William Kraut
Selectman PJ Shanley
Selectman John Carangelo

Owen Weaver, Town Council
Ann Denny, Secretary
Bob Brinton, Town Engineer
Bob Sigler, OCC Strawberry Festival Co-Chair

A handwritten signature of Helen Koziel, Town Clerk.

2026 FEB 13 AM 9:43
ORANGE, CONN
TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RECORDED BY CLERK

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by First Selectman Zeoli. The fire exits were noted, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the roll call.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(2 minutes per person)

Robert Lim, 956 Corn Cob Lane made an announcement on behalf of CERT explaining what they do and gave examples of some of the duties they perform like helping at town events and manning the emergency shelter. CERT is taking applications for spring training, and you may sign up on the CERT page found on the town website

Selectman Goldblatt reminded everyone that April 11th is the spring shredding day and there will also be a Hazwaste collection that day along with mattress collection, Orange Community Women collecting household goods, and Buy Nothing Orange.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

First Selectman Zeoli made the following announcements:
In Memorium: Helen Koziel, Bob Drobish, Jimmy Dallas

Monday, February 16, 2026 All Town Offices will be closed in observance of President's Day. The transfer station will be open.

There has been a salt shortage and Mr. Foyer has enough for now, but new deliveries have not been received. They are doing the best they can, and you may notice that some areas may not be salted to what you are used to.

The budget is currently being formulated, the Amity and Orange Boards of Education have been working on theirs and the Board of Finance met all day last Friday.

The Fourth of July concert and fireworks are on Friday July 3rd with a rain date of Sunday July 5th.
Congratulations to Tage Thompson who is on the U.S. Olympic Hockey Team.

First Selectman Zeoli stated the Party City building is being split into smaller units if people notice activity there. He met with the owners of Big Y and Brixmour and they said it takes about 10 months from when they start construction to when they open and they anticipate opening in early 2027.

First Selectman Zeoli stated he also had a meeting with people from USDA for possible funding sources for projects at the community center.

MINUTES

- ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Carangelo, seconded by Selectman Goldblatt, ***the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the January 14, 2026 Regular Meeting of the Board of Selectmen.***

NEW BUSINESS

1. **Request to Hang a Banner to Promote the Strawberry Festival and to waive the customary rental fees for the use of the HPCC kitchen** – Bob Sigler, Strawberry Festival Co-Chair, requested to hang a banner two weeks prior to the Strawberry Festival to help promote the event that is being held Saturday June 13, 2026, and also requested the customary rental fees for the use of the HPCC kitchen be waived. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Carangelo, seconded by Selectman Shanley, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved the request from the Strawberry Festival Committee to hang a banner over Orange Center Road two weeks prior to the event and waive the customary rental fees for the use of the HPCC kitchen.***
2. **Consider and act on the request to enter into an agreement with United Illuminating for replacing Boston Post Road (Rt. 1) Ornamental Streetlights** – First Selectman Zeoli explained information provided by Town Engineer Bob Brinton for replacing the green ornamental streetlights on the Boston Post Road. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Shanley, and unanimously carried, ***the board approved entering into an agreement with United Illuminating for replacing Boston Post Road (Rt.1) Ornamental Streetlights and authorizing the First Selectman to execute the agreement on behalf of the town.***
3. **Consider and act on the request to enter into an agreement with Take 2 Recycling LLC for Electronic Recycling at the Transfer Station** - Town Engineer Bob Brinton presented information on a new vendor for collecting electronic devices at the transfer station and at the town shredding day. Mr. Brinton recommends the Board of Selectmen approve the agreement with Take 2 Recycling LLC and authorize the First Selectman to execute the agreement on behalf of the town contingent upon the First Selectman's office coming to a finalized agreement of the contract with Take 2 Recycling LLC. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Shanley, and unanimously carried, ***the board approved entering into an agreement with Take 2 Recycling LLC for electronic recycling and authorizing the First Selectman to execute the agreement on behalf of the town contingent upon the First Selectman's office coming to a finalized agreement of the contract with Take 2 Recycling LLC.***
4. **Consider and act on Veteran's Tax Exemptions** – First Selectman Zeoli presented information from Assessor Mark Branchesi regarding Veteran's Tax Exemptions provided under CGS 12-81(83) (E) and the estimated fiscal impact for veterans who qualify. These are new exemptions for the land assessment

for veterans who have a 100% Permanent and Total disability rating as determined by the VA, and if approved it would start with the October 1, 2025 Grand List.

Aaron Smith, 220 Wilson Road explained that veterans are put into categories and that the VA reevaluates you every 3-5 years.

Brittany Smith, 220 Wilson Road thanked the selectmen for placing this on the agenda so quickly it is greatly appreciated and supports this benefit for the veterans.

Garrity Karr, 555 Dogwood Road supports this exemption not only for her family but for all veterans' families that are affected and stated it will help ease the pain a little bit. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Goldblatt, seconded by Selectman Carangelo, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved expanding the Veteran's Tax Exemptions as allowed.***

5. **Dates for the Annual Town Meeting and Budget Referendum** - ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Carangelo, seconded by Selectman Shanley, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved the dates for the Annual Town Meeting and Referendum as presented.*** (See attachment for details on dates)
6. **Tax Refunds for the Month of February**- ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Carangelo, seconded by Selectman Shanley, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved the tax refunds in the amount of \$4,130.55 for the month of February.***
7. **To Consider and Act on the Volunteer Fire Department Lease & Option Agreement/Public Hearing at the March BOS Meeting** – ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Shanley, seconded by Selectman Carangelo, and unanimously carried, ***the Board will hold a Public Hearing at the March Board of Selectmen meeting for the lease/purchase of a fire truck.***
8. **Discussion of Policy for Electronic Mail Communications by Board Members** First Selectman Zeoli stated he had been asked to distribute the policy from the Board of Education regarding electronic mail communications and discussion ensued. Selectman Carangelo expressed his thoughts that the Board of Selectmen are long overdue in having a uniform response to emails to understand how to respond appropriately. Selectman Shanley believes that if the selectmen all start responding with opinions it could be considered an unofficial meeting, Attorney Weaver agreed that it could be a FOIA violation. Attorney Weaver stated that no one can individually speak on behalf of the board, not even the First Selectman, but if a question comes in that can be directed to a department for an answer it can be directed to the department head. Selectman Goldblatt feels it is an obligation to respond to emails and if it's a question he can answer he will. Attorney Weaver stated you can reply to an email that says it's on an agenda, but you can't give substantive answers. Selectman Goldblatt feels there is not always going to be a uniform response, and he feels the whole board should not be included. Selectman Kraut feels there is a clear indication that the board needs a policy, his experience at the Board of Education was to listen to people but then he would report the comment to the superintendent. Board members never engaged there was a standard reply of received, thank you. Selectman Shanley agreed and asked if there should be a procedural committee put together.
Aaron Smith, 220 Wilson Road feels that if he takes the time to reach out and contact you, you should give a genuine response because becoming a unified front becomes automated.
Mike Dolan, 422 Clement Lane thanked everyone for doing a great job, and he likes the transparency but understands the board must wear two hats, you have personal and town responsibilities.
No action was taken, this will be continued possibly as an ad hoc committee to develop a policy.

Selectman Shanley ***made a motion*** to close the Regular meeting and convene into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. and invite Attorney Weaver into the Executive Session. Selectman Kraut ***seconded the motion***. All voted in favor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. **Blight lien foreclosure**
2. **Tax appeal entitled Colonial Building Associates, LLC v. Town of Orange, HHB-CV-24-608893-S**

The Regular Meeting was reconvened at 9:10 p.m.

VOTE

1. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Carangelo, seconded by Selectman Kraut, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved The Town of Orange v. Brian Goldstone et al. blight lien settlement with TD Bank and give the First Selectman's office authority to enter into a written agreement as presented.***
2. ***On a motion*** made by Selectman Shanley, seconded by Selectman Goldblatt, and unanimously carried, ***the Board approved the proposed tax appeal settlement with Colonial Building Associates, LLC v. Town of Orange.***

At 9:12 P.M., Selectman Carangelo made ***a motion to adjourn the meeting.*** Selectman Shanley seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Denny
Secretary to the Board of Selectmen