

TOWN OF STAMFORD
ALL BOARDS MEETING
April 24, 2019
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Nancy L. Bushika, Christopher Warren, Michael G. Denault, Daniel J. Potvin, Kurt Gamari, Jenifer Hughs, Helen Fields, Jessica Tatro, Barbara Malinowski, Erika Bailey, David R. Tatro, Luke McKay, David McKay, Sheila G. Lawrence, William Levine, Glenn Ethier, Janice Farinon, Carol Ethier-Kipp, Sally Bohl, Pat Sullivan, Carolyn Burch, Steven Denault, Theodore N. Dobbert, Robert Briggs, Tyna Senecal, Jennifer Lovett, Charles Lovett, James Stimpson, Chris Robare, and Lori Shepard.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. The all boards meeting began in 1994 to meet new board members, increase communication, and learn what other boards were doing. The last all boards meeting was in 2017 for an open meeting laws presentation and before that, the last meeting was in 2009. Everyone took turns introducing themselves and stating what board or group they belonged to.

TOWN CLERK: Lori Shepard spoke about the land records and the ongoing project of scanning documents to facilitate copying by attorneys and title searchers. As treasurer, she explained dividing funds into several CDs to maximize earning potential with long-term CDs while keeping yearly access to other funds in short-term investments. She noted the town's new website, "townofstamfordvermont.org". She thanked the Selectboard for their support of her continued education.

MODERATOR: Bill Levine stated that town meeting went smoothly and he feels it is important that everyone speaks in a respectful manner and allows others to express their opinion.

COLLECTOR OF DELINQUENT TAXES: Sally Bohl advised that the amount of uncollected taxes is below \$50,000 which is very good for this time of year. The amount was close to \$75,000 at town meeting.

CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS: Janice Farinon explained that the commissioners closed the Millard Cemetery for the winter. Many stones in Millard were cleaned last year and they hope to clean more this year. Stones at Houghton Cemetery will be very tough to clean.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: Caroline Burch announced that the library has updated their website, StamfordLibrary.org, and have added OverDrive which allows the library to offer thousands of ebooks and audio books. Their Books on Wheels service brings books to homebound patrons. Tyna Senecal explained the Lego program on Thursday afternoons. There are about 26 children who participate from pre-k through 6th grade. McCann Technical High School has a robotics and drones group and they want to bring drones up to fly with the older children. The State of Vermont will set the theme for the summer reading program. They are working to change the perception of the library to one of fun and active participation. The Seed Savers Group uses the library as their base of operations.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE: Tyna Senecal stated it has been quiet. There have not been many marriages.

SELECTBOARD: Nancy Bushika advised that the Selectboard is in the process of adopting the revised Town Plan which includes the new Chapter 10 about energy. The Planning Commission has approved it and the Selectboard will hold a public hearing on June 6, 2019. A septic system and well will be installed this summer at the highway garage. Dave Tatro will be working on Collins Road this spring where there has been some minor flooding. The Selectboard is pursuing a grant to replace a large culvert on Lincoln Road which will have to meet state and FEMA regulations due to the size of the project. The free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day will take place on May 8, 2019 in Bennington. TVs, computers and other electronics are accepted anytime at the Bennington Transfer Station for free.

SCHOOL BOARD: Erika Bailey advised that the School Board has been focused on the Act 46 merger with Clarksburg. The results of the feasibility study will be presented on May 15, 2019 at the Clarksburg School. The Board will be working on creating policies and updating those that have become outdated. Their main goal is to ensure the safety and education of our children.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Jim Stimpson said the permits are normal. Currently he is working with the Planning Commission to rewrite the town's By-laws. They are not copying and pasting a few items but are going through the By-laws one paragraph at a time. It will be a several month process. He feels the By-laws are very archaic and need to be changed drastically.

ASSESSOR CLERK: Sally Bohl stated that the town is under a mandate from the state to reappraise. Our COD was 22% this year. Anything over 20% generates a reappraisal order. There has not been a town-wide reappraisal since 2004. She has been working with the Assessor and grievance hearings are set for June 17, 2019.

ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT: Sheila Lawrence advised that the board has met a couple times this year but has been quiet for the most part.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR: Bill Levine announced that the Local Emergency Management Plan (LEMP) has been completed and reviewed by the Selectboard. The contact information has been updated and all resources available have been listed. In the event of an emergency, responders will have a place to start. There is a training session in Bennington to discuss CARE, Civilian Auxiliary Response Group, where people can be trained to assist with traffic control and other duties during an emergency.

DOG OFFICER: Luke McKay stated that the dog kennel has arrived. He has dealt with some dog bites over the winter and hopes all dogs will be registered soon. Mike Denault thanked him for his hard work. Since Luke McKay became Dog Officer, getting all dogs licensed with the town is much easier.

ENERGY COORDINATOR: The state advised our Planning Commission that if they adopted the new state energy plan and goals, the town will have a say in where solar and wind energy installations can be placed. The state's goal is to be 90% reliant on renewable energy resources by 2050. The Bennington County Regional Commission, with the Planning Commission's input, created a map of preferred and non-preferred solar and wind sites. There is a process if someone has land that is not listed to be designated as a preferred site. One resident is already planning a large solar field. Tightening up and weatherizing homes can save up to 30% in overall heating costs which will help the town toward its goal.

PLANNING COMMISSION: Dan Potvin explained the state's renewable energy goals and the input the town had in deciding which sites were preferable. The Hoosac Range is the state's 3rd most desirable mountain range for wind power, but the Planning Commission had the ability to choose a different area in the northwest corner of town. To meet the town needs, we would need 16 acres of solar panels and 5 wind turbines. He said the Planning Commission is actively revising and simplifying the By-laws. The Commission has expanded from 5 members to 9 members which allows for different perspectives.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Sheila Lawrence stated that a few years ago they were meeting once a month but the commission has not been active lately. She feels the Conservation Commission should meet with the Planning Commission. Jennifer Lovett would like to see a manual or warnings created for residents concerning invasive species such as Japanese knot wood and poison parsnip. Kurt Gamari suggested working with the Vermont Association of Snowmobile Trails (VAST) to create new trails and connector trails to the VAST system. He remembers years ago having access to hiking trails and property but now everyone posts their land. A VAST trail is planned through the old Dutch Hill Ski Area to connect to Florida mountain. Tyna Senecal rides dirt bikes in several states and Vermont has the least amount of trails. Everyone is registered and insured and is very respectful about staying on the trail and other people's lands. She feels allowing this type of activity would bring in a lot of money and she would like to see this outdoor market opportunity flourish.

ROAD COMMISSIONER: Dave Tatro has been Road Commissioner for more than 10 years. He said he has changed the highway operation significantly with the support of the Selectboard. He has added a 3rd worker and purchased an excavator to eliminate the need to hire outside contractors. The sand and salt shed was built to keep the sand and salt from going into the brook. He has replaced the old sickle blade with a more efficient tractor and boom mower. He purchased wing plows to save time plowing the roads. All paved roads are part of a 5 year resurfacing plan. He has worked at obtaining grants for culvert repair. Under Act 46, he must come up with a 20 year plan for all hydronically connected roadways that are not in compliance. Mike Denault noted that the changing laws greatly impact Dave Tatro's job and the administrative part of his job has increased. Mike Denault thanked Dave Tatro for working so closely with the Selectboard and for being fiscally responsible.

BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION (BCRC) REPRESENTATIVES: The BCRC works with towns to implement state regulations, most of which was already discussed tonight.

GREEN UP DAY COORDINATOR: Pat Sullivan passed out mini posters for Green Up Day on May 4, 2019. It is a state wide program to gather trash and keep our town roads clean. She hopes for a larger turnout than last year's 55 participants. There will be light refreshments. The Seed Savers will have a table and she welcomed others to come and set up a table.

HEALTH OFFICER: Kurt Gamari said he receives 4-5 calls per year, mostly involving dogs and chickens.

STAMFORD/CLARKSBURG MERGER COMMITTEE: Erika Bailey said the committee has been actively researching a merger with Clarksburg School. The feasibility study will present its findings on May 15, 2019 at the Clarksburg School.

STAMFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC.: Glenn Either reported that the fire department responded to 65 calls in town with an average 6.5 minute response time. There are about 20 active members. 8 or 9 are certified fireman and 6 are EMRs. The department has obtained \$150,000 in grant funds for equipment. They have installed 6 dry hydrants and hope to install another near Tatro bridge this year. The fire trucks are in good shape but they will need a new truck in the near future which will probably cost \$350,000. The toughest part is that their members are aging and young members are not signing up. Sally Bohl suggested starting up the firemen's banquet again. Each year they would personally call all the new people who had moved to town and invite them to attend the banquet. She felt a personal invitation might help them get involved. Glen Ethier has considered paying firemen a stipend to increase participation. He thought if the school custodian and town employees were medically trained, that would help. About 50% of the calls are medically related.

BROADBAND GROUP: Bob Briggs said the group started in 2005 with C J Vadnais, Bill Levine and Leo Ethier. Now there are 6 people trying to keep up with the broadband needs. They serve approximately 80 houses. He would like to ask residents what they would like to see and where they would like to be in 5-10 years. In Charlemont, MA they voted to install fiber optic to all houses. If they obtain at least 70% participation, the users should pay about \$80/month. He would like to see Stamford look into this and feels there is a lot of funding available. The Broadband Group meets once/month at the firehouse and he encouraged people to come and get involved.

STAMFORD SEED SAVERS: Helen Fields has created and installed a bulletin board outside of the school with grant funding from the Seed Savers. Building community and communication is very important. She has worked in the class rooms planting with the children and plans to involve them with other aspects of gardening. Food security is important and she hopes to teach the children how to raise their own food. They will have a Dig in the Dirt day to build more garden beds on the tennis courts. In June Bernie Aubin will sponsor the Seed Savers with a country music dinner dance at the school. She wants to start a newsletter and has a few volunteers to help.

BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP: Pat Sullivan explained that their group started about a year ago. It is all about building community and has focused on grants for development of the town center. They have discussed a building in front and constructing a building behind the school. They have worked with the children on a history project where children interviewed residents in town and have prepared a presentation in the library. The group is working with Victoria Jefferies and Norwich University for the design and development of the buildings. They have tried to find grant funds to support the activity. The group will need many volunteers to help with the building installation. Meetings are open to the public and she invited and encouraged people to attend.

Nancy Bushika thanked everyone for coming and asked if another all boards meeting should be scheduled. Chris Warren thought this was a good introductory meeting and future meetings could be geared toward a specific theme. It was suggested to meet again in November. Chris Warren stated that the Selectboard is forming a research group to gather information concerning the sheriff, state police or a town constable and asked people to consider serving on the committee. Caroline Burch thanked the Selectboard for holding the all boards meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Nancy L. Bushika
Clerk pro tem

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