

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
September 3, 2020
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin, and Michael G. Denault.
Christopher Warren was not present.

Visitors: Sally Bohl, Theresa Denault, and Helen Fields.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone. She read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. There was some correspondence added to the agenda. There were no changes to its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

HARVESTSTAMFORD COMMUNITY SHARE

Helen Fields reported that the HarveStamford Community Share was very successful. They collected 300 pounds of fresh vegetables and delivered them to the North Adams Congregational Church which supplied three days of take-out food. Helen Fields thanked Mike Denault for loaning and setting up the tent, all those who donated food, and the committee who worked hard to organize the event.

SEED SAVERS GROUP

Helen Fields and a few volunteers harvested 330 pounds of potatoes from their gardens this summer as well as many other vegetables and fruits. Our town is doing such a good job that the Vermont Victory Gardens organization has been following Stamford.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 20, 2020 as written. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #35 \$7,333.88 payroll
- WARRANT #36 \$8,581.02 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The mowing tractor engine has to be rebuilt. Dave Tatro has researched the cost of buying a new machine, a used machine, and buying a mowing attachment for the Kubota. Rebuilding the engine is the most economical solution. Mike Denault appreciated the amount of money the highway department will save by doing it in house.
2. The driveway letters haven't gone out yet but they will soon.
3. The town office received a complaint concerning growing vegetation at the intersection of The Lane and East Road. Dave Tatro said there is a tree on the corner which he thinks is the problem. Although the board agreed they do not want to deal with any trees, a letter will be sent concerning vegetation that could be trimmed back.
4. Davey Tree Service will be working in town until the end of the year.

RECYCLING

1. There is no update concerning the transfer station recertification.
2. The town cannot accept e-waste since we do not have a proper place to store it. Mike Lavariere asked for a handout to let people know. Nancy Bushika prepared an announcement which also states that e-waste will be accepted at Casella's Transfer Station in Bennington as well as the Readsboro and Searsburg Transfer Stations.
3. The Selectboard reviewed the recycling update sheet. Dave Tatro indicated that he is unable to dispose of many of the appliances listed. Mike Denault agreed that if we can't get rid of it, we shouldn't accept it. Most retailers accept your old appliance when you purchase a new one. The Selectboard updated the information sheet.
4. Helen Fields will be removing the compost at the transfer station in the next week or so.
5. Casella randomly changed the pickup schedule to every other week again. Dave Tatro had to call them to go back to the automatic pickup.
6. Nancy Bushika has not contacted local haulers about contracting the town's transfer station hauler work. She will write something up and work with Dave Tatro.

ASSESSOR CONTRACT

Lisa Wright from Wright Appraisal Services submitted a contract for assessment services for the calendar year 2021. The contract provides for one day per month for a total of \$13,440.00 which is the same as the current contract. We have not needed that much work and have incurred about \$6,000.00 to date. Sally Bohl indicated that we have six building permits and she hopes to inspect the Class 4 road properties this fall.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the contract with Wright Appraisal Company for the maximum amount of \$13,440.00. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

REAPPRAISAL CONTRACT

Nancy Bushika noted that the original bid for reappraisal work which the town accepted last year was for \$83,280.00. The contract is for \$90,644.00. She questioned why the contract differed from the bid amount and would like to look into it. Mike Denault agreed and believes the contract should be the same as the bid price they accepted since that's what they budgeted. Lisa Wright does not value utilities and she suggested the town hire George Sansoucy to evaluate the utilities in town. Mike Denault asked if the cost to appraise the utilities would be worth it. Nancy Bushika will ask for an estimate. Lisa Wright indicated that the town could save some money by providing data collectors.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The phone system is set up for tonight's meeting. Helen Fields called in from across the parking lot to test it and said she could hear very well.

SELECTBOARD MEETINGS IN THE GYM

The Selectboard reviewed the draft letter to the School Directors and Principal. Mike Denault feels the board should not have to fill out a form and should not have to ask for permission to use the gym. The Selectboard is compromising by changing their meetings to Friday. It was stated that the children will be entering the school through their own classroom doors and will not be using the gym. Offering only remote Selectboard meetings does not serve everyone in town since not everyone has a phone and many do not have good internet. The board reworded the letter to schedule the gym/multi-purpose room so they can comply with the open meetings laws and social distancing guidelines in the event several visitors attend. Most meetings will still be held in the town office. Use of the gym will only be needed occasionally when several people attend a meeting. Helen Fields indicated that because of COVID-19, the state says when school is in session, no one can come into the building and the state and superintendent consider the gym part of the building. Mike Denault does not consider school to be in session on a Friday night.

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve sending the letter as it was finalized. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

COVID-19 GRANTS

1. Lori Shepard applied for the Local Government Expense Reimbursement Grant for reimbursement of COVID-19 related expenses. She should hear by mid-September if the grant will be approved.
2. The Vermont elections division is offering a grant up to \$1,000.00 for the purchase an outside mail drop box or mail slot to allow residents to safely drop off their voted ballots. Lori Shepard thought the installation of a mail slot at the town office would provide a secure and convenient way for voters to deliver their ballots since the town office is still closed due to the Governor's Stay Home-Stay Safe Order. The board suggested the town clerk obtain a quote for the work and suggested the small square window in the back of the office would be the best location since it would be accessible year round. The board recommended that she purchase a security camera for the area as well.

FENCE VIEWER REQUEST

The Selectboard received a letter from a resident requesting that two board members in their role as fence viewers, come to visually view the property boundary markers at each corner. Nancy Bushika stated that the fence viewer position is an archaic position and the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) has advised that towns no longer need to appoint fence viewers. Bill Levine countered that the position still exists in the law and if they do not appoint another as fence viewer, the position might default back to the board. Dan Potvin stated that they are not surveyors and are not qualified to make any determination about property boundaries. Nancy Bushika will contact the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) to see if they are required to act as fence viewers since a request has been made or if it is not necessary.

COMPLAINT

The board received a complaint that the neighbor's accessory building does not meet the required agricultural setbacks. The complaint included a prior email from the BCRC with wording suggestions for Bylaws of various setbacks and agricultural restrictions that could be included in a town's Zoning Bylaws. Dan Potvin said our Bylaws state that residents must follow the state agricultural laws when building agricultural structures. Nancy Bushika will contact BCRC to see what the state's agricultural setbacks are and whether it's up to the town to enforce them or the state.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The next free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on September 12, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dorset School in Dorset, VT.
2. The Selectboard scheduled a public hearing to receive comments and questions concerning the proposed revisions to the Zoning Bylaws for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7 p.m.
3. The town office continues to be closed in accordance with the Governor's Stay Home – Stay Safe Order to slow the spread of COVID-19, but we are open by appointment and are willing to assist our residents by email, regular mail, or telephone.
4. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org.