

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
March 4, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin and Michael G. Denault.
Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Pat Sullivan, Susan Welsch, and Ruth West.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone. She read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Some Municipal Excess Weight Permits were added to correspondence. There was no change to the order of the agenda.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Ruth West submitted several petitions. Due to COVID-19, she was not able to obtain the required 5% voter signatures on the petitions. She asked the Selectboard to waive the signature requirement. The petitions were as follows:

1. Do the Stamford voters desire to have the all-purpose room/gym as a community room for community events?
2. Do the Stamford voters desire to have patrol services of the Bennington County Sheriff's Dept.?
3. Should the 8% penalty for delinquent tax payment be eliminated? A flat charge of \$50.00 for delinquent payment, and monthly interest (1% for first 3 months and 1.5% thereafter) if not received in the town office by the due date, to replace the current wording on tax bill.
4. Following the COVID-19 guidelines for physical access to public places, do the Stamford voters desire to have physical access to the Stamford Community Library?

Mike Denault felt there was no reason for the board to prevent the questions from being brought before the people. Nancy Bushika noted that although some of the petitions had some signatures, none of them were signed by 5% of the registered voters, or at least 35 signatures. The state waived the requirement to obtain signatures for candidates running for an elected position, and the state gave towns the option of waiving the signature requirement for petitions. Nancy Bushika felt it was important to follow the law, regardless of their personal opinion. She stated that it is very unusual for the Selectboard to be presented with this many petitions for warrant articles. Bill Levine felt there was no reason for the Selectboard not to accept them.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept the petitions even though the signature requirement had not been met and include them as articles on the warrant. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of February 4, 2021 as written. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #7 \$ 8,698.68 payroll
- WARRANT #8 \$23,889.79 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro was unable to attend the meeting. He informed Nancy Bushika that the Freightliner truck had to be taken up for testing and the Freightliner garage ordered some parts.
2. Mr. Wolters signed and returned the Road Agreement to plow the beginning of the Class 4 section of County Road. He made some changes to the agreement. Nancy Bushika reviewed the changes and asked if the board wanted to keep the wording in the original agreement and implement the changes next year, or accept the changes he made now. In principle, he has some valid suggestions, but Nancy Bushika was not happy that he changed the contract without discussing his changes with the board first. Mike Denault agreed that it would have been better for him to come to the board with his suggestions first. The Road Agreement form will be updated with the changes and a signature line will be added for the plowing contractor to sign also. Nancy Bushika feels the Road Agreement should be recorded in the Land Records and the board agreed. The recording fee will be waived.

RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika advised that the Alliance has applied for a \$100,000.00 grant for a permanent Household Hazardous Waste facility at the Bennington Transfer Station. If the Alliance has a year-round facility, they will no longer have to provide three Household Hazardous Waste Days each year. This year's HHW Days have been scheduled for May 8, 2021 in Bennington, September 11, 2021 in Dorset and a smaller event on July 24, 2021 for Searsburg and Stamford which will be held at the AOT highway garage on Main Road in Heartwellville. Readsboro residents will also be allowed to participate. The company putting on the event requires people to stay in their cars and wear a mask. Dan Potvin disagrees with the restrictions. People have to handle the waste to put it in their car, and if you have to remain in your vehicle, the mask shouldn't matter. Mike Denault agreed that although it's a private company implementing these restrictions, the government is going along with it.

RABIES CLINIC

The Rabies Clinic is scheduled for Sunday, April 18, 2021 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the Stamford highway garage. The Town Clerk will be present to license dogs. Pat Sullivan stated that the Community Projects Committee would spread the word through their communication network.

TOWN WEBSITE

The town clerk is unable to post or upload material to the town website. She has asked for assistance and hopes that it will be fixed soon. Mike Denault offered a web designer to help.

BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The sheriff's department submitted a new contract beginning February 2021 and ending January 31, 2021. The terms are the same as last year: 15 hours/week and \$43.25 per hour. The funds were already included in the 2021 budget.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the sheriff's contract. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

TOWN WARRANT

The Selectboard reviewed the warning. One of the four new articles submitted by Ruth West was revised for clarity.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the warrant as written. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD REPORT

Nancy Bushika asked if the board should add anything to the Selectboard Report concerning the four new articles. The rest of the board didn't think it was necessary. Nancy Bushika asked if the board would like to send the final report to the auditors since it is usually part of the audit.

MOTION by Mike Denault to send a copy of the Selectboard's Report to the auditors. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine stated there were several trees limbs down from the high winds the other night.
2. He received some comments about the great work Dave Tatro and Mike Brothers have done this winter.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the permit applications from ABC Supply and Cardinal Logistics Management Corporation. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The proper fees and insurance information were received from each applicant.

TENT/OUTSIDE TOWN MEETING

Ruth West thought the cost of the tent rental was high and suggested we use the gym for town meeting. Mike Denault felt it is a good compromise to hold town meeting outside during these difficult times. Dan Potvin felt the cost was worth it to hold an in-person town meeting. Nancy Bushika feels more people will come than if town meeting was held inside. Ruth West asked if the board would demand that everyone wear a mask. Mike Denault said the board cannot demand anything, but they will recommend people attend with masks. Nancy Bushika recalled many town meetings that were held in the gym during a blizzard and there was very low attendance because many people chose not to go.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. 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. The town clerk is scheduling appointments and is willing to assist residents by email, regular mail, telephone or fax.
2. Voting on the Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District ballot only will be held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. here in Stamford. Absentee ballots maybe requested until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

3. Town Meeting will be held outside on Monday, April 19, 2021 and the election of officers will be held on Tuesday April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. by Australian ballot in the community room. Absentee ballots maybe requested until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

4. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.

PETITIONS FOR WARRANT ARTICLES & ELECTED POSITIONS
(REVISED)

The deadline for filing petitions with the town clerk for warrant articles to be included in the town meeting warning is Thursday, March 4, 2021. These petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters or at least 35 signatures. V.S.A. 17:2642(a)

The requirement to submit Nominating Petitions to run for an elected office is waived due to Act 162 along with the requirement to obtain signatures of 1% of the registered voters. A Consent of Candidate form will be required to run for an elected office and the deadline to file the Consent is Monday, March 15, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. A Consent of Candidate form may be picked up at the Town Office. V.S.A. 17:2681(a) (b).

Elected positions to be filled this year are:

Town Moderator - 1 year term (*William Levine*)
School Moderator - 1 year term (*William Levine*)
Selectboard member - 2 year term (*Nancy L. Bushika*)
Selectboard member - 3 year term (*Christopher Warren*)
School Director - 2 year term (*Erika Bailey*)
School Director - 3 year term (*Kelly Holland*)
Auditor - 1 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 2 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 3 year term (*vacancy*)
Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year term (*Sally A. Bohl*)
Cemetery Commissioner - 3 year term (*David McKay*)
Library Trustee - 5 year term (*Barbara Goldstein*)

Voting will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Town of Stamford Community Room or outside, weather permitting. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office and throughout election day.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

Anyone interested in serving as an appointed board member, please review the expiring appointed positions in the town report and contact a member of that board or the Selectboard.