

**TOWN OF STAMFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
April 1, 2021  
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin (for the first half hour of the meeting) and Michael G. Denault.

Visitors: Paul Austin, Carolyn Brooks, Laura Champagne, Debra Burchard, Tammy Daniels, Theresa Denault, Margot Falkner, Helen Fields, Collin Flanders (Seven Days Reporter) Barbara Goldstein, Stephen Greene, Karen Kuranda, Michael Kuranda, Laura Sibia, Marta Miller, Kimberly Roberts-Morandi, Thomas Morandi, Pat Sullivan, Pamela Tworig, Susan Welsch, Howard Weiss-Tisman (Vermont Public Radio), and Clay Zeller-Townson.  
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.  
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.  
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. Additional correspondence was added. There was no change to the order of the agenda.

**HEARING OF VISITORS:**

**COVID-19 VACCINATION**

Karen Kuranda read a summary of the email that she submitted to the Selectboard. She wanted to refute the statements made by Dan Potvin at the last meeting. Karen Kuranda has a PhD in Genetics and retired four years ago and loves our town. It was decided later in the meeting to invite her to the next meeting where she could read her letter in full to the board. The Selectboard reminded residents that they can request a copy of the letter or the recording of Selectboard meetings. Laura Sibia stated that she was contacted by a lot of residents with concerns. People have requested that she provide access to resources from the Vermont Department of Health concerning the vaccines. She uploaded information on the vaccine, the myths and rumors, to the chat. Pam Tworig said she has been fully vaccinated and has volunteered at the clinic to assist others with getting their vaccine. She respects Dan Potvin but completely disagrees with him and does not understand why the Selectboard is putting out this information. The Selectboard doesn't get involved with the flu shot or other health matters and should not be involved in this. She doesn't like the division in town. Our leaders should be doing everything in their power to bring people together. If someone relies on this information and dies because they weren't vaccinated, it is not right. Dan Potvin said he brought his opinion forward under New Business; it was not on the agenda and the media is only giving one side of the story and he wanted to give information on the other side. Mike Denault said the board allows all visitors to speak and what people say is their personal opinion. The board did not make a motion or a decision on whether or not people should get the vaccine or whether or not the board agrees with Dan Potvin. Mike Denault suggested we agree to disagree. Pat Sullivan suggested the board review and address the chat after the meeting. She asked if there was any official policy on what Old and New Business should consist of. Nancy Bushika said the town has no policy, but it allows new topics to be discussed. There is usually no voting during new business since the topic was not on the agenda. Deb Burchard sees both sides and feels we should just make our own decisions.

#### SEED SAVERS SWAP

Helen Fields would like to move the Seed Swap from April 17, 2021 to May 1, 2021 and join the Green Up Day event. The Selectboard was fine with the change and reminded her to fill out the School Use form.

#### SEED SAVERS SUMMER CAMP

Helen Fields hopes the library will sponsor another summer camp this year at the tennis courts. Nancy Bushika noted that the Seed Savers are an independent group and suggested that she contact the library and School Directors.

#### GREEN UP DAY

Pat Sullivan announced that Green Up Day is scheduled for May 1, 2021 from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and hopes that everyone will attend.

#### HIGHWAY CONTACT

Deb Burchard said it's been a horrible mud season and there was a hole on Mill Road over the weekend. She feels the town needs a way to contact someone on the weekend without having to call Dave Tatro at home if a road becomes impassable. Bill Levine suggested calling 911. The Selectboard has appointed Dan Potvin as highway liaison. They recommended calling the garage phone no. (802) 694-1322 and if Dave Tatro is unavailable, they can leave a message. The highway answering machine gives Dan Potvin's phone number to contact if it is an emergency.

#### ZONING BY-LAWS

Deb Burchard said the Planning Commission worked hard to update the Bylaws. She asked why permits aren't being tracked down if people are not following the By-laws. Mike Denault agreed there is no sense in having By-laws if they are not enforced. He suggested talking to the Zoning Administrator at the next meeting to review the procedure.

#### MINUTES

1. Karen Kuranda asked that the covid-19 vaccination section be stricken from the minutes. Mike Denault did not feel it could be stricken from the minutes since it was said. Minutes can be altered if there is an error. Bill Levine asked that the minutes be amended to clarify the Communications Union District section. The town can appoint one primary representative to the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District and can have several alternate representatives. Karen Kuranda asked at the very least, if the minutes could be amended to stipulate that Dan Potvin's presentation on the vaccine was done as a private citizen and not as a representative of the board or the town. Mike Kuranda felt the board is in a unique position to influence others and allowing only one side of the story is a disservice. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding speaking as private citizens, the minutes and amending the minutes. Mike Denault suggested they talk to Dan Potvin at the next meeting concerning his vaccine presentation and discuss whether board members speaking as private citizens should say so. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 18, 2021 as amended to clarify the CUD section. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. 2 in favor, 1 opposed (Nancy Bushika). Motion FAILED. Nancy Bushika feels the minutes were stated accurately according to what was said at the meeting and they have since learned new information. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 18, 2021 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Mike Denault thanked Mr. and Mrs. Kuranda for coming to the meeting and sharing their views. MOTION by Mike Denault to include the letter written by Karen Kuranda concerning the COVID-19 vaccine as an attachment to this meeting's minutes. A lengthy discussion ensued concerning what should be included in the minutes. All letters that are submitted to the Selectboard are public information and anyone can request a copy of the letters or of the recording of the meeting. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. 2 in favor, 1 opposed (Nancy Bushika). Motion FAILED. Nancy Bushika said many residents submit letters to the Selectboard and she doesn't want to set a precedent to include letters in the minutes.

#### SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #11 \$ 6,259.44 payroll

WARRANT #12 \$32,219.44 accounts payable

#### TOWN REPORT

The board reviewed the completed draft of the town report. It is being printed and will be mailed out by the end of next week.

#### ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew is fixing the muddy spots.
2. It will be a couple weeks before they can start grading. There are areas where the frost still needs to come out of the road.
3. Dave Tatro provided information on a new furnace for the garage. The current wood furnace is very inefficient and is warping. The town's insurance has frowned upon the existing wood stove for years. The new furnace is EPA compliant and has a blower system to distribute the heat much better. Nancy Bushika asked about the backup gas heater and if it was a better long-term solution. It was agreed that the wood is much less expensive and was the better way to go.
4. The street sweeper is scheduled for the second week in April, weather permitting.
5. Class 4 roads are not open yet. Dave Tatro reviewed the plowed section of County Road and stated that the road is in good shape and was not damaged.

#### RECYCLING

1. The spring Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Day will be held on May 8, 2021 in Bennington. The HHW Day for Searsburg and Stamford will be on July 24, 2021 at the AOT highway garage on Main Road in Heartwellville.
2. The outside compactor control is no longer working. It was set up in the 1980's and you can no longer get parts. The recycling operators have to come inside the garage to run the compactor pump. It is less convenient, but they may not blow fuses as often because you can hear the pump and are less likely to overrun it.

#### NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE

Martina Barnes is the new District Ranger for our area and wants to meet with towns containing National Forest acreage. The Selectboard felt it would be good to invite her to a meeting after the election when there is a full board.

#### BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The town received a request from the sheriff's department suggesting that we increase their patrol time to allow them to provide weekend coverage. Mike Denault was surprised by the request. In the past

the board has been able to request various changes in patrol service such as on the backroads when there are parties in the summer or dumping. The sheriff's department has always been willing to accommodate the town's requests using the regular contracted hours. The board has already budgeted the funds and signed the contract so it doesn't make sense to increase their hours. Mike Denault will contact the department.

#### EMEGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine again requested that the Selectboard recommend Harry Klein as Fire Warden and Mitch Morandi as Deputy Fire Warden. Bill Levine said Harry Klein is sick of being the only one responding and issuing permits.

MOTION by Mike Denault to send a letter in support of Harry Klein being appointed as Fire Warden and Mitch Morandi as Deputy Fire Warden. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### OFFER TO PURCHASE TOWN OWNED RPROPERTY

1. At the last meeting, the town received two offers to purchase the 1.5 acre parcel located on Main Road formerly owned by Desilets. Both bidders were given the opportunity to reconsider and submit a new offer. Daniel Rainey increased his offer to \$800.00. Joseph Berard's offer remains at \$500.00 as he did not submit a new offer.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer to purchase the parcel on Main Road from Daniel Rainey for the sum of \$800.00. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. The town received an offer from Aundrez V. Joaquin to purchase Lot 404 in Alpenwald for the sum of \$675.00.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer to purchase Lot 404 for the sum of \$675.00. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

3. The town received an offer from Alberto Borges to purchase Lot 361 in Alpenwald for the sum of \$1,000.00.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer to purchase Lot 361 for the sum of \$1,000.00. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the permit application from Camp Precast Concrete Products, Inc. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The proper fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

#### RABIES CLINIC

1. There were about 40-45 dogs at the Rabies Clinic this past weekend. The town has licensed about one-third of its dogs and the due date is today (April 1st). The town clerk cannot charge late fees as any licenses that expire during the Governor's declared emergency are considered valid throughout the declaration and for 90 days after the emergency order expires. Nancy Bushika encouraged everyone to protect their family and neighbors by making sure their dogs get their rabies shots and to license their dog with the town. The town clerk will send out reminder notices. Mike Denault asked if there were grants available to reimburse towns for this lost income. The American Rescue Plan may provide reimbursement for this type of loss and will be considered.

2. Dave Tatro asked the board to consider holding the rabies clinic here at the town office. He said he spent a considerable amount of time cleaning the garage for the safety of the dogs but it is not the best place.

#### BENNINGTON COUNTY TAX

The town received a letter indicating that the assistant judges decided to use \$76,000 from their Operating Reserve Fund to lower the amount to be raised in taxes by Bennington County towns. This will be a one-time reduction and the town will need to budget for the full amount next year.

#### LETTER TO GOVERNOR

Ruth West submitted a copy of the letter she wrote to the Governor.

#### BOARD OF ABATEMENT REQUEST

A request to abate taxes has been received. The hearing will be scheduled for Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

#### TOWN MEETING/ELECTION

Town Meeting will be held outside near the library on Monday, April 19, 2021 at 7 p.m. and the election of officers will be held on Tuesday April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the community room. The tent, lighting and sound system will be rented. The School Directors will contribute \$400.00 toward the rental costs. The town clerk hopes to recover the cost with grant money but is not sure.

#### COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

Nancy Bushika stated that after appointing Roger Bouchard to the DVFCUD, they learned there is an appointment form that needs to be completed. Roger Bouchard has withdrawn his request and does not want to be an alternate.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Bob Briggs as Town Representative and Bill Levine as Alternate Representative to the Deerfield Valley Fiber Communications Union District. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### TOWN OFFICER EDUCATIONAL CONFERENCE

There are several virtual conferences planned for April 12, 13 and 15, 2021. Nancy Bushika will sign up and plans to attend with Sally Bohl, Lori Shepard and Theresa Denault. Any board members are welcome to attend.

#### AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The Selectboard was contacted by Ron Mercon who would like to fly a drone over the town and asked the Selectboard if there were any sites they would recommend or times of year that would be best.

Nancy Bushika thought the view of the town from Allen's Peak would be nice. Mike Denault did not want to give anyone permission to fly over people's houses or property.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 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. 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. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office and throughout election day. Absentee ballots maybe requested until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.
3. Upcoming HHW Days are scheduled as follows: May 8, 2021 in Bennington and 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.
4. Green Up Day is scheduled for May 1, 2021.
5. The summer hours at the transfer station will begin on April 28, 2021, the last Wednesday of the month, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
6. 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.
7. Please visit the town's official website: [townofstamfordvermont.org](http://townofstamfordvermont.org) for town information and updates.