

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
September 16, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Michael G. Denault Daniel J. Potvin, and Brandon Field.

Visitors: John Barrett, Scott Boettle, Sally Bohl, Robert Bouchard, Helen Fields, Amal Lebbos, Randy Lichtenwalner (School Principal), Marta Miller, Beth Phelps, E-Jay Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Trevor Tatro, Pamela Tworig, Allen Whitney, Damien Wimpenney, Tyler Wojkowski, Natalie Yorke, Luke McKay, Dog Officer
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. The agenda was amended to add some correspondence. There was no change to its order.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of employee matters would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session for personnel matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:06 p.m. Sally Bohl and Lori Shepard were invited to participate.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 6:10 p.m.

The board decided not to hire an Assessor Clerk at this time. The state requires a certified professional assessor if a town does not have elected listers. Since NEMRC is willing to do the assessor work for the town, it was determined that local assistants are not necessary. The Selectboard hired NEMRC as Assessor and is reviewing the contract to hire them as Reappraiser. NEMRC will charge \$95.00/hour for assessor work and \$75,000.00 to complete the town-wide reappraisal.

ATV/UTV TRAILS

Jessica Tatro spoke on behalf of the newly formed local ATV club. The club requested that a subcommittee be created to research information, investigate the laws, VASA, and work with the community to address concerns and come back to the board with a proposal. Jessica Tatro asked for a one-year trial period and offered to start with rubbish pick up. Nancy Bushika stated that the National Forest District Ranger will be attending the October 7, 2021 board meeting to discuss an ATV trail project to Sucker Pond. It was noted that being part of VASA provides funding for trail maintenance and liability protection for private landowners and the town. Some would prefer the local club to move forward without VASA. Mike Denault was contacted by several people after the last meeting and threatening statements were made that he will not tolerate. Jessica Tatro asked the board to allow the prior three roads to be VASA ATV trails just for the remainder of the year. The board felt a lot needs to be discussed first.

MOTION by Brandon Field to create an ATV committee to research and report back to the board. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. Brandon Field, Carol Fachini, David Tatro, Robert Bouchard, Jessica Tatro, Marta Miller and Natalie (Connie) Yorke were appointed to the ATV Subcommittee. They will need to follow the open meetings laws and posting requirements.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. E-Jay Tatro questioned the roads and trails that were given up during the Ancient Roads process. The board followed the Ancient Roads guidelines and Vermont law. The decisions can't be easily reversed or rescinded since the land reverts back to the landowners.
2. Randy Lichtenwalner, the School Principal, spoke briefly. He commended our school children and staff. He encouraged everyone to take an online survey which is available on the Stamford School website.
3. John Barrett stated that he has ridden bikes and ATVs his whole life and bought a camp on Risky Ranch Road because he enjoys riding and could ride legally. He hopes the town can find a way to move forward.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of September 2, 2021 as written.

SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #35 \$ 8,222.27 payroll

WARRANT #36 \$14,534.94 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro stated that the town cannot purchase winter sand from Eilers Brothers this year because they don't have drivers to make deliveries.
2. The state is offering small equipment grants to towns through the Grants-in-Aid program. Dave Tatro would like to purchase a plate compactor which will help with culvert installation. The grant pays 80% and the town will have a 20% match.

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the Letter of Intent to Participate in the Municipal Roads Grants-in-Aid Program Equipment Purchase. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

3. The town is waiting for the Request for Proposal form for the Hazard Mitigation Grant.

RECYCLING

The Recycling Update was presented to the board. Nancy Bushika would like Dave Tatro to review it and the board will discuss it at their next meeting.

DOGS [AND WOLF HYBRIDS] ORDINANCE

The Selectboard reviewed the proposed changes to the Dog Ordinance which would allow the Dog Officer to transfer a stray dog to a Stamford resident.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to approve the changes and the Dog Ordinance as presented and proceed with the ordinance adoption process. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

STRAY DOG/DOG UPDATE

1. No one claimed the dog after the ten day period and the stray puppy has been transferred to its new home. The dog and new owner are very happy.
2. A few delinquent dog owners have come in to license their dogs. Luke McKay, accompanied by the Bennington Sheriff, issued tickets to delinquent dog owners this week. There are only two dog owners who have not licensed their dogs. Luke McKay said next year he hopes everyone will adhere to the April 1st deadline. According to our Dog Ordinance, he will be prepared to issue tickets on May 1st for the 1st

offence, June 1st for the 2nd offence, and on July 1st tickets can be issued for the 3rd offence, your dog can be impounded and you will have to go to dog owner classes.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine received an email advising that the state is restructuring its emergency management. It is moving from Local Emergency Planning Commissions to Regional Emergency Management Commissions with the involvement of the County Regional Commissions. The email said towns would have to appoint people to represent their town at the regional meetings and Bill Levine looked to the Selectboard to make the appointments. Dan Potvin was willing to participate if Bill Levine needed help. The state has not provided much guidance. Dan Potvin does not want to replace local control with regional control. The board will wait for more information before making appointments or taking any action.
2. Bill Levine suggested the Selectboard take the ICS-100 course before taking the ICS-400 emergency preparation course. Board members will need to create an account first and then they can sign up to take the course. John Barrett is familiar with the process and offered to send the town clerk the links to sign up.
3. Bill Levine purchased a new lock for the Red Cross trailer. He is looking for volunteers to help pull out the trailer and review the contents.

PURCHASE OF TOWN OWNED PROPERTY

1. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer of Anthony Pitrone III to purchase the Stamford portion of Lot 220 in Alpenwald for \$100.00. SECONDED by Brand Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The buyer has already negotiated with Readsboro to purchase the remaining portion of the lot.
2. The Selectboard signed the two deeds completing the transfer of Lots 308 and 401 to Aaron and Nancy Tyler for \$500.00 each.

TOWN CYBER SECURITY RISK

The town clerk received the results from the cyber risk survey which was required in connection with its liability insurance policy. The town ranked in the 3rd percentile compared with the other policyholders, representing the very lowest risk. VLCT wants to include Stamford in their assessment program which will help towns realize the need for further cyber security measures.

OATH TO THE CONSTITUTION

Dan Potvin asked the Selectboard to recall the oath they took to the U.S. Constitution and Vermont Constitution. He said in 1940 when Germany invaded France, the Third Reich went to each town asking the leaders for their allegiance. Any board member who did not swear allegiance was taken out into the street and shot by the Germans. After the war was over, the townspeople went to their town leaders and took all the traitors out into the street and shot them. His point was that, although all the board members died, they died for very different reasons. Things are getting very bad in our world and he hopes he can count on the Selectboard to stay united and stand by their oath to uphold the Constitution and the rights of the people of Stamford. He sees the right to freedom of speech already being violated throughout the world as well as in our own country.

SURVIVAL/PREPAREDNESS

Dan Potvin is concerned that supply chains will continue to break down and people should be prepared. A few years ago he sent out letters to townspeople recommending that they eat healthier, plant gardens, and stock up on necessities. He also prepared a letter explaining how to survive a nuclear radiation fallout. This information is available through the town clerk's office for anyone who would like a copy.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The town office is open with the following hours: Monday – Closed; Tuesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Wednesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Thursday – 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
2. Anyone interested in helping Bill Levine review the contents of the Red Cross trailer or interested in forming a Citizen Response Group should contact Bill Levine directly or the town office.
3. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.