

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
October 21, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, and Carol A. Fachini.

Daniel J. Potvin and Brandon Field did not attend.

Visitors: Robert Bouchard, Carolyn Brooks, Debra Burchard, Helen Fields, Kurt Gamari, Stephen Greene, Victoria Jefferies, Karen Kuranda, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Pat Sullivan, E-Jay Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Pamela Tworig, Allen Whitney, Jr., and Natalie Yorke.

Luke McKay, Dog Officer.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 correspondence. There was no change to its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

1. Pam Tworig requested that the board return to hybrid remote and in-person meetings using zoom. Nancy Bushika noted that the board is not required to have remote meetings. Pam Tworig advocated for those who cannot attend meetings in person but still want to participate.

2. Pat Sullivan stated that the Building Community Group has worked for several years to complete a new sign for the town. The project was set aside because of COVID-19. McCann Technical High School is able to cut the aluminum letters for the sign. There is still a great deal of site work to be done and additional benches to install. She anticipates the entire cost of the project to be \$20,000.00-\$25,000.00 and admits they are significantly short in funding. She encouraged the town to consider the village center designation presented by the Bennington County Regional Commission recently so she could try to apply for more funding to finish this project.

3. Helen Fields informed the board of the PTG Fall Fest fundraiser on Saturday October 30, 2021 at the school from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. to raise money to purchase piano keyboards for kids. There will be games, good food, a Chinese auction and many other fun things to do. She hopes for large community support and asked for volunteers, donations for the Chinese auction, and cash donations from those who are unable to attend but would still like to help.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of October 7, 2021 as written.

SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #41 \$ 8,334.74 payroll

WARRANT #42 \$31,354.65 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew has been blowing the leaves out of the ditches and unplugging the culverts.

2. Dave Tatro has been stocking up on supplies for winter. Things are in short supply and simple things that you would expect to be on the shelves are not available. He is having trouble finding culvert pipe.

3. Nancy Bushika asked why the town received a bill for the road sweeping after the chip seal coat. Dave Tatro advised that the sweeping has never been part of their bill. We always hire a contractor and pay for that separately.

RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika was asked to review the transfer station recertification plan after the last meeting. It is very vague and she is hesitant to call the state. She suggested the town keeps doing what they have been doing and encourages people to bring appliances containing freon to Apkins in North Adams or have their supplier take back their old appliance when they purchase a new one.

BYLAW MODERNIZATION GRANT

The board received the email from Catherine Bryars from the Bennington County Regional Commission with more information about the grants and the ways the town might benefit by changing the Bylaws. Deb Burchard invited the Selectboard to attend the upcoming Planning Commission meeting on November 1, 2021 where they will be discussing this subject. Mike Denault was concerned because he is feeling rushed by their timeline. Helen Fields said the Planning Commission should listen to Catherine Bryars' presentation at the upcoming meeting and hopes the board will welcome any changes they suggest. Pam Tworig asked why the state is pushing this downtown village design. Kurt Gamari feels the state wants to promote clustered housing in town centers and prevent urban sprawl. Pam Tworig cautioned that state funds are rarely free and usually come with strings attached, citing the salt shed grant that the town obtained and later forfeited because there were too many requirements. She feels developing the town center would put us in a position to need a public water system which we can't afford. At a recent webinar Lori Shepard attended, they said this grant was created to solve the state's housing problem. Nancy Bushika recalled that the septic system was a big problem when the town tried to do the senior housing and the state wanted mixed unit housing, not just senior housing. Helen Fields noted that a lot of people would like to live in our town but can't afford it. She feels class issues need to be recognized and providing housing in town is important. Kurt Gamari felt it is very hard to develop the center of Stamford because of the sewer and water issues.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine left word with Nancy Bushika that the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District has received grant funding and will proceed with the next step.
2. Lori Shepard contacted the state for the status of the town's hazard mitigation grant in order to update the town's hazard mitigation plan. One of the grant requirements is that the town needs a written Purchasing Procedure Policy in place so there has been no movement on the grant process. Nancy Bushika asked for a model policy for the board's review.

LIABILITY INSURANCE

Lori Shepard reviewed the liability coverage for the town and highway buildings. Helen Fields suggested that the outdoor garden shed built by the Seed Savers should be added to the town's insurance policy. It was noted that this building is also being used as an outdoor classroom for the school. Mike Denault would like to know what the cost would be to cover the building.

MUNICIPAL ROADS GRANTS-IN-AID

Dave Tatro has completed the culvert installation project on County Road.

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve and sign the Municipal Invoicing Spreadsheet to request reimbursement of the grant funds in the amount of \$7,820.00. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SOLAR FACILITY CORRESPONDENCE

The Selectboard received correspondence from a resident who installed a solar facility at his home. He then installed a second solar stand. The state determined after completion of the second solar facility, that the combined kw total of both solar stands required the landowner to follow a different process than what was needed when each stand was viewed as an individual array. The landowner hoped the board would waive the 45 day notice requirement so they could proceed. Nancy Bushika did not agree with waiving the notice period since they have not waived the requirement for other property owners in the past. Mike Denault felt this was different because the solar arrays are already installed and this would just expedite the process. Carolyn Brooks feels the state's process includes the 45 day notice period for a reason and it should stay in place. Ultimately, the board tabled the matter until the next meeting in order to get more information.

VETERANS DINNER

Although Dan Potvin was not present, he asked the board to discuss the plans for this year's dinner. Nancy Bushika noted that this is not a Selectboard-funded project, but something Dan Potvin puts together every year. The potluck supper will be held on Saturday, November 6, 2021 at 5 p.m. All are welcome to attend.

BULLETIN BOARD

Nancy Bushika has received complaints that several notices from the bulletin board were flying around after last week's wind storm. They have littered neighbor's yards and last year they got caught up in the snow blower. Stephen Greene will make it a priority to fix the problem by adding doors. The Seed Savers used grant funds to build and install the bulletin board.

SCHOOL WOOD CHIP PILE

Mike Denault asked if there was any plan to move the wood chips from the parking area. Helen Fields said they discussed it at their last School Directors meeting and he would have to look up their minutes for an answer.

SELECTBOARD AGENDA

Mike Denault asked what the process was for getting on the Selectboard's agenda. Usually people contact Lori Shepard or a Selectboard member and the item is added to the agenda. If the Selectboard member does not want the item on the agenda, it looks like the town has no process in place. Helen Fields felt Roberts Rules of Order has a generic process and people have the right to put an item on the agenda.

DOG ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Mike Denault said he had stopped at the town office last week. The mowing contractor was mowing the lawn and was unable to finish because someone had tied a dog to the sign post and left it alone. The front north side of the lawn was left unmowed because they didn't want to mow around the dog and didn't have time to wait. There are no dogs allowed on the school/town property.

SPEEDING ON TOWN ROADS

Mike Denault has received complaints that cars are speeding on East Road and Lesure Road. He will contact the sheriff's office to ask them to spend more time patrolling those areas. He said the sheriff's department is changing and the service has improved over the past year. Mike Denault feels that the townspeople should begin to consider what type of patrol services they want for the upcoming year.

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 to discuss employee 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 7:25 p.m. Lori Shepard and Luke McKay were invited to participate.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:08 p.m. Results of executive session: 1) The Selectboard signed the Dismissal of Complaint form which will be filed with the Judicial Bureau and the town clerk will follow up to be sure that the waiver penalty is returned to the dog owner; 2) the September assessor bill was reviewed and the board will dispute the charge to correct the assessor's error and the charge to reinstate our passwords.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 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.