

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
December 1, 2022
(UNAPPROVED)

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

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Carolyn Brooks, Laura Champagne, Theresa Denault, Carla Dix, Kurt Gamari, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Deborah Righi, James Righi, and Jonathan Cooper from the Bennington County Regional Commission.

Luke McKay, Dog Officer.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

William Levine, Emergency Management Director.

Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

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 reviews and salaries pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:30 p.m. Luke McKay, Dave Tatro, and Michael Brothers were each invited individually to participate.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 6:30 p.m. No decisions were made.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Jonathan Cooper from the Bennington County Regional Commission spoke about the Southern Vermont Economic Zone. He said this would make the town eligible for additional grant funds and would allow our town to participate in more economic development programs. They need at least 50% of the 44 southern Vermont towns within the zone to sign up in order to establish the Economic Development Zone and be recognized by the federal government. He said the town could still benefit from the programs even if Stamford doesn't send in a letter of support. Kurt Gamari asked what type of commitment would be required from the town. He said there was no financial commitment of any sort. He stated that this plan is driven by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation, the Windham Regional Commission and the Bennington County Regional Commission who will jointly receive \$70,000.00 per year from the federal government to assist towns with these programs. He hopes to receive the letter of support in December or January 2023. Carolyn Brooks asked for concrete examples of how this would help our town. Jonathan Cooper was not familiar enough with our town to give any real examples. He passed out a booklet to the Selectboard and Planning Commission Chair with more information which can be found online at <https://www.vermontzone.com/ceds>. Kurt Gamari confirmed that nothing in this new district would supersede our local By-laws. Nancy Bushika thanked Jonathan Cooper for coming and said she would like to receive input from the Planning Commission before making a decision.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of November 17, 2022 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #47 \$ 6,875.57 payroll

WARRANT #48 \$356,327.61 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

The Selectboard reviewed and confirmed financial statements for the month of October.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro advised that the Lincoln Road bridge project was finished.
2. All the equipment is set up for winter. There has been snow in the higher elevations.
3. The Selectboard received an email from the National Forest indicating that they have installed a gate at the end of Sucker Pond Road. The gate will be open for snowmobile use this winter. It is rumored that they may put a gate at the end of Risky Ranch Road.

RECLASSIFICATION OF CLASS 4 ROAD TO LEGAL TRAIL

Since the Class 4 roads are closed, the board will wait until spring to begin the process.

RECYCLING

1. Nancy Bushika showed everyone her small battery box to recycle household batteries at home. When the box is full there are directions on how to seal the box and mail it back to the state free of charge. She said anyone can request a battery box for their home by calling 877-723-1297 or visiting the website <https://www.call2recycle.org/>. Marta Miller suggested this information could be posted on the new bulletin board at the recycling center.
2. Mike Denault said he heard that Apkins in North Adams will be closing and the town will need to find a new location to bring its scrap metal. He said our country is saturated and no one can move scrap metal. There is a small facility on Florida Mountain as well as one in Albany and Holyoke.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Nothing to report.

BUDGET MEETINGS

The board scheduled an executive session to finish the employee reviews beginning at 5:30 p.m. on December 15, 2022. The regular meeting will start at 6 p.m. A budget work session was scheduled for Thursday, December 29, 2022 at 5:00 p.m.

FIRE TRUCK PURCHASE

Bill Levine noted that at town meeting this past March the town approved putting \$50,000.00 per year for the next five years into the firetruck replacement fund. The Fire Department was not awarded the grant to fund the purchase of a new fire truck. Therefore, the Fire Department is requesting that the Selectboard authorize the purchase now. The cost will be around \$498,000.00 but they will save money by committing now. If the Fire Department waits until town meeting in March, the price could be significantly higher. Bill Levine explained that this new truck would replace their 30 year old pump truck and described the problems they are having getting replacement parts. It will take about 1 ½ years before the balance of the money will be due and the Fire Department can come to the town to ask for the funds at that point. Deb Burchard asked if the Selectboard could legally make this decision or if it should be a town vote. The board stated that they could authorize the purchase now and the townspeople could decide whether and how to fund it later.

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the purchase of the fire truck and move forward. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

TREES ON EAST ROAD

With the high winds today, the Town Clerk received a call asking about the status of the dead trees on East Road. The board agreed even though a tree is within the town's right-of-way, it is still the landowner's tree and the landowner's responsibility. If the town took on the responsibility for every dead tree on the side of the road, it would cost the town a fortune. Dave Tatro said the only time the town might consider getting involved is if a tree or limb is hanging over the road creating a dire threat.

THIRD QUARTER FINANCIAL REVIEW

1. The Selectboard was given the 3rd quarter financial reports.
2. Lori Shepard explained that the majority of the assistant's time is spent doing payroll, accounts payable and land record recording. The town office has gotten behind on recording and Lori Shepard asked the Selectboard to consider increasing the assistant's hours from 18 hours per week to 22 hours per week through the month of December. If additional time is needed in 2023 perhaps some additional time could be included in next year's budget. There are unused funds from other line items that would allow for the additional hours without going over budget. Mike Denault asked how many hours kicks an employee over the threshold where the town would have to provide benefits. He thought it would be ok for the month of December but would need to know that threshold before considering more time next year.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini, Clerk

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REMINDERS

1. Anyone interested in serving on the Finance Committee this year should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.
2. The fifth annual tree lighting will be held in front of the school on Sunday, December 4th at 5:00 p.m. Caroling, refreshments and a visit from Santa are planned.
3. The Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place on Saturday, December 17, 2022, at 12 p.m. at the Stamford School with the placement of wreaths on gravesites immediately following.