

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING**  
**February 6, 2025**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**  
6:00 p.m.

Present: Select Board: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Douglas Wright, Michael G. Denault and Kurt Gamari.

John Dunn was not present

Visitors: Laura Champagne, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin and Beth Thomas.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

Lori Shepard, Select Board Secretary.

Nancy Bushika opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. An executive session for personnel matters was added to the agenda along with an ethics update and the approval of the January 16, 2025 budget work session minutes. Jed Gramlin recorded the meeting.

#### MINUTES

1. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 16, 2025 as written. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the budget work session minutes of January 16, 2025 as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
3. MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 23, 2025 as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### SELECT BOARD ORDERS

The Select Board reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #3 \$ 9,112.17 payroll
- WARRANT #4 \$44,463.36 accounts payable
- WARRANT #5 \$10,594.04 payroll
- WARRANT #6 \$35,392.58 accounts payable

#### ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway department has been dealing with a lot of snow. They have also had a fair amount of breakdowns.
2. Dave Tatro has started coordinating with the janitor and things have improved with clearing the school parking lot.
3. Laura Champagne asked about the ripples on Mill Road. Dave Tatro said you cannot grade gravel in the winter.
4. Laura Champagne had requested that if the Class 4 section of County Road was plowed, that they leave a shelf on the side of the road for snowmobilers. The road was plowed but there is no shelf. Dave Tatro said the road is too narrow to leave a shelf but

they were going to leave snow on the road. VASA will not groom it because it is a secondary trail. Mike Denault does not think the town has a policy regarding a shelf for snowmobiles.

#### JOINT MEETING

Mike Denault would like to have a joint meeting with the School Board and would like to meet the principal and new superintendent. Nancy Bushika will contact the school to set something up after the election.

#### INSURANCE LOSS CONTROL INSPECTION

Nancy Bushika asked Dave Tatro to implement a few safety improvements from the last inspection. Doing a couple each year shows that the town is trying. Dave Tatro will put up the work place posters and install some smoke detectors.

#### MUNICIPAL ROADS GRANT IN AID

The board recently signed the reimbursement request for the 2024 grant. A new reimbursement request needs to be signed because the state is denying reimbursement for the cost of the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) to administer the grant. The BCRC's work was conducted after the grant period ended so, even though the town has to pay the BCRC, the state will not reimburse us for that cost. Dave Tatro is frustrated because the state used to pay the BCRC directly and last year they changed the process. He recommended the Select Board contact our representative to complain. The Select Board signed the new reimbursement request for the reduced amount, but will hold off on submitting it until Nancy Bushika talks with Representative Jonathan Cooper.

#### RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika noted that Dream Green Recycling in the Berkshires is offering a free pick up this weekend. You pay for the items you are recycling, but there is no pick up fee.

#### REVIEW RENEWING APPOINTMENTS

1. The board reviewed past practices. Nancy Bushika would like to send a letter to all officials with renewing appointments asking if they would like to serve again. Letters will be sent out.
2. Mike Denault asked about board members who do not show up for several meetings in a row. He would like to get updates from the board chairs. Kurt Gamari suggested having an All Boards meeting. Kurt Gamari noted that the Select Board should be aware of conflicts within boards. After taking the ethics training, he noted that the Selectboard is ultimately responsible for the appointments they make. Mike Denault felt that it is a conflict for people on the Planning Commission to also sit on the Zoning Board of Adjustment.

#### DOG LICENSE FEES/RABIES CLINIC

1. The new dog license fees for 2025 are \$16.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$20.00 for real/intact dogs. Nancy Bushika noted that the Select Board added Article 6 to the warrant to create a reserve fund for the extra money they are allowed to collect to take

care of expenses the town incurs when picking up stray dogs. If the owner can't be found, the town can be responsible for dog-related costs.

2. The dog officer was not able to organize a rabies clinic this year. Wilmington is holding a rabies clinic on March 8, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Wilmington Fire House and Pownal will be hosting a clinic on March 22, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the old town office.

#### REVIEW MOWING BID REQUESTS

Deferred to the next meeting.

#### FEMA FUNDING

The town clerk received an email indicating that the FEMA reimbursement funds for the July 2023 flooding damage may be delayed.

#### UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit application from Newport Sand & Gravel Co. / Carroll Concrete Co. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

#### NEMRC ASSESSOR CONTRACT

The assessor's hourly rate is \$95.00/hour to perform assessment work for 2025. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the contract. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### ETHICS UPDATE

Doug Wright has continued to learn the new ethics laws. The town can appoint an Ethics Commission or the Select Board can handle the complaints. They can also appoint a second person to investigate complaints. He reviewed the steps to file a complaint. The Ethics Liaison Officer is a point of contact. He will need to keep a log of all complaints filed. Almost everyone serving on a town board needs to take the ethics training and submit their certificate of completion to the town. The town must adopt a Code of Ethics which is very similar to the town's Conflict of Interest Policy we already have. He suggested the town could incorporate the Chart of Incompatible Offices in its policy. The Select Board also needs to create a Policy for Investigating Complaints. This policy along with the Code of Ethics needs to be available on the town website. The complaint form could also be added to the website. Nancy Bushika thanked Doug Wright for keeping the board up to date.

#### SELECT BOARD MEETINGS

Mike Denault said it was brought to his attention that some visitors are allowed more time than others at meetings. There are also side conversations going on at times during meetings. He supports the first amendment right for speech, but recognizes that after the Hearing of Visitors section, discussion should only be by the Select Board. After the election he would like to reign in some of the conversation. He felt Nancy Bushika does a great job and board members were in agreement with the change.

## JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Nancy Bushika feels the job descriptions for employees have not been reviewed in some time and are outdated. The job descriptions will be reviewed and updated along with the employee policy.

## EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature general public knowledge of a personnel matter 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 an employee matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Select Board entered executive session at 7:15 p.m. Dave Tatro was invited to participate.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:00 p.m. No action was taken.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:01 p.m.

Kurt Gamari  
Clerk

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## REMINDERS

1. Townspeople should sign up with the state's free communications network, VT-Alert. You can sign up at [vtalert.gov](http://vtalert.gov) to receive notifications. You can choose how you would like to be alerted (phone call, text or email) and can choose what type of alerts you would like to receive, i.e. weather, road closures, public health, etc.
2. Anyone interested in applying for the transfer station substitute position should submit a letter of interest to the Select Board.
3. The new dog license fees for 2025 are \$16.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$20.00 for real/intact dogs.
4. Wilmington will hold a rabies clinic on March 8, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Wilmington Fire House, 40 Beaver Street, Wilmington, VT. Pownal will host a rabies clinic on March 22, 2025 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the old town office, 467 Center Street, Pownal, VT.

5. The town office is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays.

#### PETITIONS FOR WARRANT ARTICLES & ELECTED POSITIONS

The deadline for filing petitions with the town clerk for warrant articles to be included in the town meeting warning is Thursday, January 16, 2025. These petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters or at least 38 signatures. V.S.A. 17:2642(a)

The required signatures on a petition to run for an elected office are 1% of the registered voters or at least 8 signatures. The deadline for filing these petitions with the Town Clerk is Monday, January 27, 2025 by 5:00 p.m. Nominating papers and the 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 (*Paul Dupuis*)  
School Moderator - 1 year term (*Paul Dupuis*)  
Select Board member - 2 year term (*Nancy Bushika*)  
Select Board member - 3 year term (*Michael Denault*)  
School Director - 2 year term (*Erika Bailey*)  
School Director - 3 year term (*Gary Bellows*)  
Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year term (*Sally A. Bohl*)  
Cemetery Commissioner - 3 year term (*Sheila G. Lawrence*)  
Library Trustee - 2 year term (*Danielle Smith*)

Town meeting will be held on Monday, March 3, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. with the school portion first, followed by the town.

Voting will be held on Tuesday, March 4, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town of Stamford Community Room. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office up to and throughout election day.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3, 2025. 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 Select Board.