

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 6, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Pamela Tworig, and Kurt Gamari.
Marie Kelly-Whitney was not present.

Visitors: Deb Burchard, Laura Champagne, Susan Flash, Victoria Jefferies, Aaron Malachuk, Beth Phelps,
Deborah Righi, James Righi, and Trevor Tatro.
Luke McKay, Dog Officer.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
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. There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

GREEN UP DAY

Susan Flash announced that Green Up Day will be Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Stamford School. There will be refreshments and prizes and she hopes for another great turnout. Dave Tatro will leave the town truck at the school. Susan Flash said she will ask anyone bring large items or furniture directly to the transfer station. Kurt Gamari suggested she get a sharps container.

STORM DEBRIS

Victoria Jefferies noted that the last snow storm left tree limbs and brush all over town and she asked if the road crew was too busy to clean it up if the town could hire someone to help. She thought it would be great for the community and a letter could be sent out. People could sign up and pay for their portion of the work done. Even if the town couldn't pull it together now, they could organize something for next time. Pam Tworig felt there are many contractors who could remove the trees. She didn't feel the town clerk has time to prepare and send out letters and the town doesn't have the resources. Perhaps neighbors could get together to hire contractors in groups.

MINUTES

Pam Tworig would like a statement she made concerning the sheriff to be added to the minutes from the last meeting: she wanted to go on record saying when we left town meeting, we left the voters with the impression that we were hiring the sheriff's department for approximately 11 hours/week, up to \$40,000.00. She feels that if that is what the voters thought, then if the board is going to deviate from that, it is a serious thing.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 16, 2023 as corrected.
SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #11 \$ 8,874.41 payroll
WARRANT #12 \$16,974.46 accounts payable
WARRANT #13 \$ 8,205.00 payroll
WARRANT #14 \$26,790.66 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The roads are good for the first week of April. Dave Tatro has ordered some gravel and will begin repairing and grading the roads soon.
2. The 2019 Freightliner is at Patriot for repair of an electrical issue.
3. Both Dave Tatro and Mike Brothers were called for jury duty service in April. Dave Tatro's has been rescheduled to July and Mike Brothers is rescheduled for the fall.
4. He found someone to repair the chimney at the garage.
5. Lori Shepard is working on a grant for the highway garage weatherization. Kurt Gamari looked for grants in light of the Village Center Designation but found the garage isn't eligible.
6. Laura Champagne requested to have Mill Road graded first. Dave Tatro said he will be grading the roads that dry up first as well as the ones in worst shape.
7. Dave Tatro has been working with the town clerk on a Class 2 Paving grant for East Road in the amount of \$200,000.00. The town's match would be 20%. The project would be completed in the summer of 2024 if the town is awarded the grant funds.
8. Marie Kelly-Whitney is talking to the residents who have been leaving their trash bins in the road right-of-way.

RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika attended the recent Alliance meeting. The permanent household hazardous waste facility is on tract and scheduled to open in June. They are working on flyers for each town and a link for the website.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine advised that the automatic external defibrillators training session is scheduled for Monday, April 10, 2023 from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the firehouse for the Selectboard members, highway crew and town office. He also invited the principal and secretary to attend. Luke McKay and Sally Bohl were also interested in participating.

FIRE ENGINE LOAN

Paul Ethier has been looking into the USDA Rural Development grant program. He found loans for 3.7% interest and they have up to three years to spend the money if they are approved. Mike Denault felt the longer the town waits, the more expensive everything will be, and interest rates are not going down. MOTION by Mike Denault to have the Fire Department pursue the loan. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DESIGNATION OF DVFIBER REPRESENTATIVE

Bob Briggs has been the town representative and Bill Levine has been the first alternate representative. Nancy Bushika suggested that the board advertise to see if anyone else is interested in serving as representative. Anyone interested should contact a Selectboard member or the town office. Bill Levine stated that both he and Bob Briggs are interested.

CEMETERY POSITION

The Selectboard received one letter of interest from Sheila Lawrence.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Sheila Lawrence to serve as Cemetery Commissioner until the next election. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Aaron Malachuk advised that the Planning Commission interviewed two candidates and unanimously voted to recommend Deb Burchard to serve as Zoning Administrator.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Deb Burchard to serve as Zoning Administrator for the remainder of the current term. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. At this time the Zoning Administrator can participate and vote on the Planning Commission, but there is a bill in the legislature which would separate the two positions and not allow a Zoning Administrator to be a voting member of the Planning Commission. Nancy Bushika asked Deb Burchard to let the board know if the bill is passed.

LAW ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Pam Tworig noted the differences between the two contracts and a few new clauses that have been added. The board went back and forth as to whether they agreed with the new clauses or not. Kurt Gamari felt the whole contract is unsustainable. The board requested a contract through the end of 2023 but Sheriff Gulley said no, he would only provide a one year contract, which at this point would go through April or May of 2024. The board considered striking out the paragraphs that were not agreeable. Either party can terminate the contract with one month's notice, but Kurt Gamari felt that would not be good for the relationship. He would like to see the sheriff's reports. He asked if the board even wanted law enforcement in town. They discussed separating the law enforcement from the budget for next year's warrant and then the people could decide. Pam Tworig noted that the clause allowing the sheriff to take a 5% administrative fee was in the contract, even though he said he was not going to take it. Pam Tworig felt voters at town meeting expressed a desire to have police presence in town. Kurt Gamari said he got a different impression. He saw that the townspeople voted down the extra \$40,000.00 warrant article for law enforcement. They might have reduced the general budget if they realized it also included \$40,000.00 for law enforcement. Victoria Jefferies stated that she likes to see a police car in town. Kurt Gamari said that was an expensive visual aesthetic. In past years when the town had no police presence, there was no change in the amount of crime in town. Dave Tatro felt it gives the public a false sense of security because if there is a real crime, the sheriff won't respond on his own; it will be the state police who respond. Mike Denault said the state troopers have advised that if there was no sheriff in town, they would patrol here more often. Mike Denault has talked with the Readsboro Selectboard about sharing patrol time but it is not something they can do this year. Pam Tworig asked the board about doing nothing, that the town is not ready to enter into a contract with the sheriff's department. Then the Selectboard could see if the state troopers will patrol. Mike Denault agreed that we don't have adequate law enforcement in the town because of the cost. Bill Levine noted that the warrant articles used to come first and Janet Gardner would keep a running total of all that was passed so when voters passed the final budget, they knew how much money it would cost them in taxes. Pam Tworig struggled, feeling a desire to listen to and follow the direction of the voters, yet realizing it was a horrible waste of money.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to tell the sheriff that the Town of Stamford is not ready to enter into a contract with the Sheriff's Department at this time. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DOG ORDINANCE

The board continued to review the Dog Ordinance and made several additions and changes. They decided to go along with the additional \$10.00 state-allowed fee to register dogs with the town. They plan to have it take effect beginning in January 2024.

DOG KENNEL

Luke McKay has priced several different styles. He found one for \$25,000.00 that is 12' x 16', has heat, cooling and washable walls. It has stalls to hold two dogs and an enclosed outdoor area. The kennel is portable. He reiterated that the kennel the town has now is not sufficient. They discussed the decision to have the kennel located at the Dog Officer's home and the problems that the town had when the board decided to move it from the highway garage to his house. Mike Denault feels the fees should be

passed onto the dog owners. Pam Tworig noted that the people who don't take care of their dogs are the same people who won't spend a lot of money on them. The board increased the \$3.00 per day kennel fee created in 2019 to \$25.00 per day. The order time for this kennel is 4-6 months. Mike Denault felt if the kennel we have is not adequate and not safe for dogs during the winter, then we don't have a choice.

MOTION by Mike Denault to give permission to Luke McKay to buy the kennel for up to \$25,000.00. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOWING BID

The lawn mowing site review is set for April 12, 2023. Nancy Bushika and Kurt Gamari will attend.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to approve the uniform municipal excess weight permit applications from: Beacon Sales Acquisition, Casella Construction, Camp Precast Concrete Products, Inc., Consolidated Communications, and West Oil Company, Inc. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fees and insurance information were received from the applicants.

WEBINARS

Various webinars for the Selectboard and town office were reviewed.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 9:30 p.m.

Nancy L. Bushika
Clerk pro tempora

/las

REMINDERS

1. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed by April 1st of each year. State law requires a valid rabies vaccination certificate to be filed with the Town Clerk's office. Licensing your dog is very easy. Rabies certificates can be faxed to the town office at 802-694-1636 or emailed to the town office at townclerk@stamfordvt.net. Once the current rabies certificate is on file, license renewals can be handled in person, by mailing a check, by utilizing the mail slot in the back wall of the town office or by telephone with a credit card. License fees are \$9.00 for each spayed/neutered dog or \$13.00 for each intact dog. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Stamford.
2. 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.
3. Anyone interested in being appointed as a town representative on the DV Fiber Board should send a letter of interest to the Selectboard by the next meeting.