

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 7, 2022
(UNAPPROVED)

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

Visitors: Megan Bouchard, Robert Bouchard, Carolyn Brooks, Denise Bruder, Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Stephen Greene, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Kurt Gamari, Maura Hawkins, Victoria Jefferies, Luke McKay, Michael Milazzo, Thomas Nazzewski, Beth Phelps, Bruce Richardson, Debra Righi, James Righi, James Senecal, E-Jay Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Trevor Tatro, Allen Whitney, Damien Wimpenny, and Natalie Yorke.

Martina Barnes and Colin Fisher, Green Mountain National Forest.

Travis Buttle, Fish & Wildlife Department.

Joel Howard, Bennington County Sheriff's Department.

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. The Green Up Day discussion was moved to the top of the agenda.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Maura Hawkins announced that Green Up Day will be held on Saturday, May 7, 2022 from 8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Susan Flash is the new Green Up Day Coordinator.
2. Martina Barnes from the National Forest advised that they have chosen to shut down the Sucker Pond Trail, #301, indefinitely. She said the first reason is that the trail needs to be connected to other trail networks, so keeping it open violates their forest plan. She said the Forest Service is not entertaining any other routes to the existing trail system. Their second reason is the extensive damage to forest resources that has occurred. They have a long-term vision to rehabilitate the area up to acceptable standards. Brandon Field asked if the entire project hinges on needing that one connector road and she agreed. Pam Tworig stated that the trailhead is not allowed in that section. Martina Barnes agreed that if the town is adamantly opposed to a certain aspect of the South of Route 9 project, such as the parking area, that it doesn't have to be implemented. Pam Tworig noted that Bruce Richardson spent an enormous amount of time locating a connector trail that allows the Sucker Pond trail to move forward without needing a section of town road. Jess Tatro asked if the parking lot was off the table, if that would be enough to go forward. Martina Barnes indicated that the South of Route 9 project has been a multi-year project. Pam Tworig stated that the entire town's taxes will go up because of the additional traffic, and that per the Forest's own documents, Mill Road and County Road will be the access point for this trail. This is already not a good road; it's not like the Heartwellville parking lot which is just off the Main Road. Rob Bouchard stated that the town doesn't maintain this section of County Road. Brandon Field felt there would be no more traffic than what is already there now. Natalie Yorke said this area is labeled diverse back country, according to the Forest Service, and that motorized vehicles are not allowed in diverse back country on the west side of Route 100. Bruce Richardson asked what the Forest Service will do to enforce the trail closure. Colin Fisher said they would use a multi-pronged approach of signage, physical barriers, perhaps gates, and would rely on the good faith response of the people. Mike Denault stated that the National Forest can pull out, and yet the town is expected to make a 3 to 5, or up to 10 year commitment. Travis Buttle suggested the board could allow

ATV use on Risky Ranch Road, Klondike Road and the portion of County Road to Pownal on a trial basis. Pam Tworig acknowledged that no one wants to stop our local people, but townspeople are being driven crazy at all hours of the day and night by ATV riders. It is the ATV tourism that she wants to avoid. When people came up with an alternative that kept the trails on the outer edge of Stamford and off of town roads, she thought it was good. The 5 to 10 year commitment is from the grant stipulation which would provide funding. Mike Denault asked if the town could negotiate the terms. Dave Tatro suggested if the one-quarter mile of County Road from Risky Ranch Road to Pownal was downgraded from a Class 4 road to a trail, there would be no cost to the town for maintenance or upkeep and the town would retain its right-of-way. Mike Denault is not ready to vote since there are still many unanswered questions. Jessica Tatro acknowledged that the board isn't ready to make a decision, but provided a letter of support for the board's review so they could see the wording. She also provided a draft ATV Ordinance that only applied to the one-quarter mile of County Road. The ATV Club is in the process of negotiating a contract with the game warden and Bennington Sheriff. Jess Tatro indicated that the club is willing to work with the town to discuss and assist with the ordinance. Mike Milazzo expressed his frustration that this discussion has been going on for nine months.

MINUTES

Pam Tworig clarified the section under Summer Mowing that the contractor she suggested is just someone she knows, good, bad or indifferent.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 17, 2022 as written.

SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #11 \$ 8,882.72 payroll
- WARRANT #12 \$30,477.41 accounts payable
- WARRANT #13 \$ 6,996.58 payroll
- WARRANT #14 \$19,365.41 accounts payable

LINCOLN ROAD CULVERT PROJECT

1. Pam Tworig reviewed the Request for Proposal and asked several questions. Although she had concerns, she did not want to jeopardize the town's ability to obtain bids.

MOTION by Mike Denault to increase the minimum insurance requirement from \$1 million to \$3 million.

SECONDED by Pamela Tworig. 4 in favor, 1 abstained (Nancy Bushika). Motion APPROVED.

2. Nancy Bushika asked if a restoration clause should be included in the temporary easement deed. Dave Tatro agreed that the property will be left in a better condition, but felt specific terms could be negotiated by the property owners. The board agreed to send the draft to the property owner for review.

3. The application for a stream alteration general permit was reviewed by the board.

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the stream alteration general permit. SECONDED by Pamela Tworig.

All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The board reviewed the Municipal Roads General Permit, Annual Report.

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the Municipal Roads General Permit, Annual Report. SECONDED by Pamela Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Deb Burchard asked about the permit and the board explained the permit and difficulties of dealing with the state.

2. Dave Tatro will begin grading the roads next week.

RECYCLING

1. The free home hazardous waste day will be held on May 7, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Bennington. Nancy Bushika stated that there will be a local HHW Day at the AOT garage in Readsboro on July 23, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2. There is one hauler who has not registered with the town. Nancy Bushika has tried repeatedly to contact him. A representative from the Alliance has also tried. This hauler is not in compliance with the town's ordinance. The board agreed to issue a ticket through the Vermont Judicial Bureau.

3. The school janitor retired in early March. When the school dumpsters were removed, the town began paying the janitor to bring the school trash to the recycling center. The new custodian does not have a pickup and is not interested in bringing up the trash. Carol Fachini has offered to fill the position.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to accept Carol Fachini's offer to bring the school trash to the recycling center under the same terms as the prior janitor. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL BOARD

Nancy Bushika felt the boards made some progress and each group has its own homework.

DEERFIELD VALLEY FIBER COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Bob Briggs as the DVFiber town representative and Bill Levine as the alternate. SECONDED by Pamela Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ARPA FUNDS

MOTION by Pam Tworig to take the standard allowance for revenue loss approach. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine and Sheila Lawrence will be attending the emergency management courses offered by the state in May. It is a two-day, in-person seminar which also has limited online participation.

2. Bill Levine indicated that the CUD is studying how to make high-speed internet available to every home.

3. Stewart Johnson has been appointed to the regional emergency management committee as the voting member representing the Stamford Fire Department.

BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

1. Pam Tworig asked Lt. Joel Howard several questions about the contract and enforcement of the town's ordinances. They discussed a report of the different types of calls the sheriff has responded to.

MOTION by Brandon Field to accept and sign the contract. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Lt. Howard stated that his office was just made aware of a deceased dog found on the state highway in town and is conducting an investigation.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit applications from Beacon Sales Acquisition, Eilers Bros. Trucking & Excavating, Suburban Propane, West Oil Company, Inc., Camp Precast Concrete Products, Inc., and R.K. Miles, Inc. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fees and insurance information were received from each applicant.

OFFER TO PURCHASE TOWN PROPERTY

1. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer made by Eric and Denise Bruder to purchase Lot 336 in Alpenwald in the amount of \$500.00. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. The Selectboard has sold all the lots the town has acquired except for the Stamford portion of Lot 218 and the 1.5 acre portion of the lot on Main Road.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The board discussed the duties of the Conservation Commission which has not met in a long time. Kurt Gamari noted that it is an advisory board to the Selectboard and only meets if an issue comes up. He suggested at some point the Selectboard may want the Conservation Commission to look into invasive species along the roadways. The board received a letter of interest from Jessica Tatro to join the Conservation Commission.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Jessica Tatro to the Conservation Commission to fill the four-year term expiring in 2024. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD TRAINING SESSIONS

Nancy Bushika, Mike Denault and Pam Tworig attended the training sessions offered by The Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT). Pam Tworig felt they were important. Nancy Bushika acknowledged that they learned that Selectboard meetings are in the public but not for or of the public. Agendas only need to be posted 48 hours before meetings and they should not discuss items not on the agenda unless the matter cannot wait until the next meeting. Pam Tworig said she would like to start reviewing policies. Nancy Bushika provided the board with a list of the town's policies and ordinances. They agreed that reviewing the current Insurance Policy and discussing a new policy for Selectboard meetings should be first. Victoria Jefferies offered to give her input on insurance requirements.

ROADSIDE TREES

Bruce Richardson, as Tree Warden, suggested the town take a look at the condition of some of the roadside trees on East Road. He is concerned and would like to work with Dave Tatro. The board agreed.

TOWN WEBSITE

The board received a price increase sheet from the web designer, but he will hold the price for one year if we prepay. The board agreed to save money and prepay for one year.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

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REMINDERS

1. 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.
2. Please visit the town's new official website: www.stamfordvt.net for town information and updates.