

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECT BOARD MEETING**

May 1, 2025

(UNAPPROVED)

6:00 p.m.

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

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Jedidiah Gramlin, Peter Greenbush, William Levine, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Natalie O'Neil, Debra Righi, James Righi, and James Stimpson.
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. The agenda was amended to discuss a joint Select Board/School Board meeting. Jed Gramlin recorded the meeting for his YouTube.

GARAGE DOOR BIDS

The Select Board received one bid from North Country Overhead Door. The bid included a commercial door opener and remote with three different insulation options. To replace the three overhead doors with an R-Value of 9.1 was \$18,321.00, replacement with an R-Value of 16.2 was \$19,001.00 and an R-Value of 18.4 was \$19,975.00. Disposal of the old equipment will be an additional cost, and the side man entry door was not included. The board discussed hiring another contractor to take care of the small door or having Dave Tatro do it. There is enough grant funding to cover the best insulation value and there is no town match.

MOTION by Mike Denault to let Dave Tatro choose the best option as long as it falls within the grant parameters. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. A certificate of insurance will be requested.

GREEN UP DAY

Marta Miller reminded everyone that Green Up Day is this Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. It will be cancelled if it is too rainy. In the event it is cancelled, green trash bags can be obtained at the town office and the transfer station will accept them the following week without charge.

SECOND ANNUAL RESILIENCY FAIR

The Second Annual Resiliency Fair will be Saturday, May 10, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please plan to attend this community event as there will be speakers, a meal, vendors, and live music.

STATE HIGHWAY WORK

John Dunn noted that the state has been cleaning out the ditches along the Main Road.

TELEPHONE POLE REPLACEMENT

Jim Stimpson asked about the posts along the roads which are part of the electric company's new pole system. The electric company will need easements for pole placement on private property outside of any existing right-of-way. The town has not been contacted about the pole replacement project.

INFORMATIONAL EMAILS

Deb Burchard asked to address the emails that were sent to the town boards. She feels they are very inflammatory and include inaccurate information. She feels all emails should be filtered through the Select Board before being disseminated. Peter Greenbush supported her and stated that the town office is too busy.

MINUTES

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 17, 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 #15 \$10,355.33 payroll

WARRANT #16 \$35,992.13 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro has been grading the gravel roads. He will coordinate the road sweeping with the East Road paving project.
2. Dave Tatro said the culvert needed for the Sportsmen Road project will cost \$5,500.00 and his culvert budget amount is only 4,000.00. Jim Henderson from the Bennington County Regional Commission met with him and reviewed various projects for the Grants-in-Aid program. He identified several undersized culverts on Sportsmen Road and thought the two projects could be done back to back.
3. Bill Levine suggested the board remember this funding need at budget time. The board discussed hiring a third highway laborer. Dave Tatro urged the board to spend money on paving additional roads to reduce maintenance instead of hiring.

PACIF INSURANCE VISIT

Nancy Bushika asked if Dave Tatro had installed the emergency lights and eye wash kit that were recommended at last year's PACIF safety visit. Dave Tatro will do that along with picking another item of the list so the town can show compliance.

RECYCLING

The summer recycling hours have started, on Wednesday afternoon from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

CODE OF ETHICS INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT ORDINANCE

MOTION by John Dunn to approve the Code of Ethics Investigation and Enforcement Ordinance as written. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The ordinance will be signed at the next meeting and the ordinance adoption process will begin.

JOB DESCRIPTION

One of the Road Commissioner duties was inadvertently left out of the job description. The corrected job description was re-signed.

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY APPROPRIATIONS POLICY

The Select Board signed the Social Service Agency Appropriations Policy that was accepted at the last meeting.

EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK

The board agreed to form a committee to work on the updates and will present the changes to the board when completed.

PROPOSED BYLAW REVISION

1. The Select Board has scheduled a public hearing for the Bylaw revision on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 6 p.m.
2. Bill Levine stated that he has received School Board approval to install the recently made town sign on the side of the school building. He asked to have it brought down to the school so that contractors could see and install it. Deb Burchard said that no permit was needed to put the sign on the side of the building.

CHANGES TO THE FORMER CHURCH BUILDING

Doug Wright has been approached by people in town and he asked Deb Burchard if a permit had been filed for a change of use. She said no because the owner was a 501(c)(3) corporation. Doug Wright felt their tax status with the government has no bearing on following the town By-laws and permitting. He also noted the various addresses used by the owner. He felt that it was a pious organization and although it may still be charitable, it is not pious, and feels there is a change as it is not being used as a church. Deb Burchard said she has done a lot of research and made her decision and there is nothing in the town Bylaws regarding a change of use. Deb Burchard said they are offering yoga which is a spiritual meditation and the goals of the owner are mind, body and health, which is similar to the church. Jed Gramlin said the State of Vermont considers churches private property and it still private property. The classes are free, except for the instructor's fees. Nancy Bushika asked if the town should revise the Bylaws and Deb Burchard agreed that there are a lot of things in the By-laws that need to be changed. Jim Stimpson said he has looked at the deeds and what they are doing as a licensed farm and learning center is very similar to the church's deed. Mike Denault confirmed that no one went to the Zoning Administrator asking if they needed a permit except townspeople asking questions. He feels the garage removal was a renovation, not a demolition. He asked if it is the town's duty to look into permits from the state, and was told no, it is the owner's and the contractor's responsibility to obtain the proper permits. Jim Stimpson feels the demolition of the garage was perfectly legal to do and the trash hauler would not take away the material unless permits were obtained. Deb Burchard said their contractor is well aware of the process for lead paint and asbestos and she believes everything was handled properly. Mike Denault confirmed that if the owner builds a new building or something that would require a permit, that one would be obtained. Doug Wright feels that religion is organized which is not the same as spiritual well-being. He asked about K's Creamery and Deb Burchard responded that she has state permits for sanitation and food handling. There is no permit needed from the town. Doug Wright was under the impression that they were not paying property taxes but that was quickly clarified that they are paying property taxes on their properties. Kurt Gamari was upset that people in this town are negative and just want to shut everything down. Deb Burchard suggested the Select Board consider adopting an ordinance for migratory food trucks.

ALL BOARDS MEETING

Mike Denault would like to hold an All Boards meeting with the chairs of all the boards. He feels that there have been many complaints about meetings and if there are people appointed to these positions that are creating chaos and are acting out of line, the Select Board needs to put a stop to it. Nancy Bushika will set it up. She would like to share the Open Meeting Law changes with the boards. Peter Greenbush said the Planning Commission has made some changes that have improved their meetings.

JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL BOARD

Nancy Bushika will set up a joint meeting.

ELECTION WEBINAR

Lori Shepard advised that the state is moving to a new election software system and she and Casey Potvin have attended the first of several mandatory webinars. Nancy Bushika suggested that she close the office for the webinars.

SOLAR ARRAY

Jim Stimpson stated that he is discussing with the Planning Commission the installation of a large solar array to benefit the town and public.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of a pending or probable civil litigation would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session for a pending or probable civil litigation pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F). SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Select Board entered executive session at 7:40 p.m. Lori Shepard was invited to participate.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to exit executive session. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:00 p.m.

Action: MOTION by Mike Denault to contact the attorney to set up a meeting. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to adjourn. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:31 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

/las

REMINDERS

1. There will be an informational meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. to provide information on Article I of the School District Warning.
2. Voting will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 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.
3. Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. Please call the town office at 694-1361.
4. Townspeople should sign up with the state's free communications network, VT-Alert. You can sign up at 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.
5. Anyone interested in applying for the transfer station substitute position should submit a letter of interest to the Select Board.
6. Anyone interested in joining the town highway crew should fill out an application or get in touch with a Select Board member.
7. The dog license due date was April 1, 2025. Please come in as soon as possible to license your dog. The new dog license fees for 2025 are \$18.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$24.00 for real/intact dogs.
8. 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.