

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
May 18, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Pamela Tworig, Kurt Gamari, Michael G. Denault, and Marie Kelly-Whitney.

Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Laura Champagne, Marta Miller, Tom Nazzewski, Deborah Righi, and James Righi.

Luke McKay, Dog Officer.

William Levine, Emergency Management Director.

Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Additional correspondence was added to the agenda. There were no changes to the order.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Laura Champagne said she was speaking on behalf of the Woodford Snobusters and the Bennington County Snowmobile Club and requested approval from the Selectboard to ride snowmobiles only on the secondary trail (#264 and #265), Stamford Pond Road, to gain access to the VAST corridor trails. She said snowmobiles have always used the road to access the VAST trail system but they would like to do some trail maintenance, repair bridges and clean ditches. She also showed the board a picture of a sign at the entrance of Stamford Pond Road against ATV, snowmobile, etc. travel. The board would like to add the topic to the next agenda. They asked for information from the National Forest since she was speaking for them and some maps of the trail.

MINUTES

MOTION by Pam Tworig to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 4, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #19 \$ 7,287.60 payroll

WARRANT #20 \$17,491.66 accounts payable

FINANCIAL

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

ROAD CONDITIONS

Dave Tatro was not present and left the following report with Nancy Bushika:

1. Dave Tatro has graded the Class 3 roads and is beginning maintenance on the Class 4 roads.
2. The highway department is getting the equipment ready for summer mowing.
3. The town received the grant for ditching and gravel on portions of Jepson Road and Boulger Road.

RECYCLING

1. Buzz Wheeler is working with Carol Fachini for the Wednesday summer hours.
2. Marie Kelly-Whitney asked if she needed permission to add a picture of the transfer station to the town website. The board thought that would be fine.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine has not been able to contact the temporary coordinator of the Vermont Alert System to set up a formal organization for the town to have authorization and passwords to utilize the system.

FIRE TRUCK

1. Bill Levine spoke with MountainOne Bank about a loan to purchase the fire truck. The interest rate they quoted him was 7%. This confirms that a loan through the USDA Rural Development grant program for 3.7% might be worth the complicated application process. Paul Ethier has hired grant writers in the past and will consider hiring an application writer.
2. Nancy Bushika attended the firetruck tour on Monday night. Paul Ethier gave a wonderful explanation of the current trucks, equipment, and how it is stored and used. She was very impressed.

DOGS

1. The board reviewed the draft of the Guidelines to Bring Delinquent Dog Owners into Compliance and discussed the process with Luke McKay, the Dog Officer.
MOTION by Pam Tworig to approve the Guidelines to Bring Delinquent Dog Owners into Compliance as presented. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. Pam Tworig will make a sign for the transfer station to remind people to license their dogs and Marie Kelly-Whitney offered to add something to the town website.
3. Luke McKay said the dog kennel is finished and will be delivered next week. It will have two stalls and a propane heater. It is insulated and has venting and windows. The board discussed permitting and the \$15.00 notice of permit would be appropriate since the dog kennel is less than 300 square feet. Pam Tworig asked about the neighbors. There were problems with the kennel being down at the highway garage, but a second fence could have been installed to prevent people from feeding or touching the dogs. Luke McKay is not compensated for the electricity used by the kennel but it is a very small amount. Carolyn Brooks felt the Planning Commission should discuss dog kennels at their next meeting.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE

The treasurer provided two proposals. One from Adams Community Bank for 4.75% and one from Berkshire Bank for 5.95%. Last year's loan rate was 2.00% for a \$400,000.00 loan with Adams Community Bank.
MOTION by Mike Denault to borrow money in anticipation of taxes and approve the application for a loan of \$400,000.00 at the rate of 4.75% per annum interest with Adams Community Bank to be paid in full in November when taxes are due. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

CAPITALIZATION POLICY

The board reviewed the policy and felt the numbers were outdated. They questioned if this was adopted as a suggestion by the auditors. The auditors will be contacted to ask what the purpose of the policy is, why it is important to have, and what parts should be updated.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

MOTION by Mike Denault to readopt the Conflict of Interest Policy as written. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

TOWN WEBSITE

Marie Kelly-Whitney advised that she has been given access to update the town website and is getting acclimated. She is looking into the counter to track how many people view the website.

MUNICIPAL AUDIT

1. The Vermont Treasurer's Office on behalf of the Vermont Municipal Retirement System and the Vermont State Teachers' Retirement System has chosen Stamford as part of their audit process. They have hired a firm to conduct the audit who will be in touch with the town to exam our data.
2. The town's insurance company, the Vermont League of Cities & Towns, will be performing a structures audit to ensure that the building values align with the coverage values. One of their consultants will contact the town.

FLAG CEREMONY

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has invited a designee of Stamford to their annual Flag Day Ceremony on June 11, 2023 in Bennington, Vermont. Board members will let the town office know if they plan to attend.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

1. Mike Denault spoke with Omar Smith from Readsboro. They budgeted less money than Stamford for law enforcement. They have not contracted with the sheriff for a couple years now but will occasionally call the sheriff to patrol if they are having a big event. The towns together will not meet the threshold to receive the reduced rate, but maybe could work together to request some evening or weekend hours. Mike Denault invited him to tonight's meeting and will reach out to invite him to a future meeting. He said Luke McKay should contact the state troopers if he needs assistance with a dog problem. He noted that the state police have been here at least three times in the past two weeks and the game warden has been in town at least two times. That is a great deterrent. Mike Denault suggested the board try this for a year and they might be surprised that it's not so bad.
2. Residents should call 911 for any type of emergency. If they have a non-emergency item to report, people should call the state trooper barracks.

SPEED SIGN

Pam Tworig would like the town to purchase the solar-powered radar sign. Mike Denault will contact the Vermont Agency of Transportation to see if they will allow the town to set up a radar sign in their right-of-way on Main Road. Kurt Gamari supported the speed sign and said it would bring the town closer to a priority goal in our Town Plan of slowing down traffic in the center of town.

MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

There has been no response from the insurance carrier concerning the Selectboard's demand for full reimbursement of the guardrail replacement cost. The town clerk will follow up.

JOINT SELECTBOARD/SCHOOLBOARD MEETING

Pam Tworig and Kurt Gamari attended the recent Schoolboard meeting. Kurt Gamari asked about the grounds maintenance but did not get any information. The board agreed that the prior custodian went above and beyond, and the town will probably not find those qualities and dedication in the next custodian. The board discussed past joint meetings with the School Directors and their frustration that nothing is ever resolved. The Selectboard would like to discuss concerns such as lawn care, building maintenance, snow removal, and infrastructure projects. Nancy Bushika will contact Erika Bailey to schedule a joint meeting with the School Directors.

SEED SAVERS GROUP

Nancy Bushika asked if there was any activity with the Seed Savers Gardens at the tennis court. She was informed that the 7th and 8th graders were working with Steve Greene at the tennis courts recently.

EXTENSION TO LODGE THE 2023 GRAND LIST

Nancy Bushika advised that NEMRC, the town's assessor, would like the Selectboard to approve an extension of time to file the abstract of the 2023 grand list. The town is ready, but there is a problem at the state level and we cannot download the current use files that we need to complete the grand list. This extension will give us some breathing room and the assessor is hopeful that the state will get their computer software in order and we will not need the extension. Nancy Bushika only remembers once, maybe twice, that the town has ever needed to file an extension.

MOTION by Marie Kelly-Whitney approve and sign the form to request an extension of time to lodge the 2023 grand list. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Marie Kelly-Whitney
Clerk

/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.