

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
September 15, 2022
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Michael G. Denault, and Pamela Tworig.
Visitors: John Bergeron, Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Theresa Denault, Diane Dupuis, Kurt Gamari, Mark Lawrence, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Sheila Pecor, Beth Phelps, Daniel Potvin, Deborah Righi, James Righi, E-Jay Tatro, Candace Voghel, Damien Wimpenny, and Natalie Yorke.
Luke McKay, Dog Officer.
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 to the agenda or changes to its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Mark Lawrence commented on the local commercial tax which was discussed at a prior meeting. He feels there are not very many businesses that it would affect, but it would definitely impact his. He said no one else in town with similar buildings and acreage pays as high a tax as he does. He also pays restaurant taxes to the state and a liquor tax. He pays \$17,000.00 in property taxes yet Forest Park, a similarly sized golf course in Adams, MA, only pays \$4,500.00. He also pays more taxes than the Taconic Golf Course. Pam Tworig said no one wants to hurt his business, but the board was discussing other ways to bring in revenue and felt a 1% tax passed onto the customer wouldn't have a big impact. Nancy Bushika suggested he speak to the town's assessor about his property values. Dan Potvin was upset by the commercial tax idea since the Planning Commission is trying to encourage local business. Natalie Yorke noted that the discussion began with the local option tax which the town learned it was not eligible to assess.
2. Mark Lawrence also felt that the Selectboard is a five member board, not a four member board, and another person got almost half of the votes and that should be considered.
3. John Bergeron said he has heard that there have been complaints about shooting at the Stamford Sportsmen's Club. The Selectboard has not received any complaints. John Bergeron noted that hunting season is coming so some extra shooting is expected. They bought some signs showing their hours and will do their best to be accommodating.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of September 1, 2022 as written.
SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:
WARRANT #35 \$ 8,458.31 payroll
WARRANT #36 \$20,209.47 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

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

ROAD CONDITIONS

Dave Tatro was not present but left word that the Lincoln Road project is progressing well, although slowly. The road crew will be starting the Jepson Road culvert upgrade under the Municipal Grants-in-Aid project.

RECYCLING

1. Many people are putting batteries in the demolition bin which is dangerous. Nancy Bushika advised that the state has a battery pilot program. They provide empty boxes to fill with used batteries and when it's full, you send it back to the state. The board discussed not accepting batteries any longer. Mark Lawrence said he gets fined every year for having too many batteries on his property because of the batteries in the golf carts. He also has to pay a fine of \$2,500.00 for storm water runoff which no one else in town is probably charged. Mike Denault would like to find out the right way to dispose of batteries before making a decision.
2. Mike Denault acknowledged that the proposed transfer station access card price increase seems excessive, but noted that the fees haven't gone up in a long time. Nancy Bushika stated that she knows someone who pays \$45.00/month for a dumpster.
3. Nancy Bushika attended the quarterly Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance meeting. The alliance has approved MS&K for the permanent household hazardous waste facility in Bennington. It should be open three days/week.
4. The Alliance's Outreach Coordinator has been contacting businesses to increase composting awareness. The Outreach Coordinator provided a flyer saying that the state will ban the sale of screw-in fluorescent lightbulbs beginning February 2023 and will ban the four foot tubes in January 2024. The Alliance requested that towns post the flyer on their websites. The board agreed. The Alliance has several backyard composting bins for sale at a reduced price.
5. In November the Alliance is planning a visit to Rutland to see where they separate the single stream recycling if the Selectboard members or recycling monitors are interested.

DEERFIELD VALLEY FIBER COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

Bill Levine reported that the CUD has replaced many telephone poles in town. They are also surveying telephone poles. Next month they will begin to hang the fiber cable on the poles.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine has set this Saturday to review the contents of the Red Cross emergency trailer at the firehouse. He has contacted everyone who wanted to participate and extends an open invitation to anyone else who is interested.

SELECTBOARD VACANCY

Nancy Bushika announced that the town has four highly-qualified candidates who have submitted letters of interest to the Selectboard: Debra Burchard, Kurt Gamari, Dan Potvin and Dave Saldo. They have all previously served on the Selectboard and currently are on the Planning Commission. She said it is a very hard decision, but ultimately is the Selectboard's decision. She asked for a motion to leave the position open until the March election.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to leave the position open until the March election. **SECONDED** by Nancy Bushika.

Mike Denault said he has received 13 emails. They believe the Selectboard should be a five member board. Mike Denault noted that at the last meeting the board did not agree during some of the discussions. Nancy Bushika stated that she has also received emails requesting that the board fill the position and she has been struggling with this decision since July. She stated if the board feels an appointment should be made because of the budget season, the Finance Committee is a great resource

and can help with the budget. Mike Denault agrees that they are an excellent guide but they don't have voting power so they can't help. Carol Fachini feels that Dan Potvin obtained almost half of the votes in the last election and that is reason enough to appoint him until March when the voters can decide. Mike Denault said the state structured boards as odd numbers because that's what works. Pam Tworig doesn't foresee a lot of disagreements over the budget and noted that she served on the Finance Committee last year. Sheila Pecor felt the town voted to have the Selectboard become a five member board and they have always appointed someone except for one time. She feels the person who received half the votes deserves to be appointed. E-Jay Tatro agreed. The board acknowledged that they have not received any emails or letters in support of remaining a four person board until March. Nancy Bushika called for a vote on Pam Tworig's motion to leave the position open until the March election. 1 in favor (Pam Tworig), 3 opposed. Motion FAILS.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Dan Potvin starting next meeting to be sworn in, to fill the vacancy left by Brandon Field. SECONDED by Carol Fachini.

Mike Denault said he is very proud of this town that four people have come forward. He feels the board needs to take out their personal feelings and look at Dan Potvin's resume. He is a business man, he's good at finances and brings a lot to the table. Although others have submitted letters now and are great candidates, they did not run in the election last year. Since Dan Potvin did run in the election, he deserves to be appointed. Marta Miller said Dan Potvin was a long standing incumbent that was unseated by slightly more than half the votes which shows the town is looking for something different. Natalie Yorke thought the board should consider that some of the candidates are regularly attending other meetings are very involved in town. Kurt Gamari said when he offered his name, it was not in opposition to Dan Potvin but only to help the town. He is not against Dan Potvin and recognized that he represents half the voters in town.

Nancy Bushika ended the discussion and called for a vote on Mike Denault's motion to appoint Dan Potvin starting next meeting to be sworn in, to fill the vacancy left by Brandon Field. 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Pam Tworig). Motion APPROVED.

Dan Potvin was appointed until March. There will be one year remaining on a three year term.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to appoint Dan Potvin tonight, for the remainder of tonight's meeting.

SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. Dan Potvin took the oath.

Mike Denault thanked everyone for putting their names in. He is very proud of the town.

WEBSITE POLICY

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the Website Policy as written. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOWING CONTRACT

1. Pam Tworig spoke to the school concerning their request to use an organic weed killer on the playground. Pam Tworig spoke with the principal. Weeds are growing through the cracks in the blacktop section on the south side where the painted America map is. Mike Denault asked if the mowing contract should be amended to take care of all vegetation, whether on the lawn or the blacktop. Pam Tworig is concerned that the spraying of any pesticide on a school playground is not good. The growth can be weed wacked. Mike Denault felt the board should take no action at this point.
2. The board reviewed and revised the terms of the mowing bid for next year to indicate there will be no spraying or application of pesticides or any substances allowed. They also discussed the liability insurance section and added proof of workers' compensation is required or contractor must provide signed non-employee work agreements.
3. Nancy Bushika noted that the custodian power-washed the building causing a lot of water in the Selectboard room and assessor's area. Pam Tworig felt they were trying to clean and improve the look of the building. The power washer could remove wood along with the paint. Mike Denault felt the

board should discuss this and the coordination of building maintenance at the next joint meeting with the School Board. It was decided that Lori Shepard would contact the mowing company to say that he should not spray any chemicals on the grounds and let the principal know as well, and suggest emails would be preferable in the future.

MUNICIPAL BUDGETING WEBINAR

The Vermont League of Cities and towns will hold a Municipal Budgeting and Capitol Planning webinar on September 22, 2022 at 9 a.m. if anyone is interested.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Luke McKay advised that he has been hearing from dog owners concerning the tickets that were issued. One dog has passed away and should be removed from the list.
2. Kurt Gamari mentioned the windmill discussion at the last meeting. He said the Planning Commission adopted an enhanced energy plan which gave the town substantial deference at the table regarding the siting of the windmill. He feels it would be good to review the Chapter 10 Energy Plan they adopted. Dan Potvin suggested the Planning Commission talk to Jim Sullivan from the Bennington County Regional Commission at its meeting on Monday night.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Pam Tworig asked what time the retail cannabis election ended. Someone tried to vote at 5 p.m. and said the doors were locked. Lori Shepard said voting hours ended at 7 p.m. She recalled being near the front window and hearing someone tugging on the front doors. By the time she got outside to catch the person, they were already in their pick up and were driving away. She was unable to flag them down and did not recognize the truck. The school has had trouble in the past with the door mechanism sticking on rare occasions. Lori Shepard spoke with the custodian about the door the next day. It has not happened again, but Lori Shepard will talk to the principal to make sure it is fixed.
2. Pam Tworig and Diane Dupuis complained about three kids on dirt bikes on Jepson Road. They were riding fast and they gave Pam Tworig a hard time when she confronted them. Mike Denault has seen them around. The board discussed putting up signs, but agreed that signs aren't going to help with the speeders or the dirt bikers. Mike Denault offered to contact the Bennington County Sheriff's Department. Diane Dupuis is concerned that someone is going to get hurt. The board discussed the sheriff's contract and amount of patrol hours. It was noted that there may be grant money available. Perhaps they will request a six month contract to see if grant funds are available after the election.
3. Pam Tworig advised that a vehicle travelling on Main Road at the north end of town was passed by four ATVs.
4. Theresa Denault asked to have the Christmas Tree Ceremony added to the next agenda. The board tentatively set the ceremony on Sunday, December 4, 2022 at 5 p.m. Mike Denault asked if the Fire Department would assist this year with traffic control.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to adjourn. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini, Clerk

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REMINDERS

There will be a free Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on September 17, 2022 in Dorset, Vermont from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.