

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
January 21, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin, and Michael G. Denault.

Visitors: Robert Bence, Carolyn Brooks, Laura Champagne, Emma Cotton (VT Digger) Theresa Denault, Cynthia DiBartolo, A. Doe, Susan Flash, Jennifer Ryan, Ross Ryan, Pat Sullivan, Ken Sullivan-Bol, Susan Welsch.

Christopher Lynch, Matrix Design Group.

Tyna Senecal and Heather Tietgens, Finance Committee.

Erika Bailey, Helen Fields, Kelly Holland, and Barbara Malinowski, School Directors.

William Levine, Emergency Management Director.

Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone. She read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Some correspondence was added to the agenda and the order was changed to move discussion of town meeting toward the beginning.

BUDGET AND WARRANT

The Selectboard and Finance Committee reviewed the budget figures. The board thanked the Finance Committee for their input and assistance in completing the budget. The Finance Committee thanked the board for answering their questions.

MOTION by Carol Fachini to accept the budget as presented. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Nancy Bushika reviewed the draft of the warning. The library figures are almost finished. The legislature will allow municipal governing bodies to move the date of town meeting due to the coronavirus. Nancy Bushika, after speaking with Erika Bailey, the Chair of the Schoolboard, suggested moving the town meeting date to Monday evening, April 19, 2021, with the school to begin first at 7 p.m. and the town immediately following. The election of officers will take place on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Both events will be held outside in front of the school, weather permitting, or in the community room in the case of inclement weather.

DEADLINES FOR PETITIONS AND CONSENT OF CANDIDATE FORMS

The decision to move the town meeting date to April 19, 2021 changes the due dates for petitions to have an article appear on the ballot and the Consent for Candidate forms. Petitions must be received in the town office by 5 p.m. on March 4, 2021. The deadline for the Consent for Candidates form for residents wishing to run for an elected position is March 15, 2021.

SELECTBOARD VACANCY

The new law provides that elected officers will continue in their terms until the rescheduled election takes place. The Selectboard decided that with only four or five meetings remaining, they didn't want to appoint someone. Mike Denault felt it would give the appointed person an unfair advantage over the candidates running in the election.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Chris Lynch from the Matrix Design Group presented an offer to the town to run a high-speed fiber network to all homes in Stamford a couple years ago. He stated that things are happening rapidly and his company may not be able to guaranty the offer will be on the table in the spring of 2022. His company was hired to do the pole study for the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District (CUD) and he knows that Stamford has joined the group. He does not feel the CUD has been able to obtain financing and does not believe they will

be able to meet the deadlines they outlined in their business plan and does not feel Stamford will be first on their list to see fiber. Nancy Bushika asked the board how they feel about going out on their own or sticking with the CUD. Bill Levine said the offer from Matrix Design Group would undercut what the CUD wants to do, but feels the town can consider their offer with the understanding that if we respond too late, the offer may not be there.

MINUTES

MOTION by Carol Fachini to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 7, 2021 as written. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #1 \$ 7,843.28 payroll

WARRANT #2 \$24,707.97 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

There has been snow every day this week. Bill Levine advised that Bob Briggs has been very impressed with how Mike Brothers and Dave Tatro have been doing with the downed trees and keeping the roads open. Ken Sullivan-Bol agreed that they do a great job on Lesure Road.

RECYCLING

Helen Fields asked about an email from Michael Batcher from the Bennington County Regional Commission concerning the food scraps quantities collected at the transfer station. The town reports the quantities quarterly with the amounts reported by the hauler.

SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR TOWN REPORT

The board reviewed the draft prepared by Nancy Bushika and felt it was well written.

SELECTBOARD MEETING CHANGE TO 1ST AND 3RD TUESDAYS

The board was asked by a resident to consider moving their meetings to the gym to allow more people to spread out and attend in person. Mike Denault feels it would give the board the ability to provide a safer environment for townspeople to attend meetings. Nancy Bushika noted that the Schoolboard is waiting for more information from the state through the superintendent. The School Directors voted not to allow the Selectboard to use the gym on Tuesday nights because there won't be enough time for disinfecting and there is still staff in the building on Wednesdays. Mike Denault and the Selectboard had a lengthy debate with the Schoolboard concerning the use of the school, the safety of the children, masks, social distancing, the health questionnaire, and other issues.

MOTION by Mike Denault to keep the Selectboard meetings on the first and third Thursdays of the month, but if the meeting becomes overcrowded, then the meeting will be moved to the following Friday night and will be held in the community room. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine stated that the recent snowstorms caused several downed trees and the fire department responded to powerline wires on fire and a few motor vehicle accidents.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. The town received the follow up letter from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns indicating there may be some exclusion clauses in our policy that the town should be aware of.
2. The board received a copy of a letter signed by a handful of residents sent to state officials supporting the Governor and his emergency orders and safety directives.

3. The board received a letter from a citizen who was unhappy with the recent decisions made by the Selectboard.

2020 AUDIT

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the engagement letter for the firm of Love, Cody & Company to conduct the 2020 audit of town accounts. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. This confirmation agrees to provide the auditors with all information necessary to conduct the audit at a cost of \$11,000.00. Last year the cost was \$10,450.00. They will begin the week of January 26, 2021.

TERMINATION OF GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY ORDER PURSUANT TO V.S.A. TITLE 20 SECTION 13(3) AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFETY AND PROTECTION

Mike Denault announced that after further research, Attorney Bucknam agrees with the Attorney General's interpretation of a natural disaster and will not be able to represent the town. Therefore, the Selectboard cannot pursue the termination of the Governor's emergency orders.

PLOWING CLASS 4 ROADS

There has been no response from the potential landowner concerning the road plowing agreement.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

Dan Potvin suggested looking up Francis Boyle and Robert Kennedy Jr. as additional resources for anyone who would like more information before making the decision on whether to get the vaccine and would like a different view than what is provided by the mainstream media.

GARDENING

Dan Potvin recommended that residents plant gardens this year and is willing to help with rototilling. The United Nations has predicted that world starvation will double due to supply chain breakdowns from COVID-19 lockdowns.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The town office continues to be closed in accordance with the Governor's Stay Home – Stay Safe Order to slow the spread of covid-19. The town clerk is scheduling appointments and is willing to assist residents by email, regular mail, telephone or fax.

2. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.

PETITIONS FOR WARRANT ARTICLES & ELECTED POSITIONS
(REVISED)

The deadline for filing petitions with the town clerk for warrant articles to be included in the town meeting warning is Thursday, March 4, 2021. These petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters or at least 35 signatures. V.S.A. 17:2642(a)

The requirement to submit Nominating Petitions to run for an elected office is waived due to Act 162 along with the requirement to obtain signatures of 1% of the registered voters. A Consent of Candidate form will be required to run for an elected office and the deadline to file the Consent is Monday, March 15, 2021 by 5:00 p.m. A Consent of Candidate form may be picked up at the Town Office. V.S.A. 17:2681(a) (b).

Elected positions to be filled this year are:

Town Moderator - 1 year term (*William Levine*)
School Moderator - 1 year term (*William Levine*)
Selectboard member - 2 year term (*Nancy L. Bushika*)
Selectboard member - 3 year term (*Christopher Warren*)
School Director - 2 year term (*Erika Bailey*)
School Director - 3 year term (*Kelly Holland*)
Auditor - 1 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 2 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 3 year term (*vacancy*)
Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year term (*Sally A. Bohl*)
Cemetery Commissioner - 3 year term (*David McKay*)
Library Trustee - 5 year term (*Barbara Goldstein*)

Voting will be held on Tuesday, April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Town of Stamford Community Room or outside, weather permitting. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office and throughout election day.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

Anyone interested in serving as an appointed board member, please review the expiring appointed positions in the town report and contact a member of that board or the Selectboard.