

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
January 6, 2022
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Laura Champagne, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Beth Phelps, and Natalie Yorke.

Heather Tietgens, Tyna Senecal, and Pamela Tworig, Finance Committee.

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. There were no changes to the agenda or its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

1. Natalie Yorke asked about the Bennington County Sheriff's bills referred to in the last meeting. Mike Denault contacted the sheriff's office but has not received a response. The board discussed the fact that they are only working a portion of the hours the town has contracted for.
2. The grant check to reimburse the town for the Summer Camp expenditures has been received.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

The Selectboard reviewed the town and highway revenue and expense sheets. They also discussed warrant articles and the amount the town may need to set aside for its match to replace the Lincoln Road culvert. The town has received a \$200,000.00 grant toward the project but the town's share will still be significant. Dave Tatro estimated our cost to be \$200,000.00 to more than \$300,000.00. The board will try to determine whether ARPA funds can be used to reduce the town's match. Laura Champagne suggested the town request a hardship and delay the project. Dave Tatro felt prices are not going down and the longer we put it off, not only will it cost more but the town will lose the \$200,000.00 in grant funds from the state. The next budget work session will be Wednesday, January 12, 2022 at 6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of December 30, 2021 as written.

SECONDED by Brandon Fields. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway department has done a lot of sanding because of the rain.
2. Pam Tworig thanked the highway crew for their dedication and hard work, especially on Christmas day.
3. Dave Tatro has had supply chain issues and is waiting a long time for parts he ordered.
4. Al Whitney has been doing a great job with the sand deliveries.
5. Laura Champagne said Mill Road is very dangerous with the ripples and could cause a serious accident. Dave Tatro said our equipment cannot grade the roads in the winter. He recommended just going slow and careful.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine warned that there is a lot of infection going around town, the fire department, and the school. They are dealing with it the best they can.
2. Eunice Rice has volunteered to help review the contents of the Red Cross trailer. Bill Levine hopes to be able to do it this year.

TOWN MEETING

Carolyn Brooks asked if there will be any special provisions for town meeting this year. She wants to promote as much participation as possible and said many will not attend if it is held inside the school. Lori Shepard advised that the legislature is discussing whether to allow special provisions for town meeting this year but there is no decision yet. The state will not allow town meetings to be conducted remotely. Nancy Bushika recalled town meeting nights where a snowstorm prevented people from attending. Several suggested holding the meeting at the church pavilion. The board recalled that insurance liability was a deciding factor in not using the pavilion last year. Bill Levine felt if the gym was set up properly with chairs six feet apart that the meeting could be conducted safely. Mike Denault recalled that many people chose to come to the ATV meeting which was held in the gym. Mike Denault agreed to look into the options available.

OLD BUSINESS

Mike Denault spoke with Ryan Wolters about the town's request to provide proof of liability insurance coverage to plow the Class 4 section of the town road. Mr. Wolters will be happy to contact his contractor to make sure the town has what it needs.

NEW BUSINESS:

MASK MANDATE

Dan Potvin saw an article in the Vermont Chronicle stating that the legislature put forth a bill for a mask mandate but the Governor vetoed the bill and put it onto the towns. The article indicated that over 80 towns have declined to enact a public-place mask mandate and only 20 towns have implemented a mask mandate. He noted that Stamford was not on either list and he thinks the Selectboard should vote on it. The board will add the topic to the next meeting's agenda.

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LABOR WEBINAR

Lori Shepard attended a webinar indicating that towns can create policies for mask mandates and vaccination requirements. Even though right now only companies with over 100 employees have to, smaller towns could choose to create these policies. Employees who do not comply with the new policy could be fired and would not be eligible for unemployment benefits. Dan Potvin said the Supreme Court should be hearing the OSHA case tomorrow so maybe that will help. Mike Denault said most companies with over 100 employees in Vermont put a hold on enforcing the mandate until tomorrow's decision. Companies are very nervous that it will cause large shortages in their labor force.

TOTALITARIANISM

Dan Potvin explained that New York is discussing legislation that would give the Governor complete and total dictatorial powers. New York would be the first state and he is worried that others will follow. He noted that Austria just passed a law requiring vaccination and the penalty will be fines and jail for noncompliance. Germany, Australia, New Zealand and Canada also have strict regulations coming for people who are not vaccinated. He read a statement from Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. on totalitarianism saying once governments acquire power, they never let go of it voluntarily and will abuse it. People

cannot comply their way out of totalitarianism. Dan Potvin feels the government is labelling those people who do not get vaccinated as uncooperative. He feels the masks, the social distancing and vaccines have been a lie and they all weaken your immune system. He said things are moving quickly and this will affect every person on the planet. He wants everyone to be aware. He expects food shortages by spring. Some felt this was outside of town business and wanted to end the discussion. The board agreed that new business is the place for any board member to bring up a new topic. Mike Denault doesn't want any back and forth arguing in the meeting. He appreciates that Dan Potvin has a lot of good information and feels he has the right to speak and give his opinion. Dan Potvin said he has information for anyone who has second thoughts after receiving the vaccine or has COVID-19, and people can contact him directly.

MOTION by Brandon Field to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 9:15 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 official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.

PETITIONS FOR WARRANT ARTICLES & ELECTED POSITIONS

The deadline for filing petitions with the town clerk for warrant articles to be included in the town meeting warning is Thursday, January 13, 2022. These petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters or at least 36 signatures. V.S.A. 17:2642(a)

The required signatures on a petition to run for an elected office are 1% of the registered voters or at least 8 signatures. The deadline for filing these petitions with the Town Clerk is Monday, January 24, 2022 by 5:00 p.m. Nominating papers and the 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 (*Daniel Potvin*)
Selectboard member - 3 year term (*Michael Denault*)
School Director - 2 year term (*Barbara Malinowski*)
School Director - 3 year term (*Gary Bellows*)

Auditor - 1 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 2 year term (*vacancy*)
Auditor - 3 year term (*vacancy*)
Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year term (*Sally Bohl*)
Cemetery Commissioner - 3 year term (*Janice Farinon*)
Library Trustee - 5 year term (*Tyna Senecal*)

Town meeting will be held on Monday, February 28, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. with the town portion first, followed by the school.

Voting will be held on Tuesday, March 1, 2022 from 10 a.m. to 7 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.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 28, 2022. 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.