

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
November 4, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Robert Bouchard, Bob Briggs, Carolyn Brooks, Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Paul Dupuis, Helen Fields, Kurt Gamari, Justin Henderson, Elizabeth Hubby, Karen Kuranda, Luke McKay, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Beth Phelps, E-Jay Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Trevor Tatro, Whitney Tatro, Pamela Tworig, James Williams, and Natalie Yorke.
Jim Sullivan, Bennington County Regional Commission.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
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. The agenda was amended to add correspondence and an executive session, and the Deerfield Valley CUD report was moved to the beginning.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

DEERFIELD VALLEY COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

Bob Briggs provided the board with the 2021 Annual Report and stated that the district has grown from 15 towns to 24 towns. The CUD received a \$4.1 million grant from the Vermont Community Broadband Association and they will contract with an internet company from Maine. He estimates that this will be a \$30-\$50 million project. They plan to have homes connected by the end of 2022. He invited people to attend the CUD meeting on November 10, 2021 either in person or through zoom. Nancy Bushika requested a report for inclusion in Stamford's annual town report. He expects there will be assistance for people who can't afford the service but it's too early to say. The district has remained self-sufficient without needing taxpayer money from towns and he hopes to remain that way. Karen Kuranda thanked him for his hard work.

FALL FESTIVAL FIRST ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Helen Fields hopes to see everyone on Saturday October 30, 2021 at the school from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. for a great, fun-filled afternoon.

VERMONT AFTERSCHOOL SUMMER MATTERS GRANT 2021

Helen Fields reported on the success of the summer camp program. The kids had a great time and the parents were very pleased. She expects there will be funding next year and hopes to be able to offer more next summer.

BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP

Carolyn Brooks stated that the metal has been purchased and McCann students will create the letters for the sign. Mike Denault suggested that McCann students may be able to install the sign as well.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of October 21, 2021 as written.

SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion **APPROVED**.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #43 \$7,000.32 payroll

WARRANT #44 \$7,930.53 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew has been doing maintenance and repair on the equipment, getting ready for winter, some culvert repair and taking care of tree limbs that came down last week in the storm.
2. Al Whitney has delivered our first load of sand.

RECYCLING

The steps that were ordered for the recycling center should be in soon.

BYLAW MODERNIZATION GRANT

Deb Burchard advised that the Planning Commission met and voted to accept the Bylaw Modernization Grant and move forward on an exploratory basis to determine if a village district designation would benefit our town. She hopes many townspeople will participate in the discussion. Mike Denault wishes the information could be given to us before we make a decision to commit. He asked what the minimum Bylaw changes would be so the town doesn't lose its \$1,000.00. Jim Sullivan said the town has to do enough to show the state we are moving forward toward the state's goal, such as creating a village designation and changing the land use and zoning restrictions in that area. If the revisions to the Bylaws are not ultimately accepted, the town will lose its \$1,000.00 commitment. If the changes are accepted, the \$1,000.00 is returned to the town. The Bennington County Regional Commission receives the \$10,000.00 in grant money to assist us regardless of whether the Bylaws are changed.

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the resolution and move forward with the Bylaw Modernization Grant. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

PLANNING COMMISSION RESIGNATION

Deb Burchard advised that Helen Fields submitted her letter of resignation from the Planning Commission. Dan Potvin spoke to the alternate, Annemarie Potvin, who does not wish to be appointed as a full time member.

MOTION by Carol Fachini to accept the resignation of Helen Fields from the Planning Commission.

SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The board thanked Helen Fields for her service. Anyone interested in serving on the Planning Commission should submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard by their December 2, 2021 meeting. One letter of interest has been received.

SOLAR FACILITY CORRESPONDENCE

The Planning Commission reported that they voted not to waive the 45 day notice requirement based on precedence. The Selectboard agreed.

HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT

One of the stipulations to obtain the grant to update the town's Hazard Mitigation Policy is that the town must have a Purchasing Policy. Nancy Bushika viewed the model on the Vermont League of Cities & Towns website and it was quite lengthy. The town obtained several policies from other Vermont towns for review. Mike Denault asked to table this matter in order to review the policies more thoroughly. Nancy Bushika offered to work with another board member to draft a new policy.

FINANCIALS

Income and expense reports were given to the Selectboard for review. Lori Shepard is available to answer any questions.

INSURANCE

The Vermont League of Cities & Towns stated that the Seed Savers outdoor garden shed/classroom was not eligible for coverage since the Seed Savers is not completely under the umbrella of the town. They act more independently like a non-profit organization. They also questioned the coverage since they only insure the contents of the town office and not the building.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the coverage terms listed on the insurance renewal paperwork.

SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine advised that at CUD meetings they have discussed raising money in each town to subsidize the monthly fee or installment costs for the high speed internet. Bill Levine suggested that the board consider allocating the ARPA funds for this purpose. It was noted that other eligible expenditures could be the digitization of the land records, sound-proofing the gym for better acoustics, or using the funds as a match for the Lincoln Road culvert replacement project. The culvert is not part of the Act 46 hydrologically connected roadways study. It was selected by the state for replacement because it is undersized and has flooded over several times. The state has conducted a hydrological study to determine the replacement structure needed. The cost is approximately \$360,000.00 and the town received a \$200,000.00 grant.

2. Bill Levine stated that the new fire truck is 15 years old and the old fire truck is 32 years old. They are having trouble finding replacement parts. The town may have to bump up the yearly amount set aside in the fire truck replacement fund.

ATV COMMITTEE

1. Marta Miller asked the board to appoint Deb Burchard as an alternate since she is unable to attend the next ATV Committee meeting. The board did not feel it was necessary since the meeting could still take place.

2. Jessica Tatro stated that the National Forest will not move forward until they have a signature from the Selectboard that the town is on board with the project. The Sucker Pond Trail, #301, is planned as a multi-purpose trail. The National Forest will receive funding from VASA. If the town does not agree to allow ATV use on town roads, the National Forest may choose to create a connector trail to Pownal on their own land and bypass Stamford. They have already planned to re-route a portion of the trail out of the wetland area to a dryer area. The creation of a parking lot on County Road is still under discussion. VASA will require a commitment from the town to allow ATV use for the life of the trail that is created. VASA will require a 3-5 year agreement before providing money to build or repair a trail in Stamford. Nancy Bushika did not feel the board was ready to make any decision. The topic will be added to the Selectboard agenda so that the board can make decisions as needed. The Selectboard would like a report from the ATV Committee. Paul Dupuis suggested they have a map available. The ATV Committee will consider holding a public informational meeting so that people can come, see the maps and get more information.

VETERANS DINNER

The potluck dinner to honor our local veterans will be held on Saturday, November 6, 2021 at 5 p.m. at the Stamford Elementary School. Prior to the dinner will be a parade beginning at the driving range at

4:30 p.m. and marching to the school. Dan Potvin said there will be Bennington County Sheriff cars in the parade as well as a horse carriage, and military trucks. All are welcome to attend.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of employee matters would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session to discuss employee matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:00 p.m. Lori Shepard and Dave Tatro were invited to participate.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:15 p.m. Results of executive session: The Selectboard agreed to pay lost time from work due to the quarantine period.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to adjourn. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The next meeting of the Deerfield Valley Communications Union District Governing Board will be held on November 10, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. at the Wardsboro Town Office, 71 Main Street, Wardsboro, VT. You can attend remotely at: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/589002621>, or by calling (Toll Free): 1 (866) 899-4679 and using Access Code 589-002-621 followed by # sign.
2. Anyone interested in serving on the Planning Commission should submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard by their meeting on December 2, 2021.
3. 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.
4. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.