

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
December 17, 2020
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Frank Alfonso, Carolyn Bobowiec, Carolyn Brooks, Carolyn Burch, Steven Denault, Theresa Denault, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Brandon Fields, Susan Flash, Benjamin Forbes, Colleen Harrington, Kevin Hoyt, Thomas Morandi, Andrew Mullett, Denise Rondeau, David Orton, John Paul Potvin, Aime Stephenson, Pat Sullivan, Ryan Wolter, and Clay, Zeller-Townson.
Tyna Senecal and Heather Tietgens, Finance Committee.
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 the executive session to the end of the meeting.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Brandon Field presented the Selectboard with a petition signed by many townspeople asking the board to support and uphold the constitution of the state and federal government. Mike Denault affirmed that the board members each took an oath to uphold the constitution when they were elected. Visitors questioned why this was being brought forward and felt our Selectboard does uphold the constitution. John Paul Potvin said he is worried about our government stepping on people's rights and does not want any of our rights taken away. Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle stated that the Governor's orders are only recommendations and that he is trying to protect and keep people safe. John Paul Potvin felt the orders are hurting a lot of people and their livelihoods. Dan Potvin felt the Governor's order to limit holiday gatherings is an infringement of our rights. Out of 37,000 people in Bennington County there has been one death. Mike Denault said he knows people who have died because of the virus. But he also knows people who have died of the flu, cancer, suicides, drug overdoses, and car accidents, and he feels sorry for all families who have lost someone, but it doesn't override the rights of all people under the constitution. Mike Denault said he whole-heartedly supports the petition. Dan Potvin read an excerpt from John F. Kennedy's inaugural address. Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle suggested this should be brought before the voters at town meeting. Dan Potvin disagreed. Mike Denault said this petition is not meant to be a reflection of the townspeople's views. He said the purpose of this petition is a request that the Selectboard, who took an oath to uphold the constitution when they were elected, re-affirm that oath that they will continue to support the federal and state constitutions. Pat Sullivan feels people in town do support the constitution. Chris Warren felt this proposal is projecting viewpoints that not every person holds. John Paul Potvin said this petition is not a reflection of the Selectboard; he is looking at the big picture and of our country, and wants to make a statement and safeguard our rights. Nancy Bushika and Mike Denault commended the young people for coming tonight, standing up for what they believe in, and hope they will stay involved.

MOTION by Mike Denault that the Selectboard adopt and affirm that we will uphold the constitution of the United States of America and the constitution of the State of Vermont. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Chris Warren). Motion APPROVED.

Dan Potvin would like to send the signed petitions to the Governor, the state legislators, the federal government and the Bishop of Vermont. Kevin Hoyt suggested it be sent to the other towns in Bennington County. Mike Denault agreed with sending it to other government entities, but not to the bishop. Bill Levine suggested the board move on to other business.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to send the signed petition to the Governor, the state legislators, the federal government and the other towns in Bennington County. SECONDED by Mike Denault. 4 in favor, 1 opposed (Chris Warren). Motion APPROVED.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of December 3, 2020 as written. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #51 \$ 9,011.16 payroll

WARRANT #52 \$730,929.81 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

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

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Ryan Wolter is buying a camp on County Road in Stamford. It is just past the Class 3/Class 4 line where the town stops plowing. He would like to ask the town to move the plow line past his driveway. A condition of his homeowner's policy requires that the property be accessible year round which is hard if the road to it isn't plowed. Mike Denault would like to discuss the request with Dave Tatro prior to moving the plow line. The board will forward a copy of the agreement which it previously prepared when Brian Jowett asked for permission to plow the road. Nancy Bushika noted that the town's highway ordinance would require that the road be brought up to town standards.
2. We got a lot of snow and the highway crew has been busy plowing and cleaning up the roads.
3. The Ford broke down during the snowstorm.

RECYCLING

Michael Batchter forwarded the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance Interlocal Contract for the board's review and signature. Nancy Bushika has compared it to the contract they signed five years ago.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adopt and sign the Interlocal Contract. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

APOLOGY CONCERNING CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY

1. The board chose to hold a tree lighting ceremony with proper precautions and in a safe manner. Many people volunteered their time to create a nice family night and fun for the kids. The Selectboard relied on the school to send notices home with the children and for whatever reason, it didn't happen. Mike Denault was contacted by over a dozen parents who would have participated had they known of the event. Mike Denault would like to send a formal apology to all families and would like to find a better way to advertise events in the future. There were differing opinions of whether to mail a letter, apologize through the Selectboard minutes, or write something in the Selectboard Report of the town report. Chris Warren did not feel that the situation required an apology. The board will try to plan events farther in advance and discuss a more effective means of communication for the future. The board thanked the Tom Denault family, Mike Denault family, Aaron Malachuk family, the Robert Burchard family, Caroline Burch, and Luke McKay.
2. Mike Denault asked the board to consider planting a small tree like Clarksburg does that can be decorated and lit each year.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine felt the meeting two weeks ago and tonight involved a number of guests without masks and without appropriate separation. From an emergency management standpoint, he feels this is endangering others and going against the recommendations of the CDC and the Governor. Bill Levine felt the board should require all guests to wear a mask and socially distance or attend remotely. Dan Potvin said the chairs are measured out six feet apart and there is no need to wear a mask unless you are unable to keep the six foot social distancing. Dan Potvin felt we are adults who are able to assess the risks and choose whether to come in person or not. Dan Potvin feels that people who are afraid of getting the virus are trying to control others.

2. Bill Levine has been considering town meeting this March and is watching for guidance from the state. He is considering using the whole room to spread out or postponing the town meeting until spring when it can be held outside. Some towns are voting by Australian ballot.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

1. Tyna Senecal said she attended remotely because she didn't want her presence to exceed the maximum room capacity allowed, not because she is hesitant or afraid to come in person. She said it is very frustrating to attend via zoom with a hybrid meeting and she is not sure what the Finance Committee's participation will look like.
2. Heather Tietgens suggested that the board schedule a budget work session without all their regular business since the Finance Committee had a lengthy wait tonight.

MUNICIPAL ROAD GENERAL PERMIT

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the MGRP Amendment form and pay the \$240.00 administrative fee to the Vermont Watershed Management Division. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

RESIGNATIONS

1. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the resignation of Lori Shepard from the Community Projects Committee with regret. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
Nancy Bushika announced that there is an opening on the Community Projects Committee if anyone is interested in joining.
2. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the resignation of Allen Desautels from the Highway Department with regret. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
The board will talk with Dave Tatro about filling the position. The board is sorry to see Allen Desautels go.

HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Michael Batchter informed Nancy Bushika that a grant is available to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan. She will check with Dave Tatro and review the town's current mitigation plan.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The group has decided not to hold a public ceremony due to COVID-19 and will just leave the wreaths representing each branch of the military in front of the town's Honor Roll. They will also not have public participation during the laying of the wreaths on graves.

CORRESPONDENCE

Nancy Bushika acknowledged letters that were sent to each board member by the Jehovah Witnesses.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

The Selectboard reviewed the income sheets and worked through some of the expenditures.

SELECTBOARD MEETING

The Selectboard scheduled a meeting on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 beginning with an executive session for personnel matters at 5:30 p.m. They will have a budget work session at 6 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS V.S.A. Title 20 section 13(3)

MOTION by Dan Potvin to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to enter executive session pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(5). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:55 p.m.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to exit executive session. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 10:11 p.m.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to put the topic on the agenda for the next Selectboard meeting for discussion. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Further discussion of V.S.A. Title 20 section 13(3) will be added to the agenda for the meeting on Tuesday, December 29, 2020 following the budget work session.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 10:12 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. Anyone interested in serving on the Community Projects Committee should contact a member of the committee or the Selectboard.
3. 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 14, 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, January 25, 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, March 2, 2021 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 and throughout election day.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 1, 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.