

**TOWN OF STAMFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
February 6, 2020  
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Robert Bouchard, Roger Bouchard, Deborah Burchard, Richard Cristofolini, Alex Dargie, Steven Denault, Brandon Field, Helen Fields, Benjamin Forbes, Brian Jowett, Cynthia Lamore, Robert Lamore, Aaron Malachuk, Annemarie Potvin, John Paul Potvin, Bruce Richardson, Pat Sullivan, and Douglas Wright. 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. The agenda was changed to add correspondence and the order was changed to accommodate the many visitors present.

**HEARING OF VISITORS:**

**BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP**

1. The group has funding to complete the benches and will begin work in May. They will be collecting rocks to fill the gabions for the benches and Pat Sullivan asked them to think about where the rocks could be stored.
2. They will be collaborating with McCann Technical High School on the lettering and students from Stamford at McCann will be working on the letters and the design. The metal fabrication department will complete the work.
3. Pat Sullivan will be applying for the Hardman Grant and she asked if the Selectboard could send an email in support of the grant. Brian Jowett, a visitor attending the meeting, said he would put in a good word for Stamford's application.
4. She invited all to attend the Stamford Variety Show which will be held on Saturday, March 14, 2020 from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. It should be a lot of fun.
5. Green Up Day will be held on May 2, 2020. It is the 50th Anniversary. Aaron Malachuk offered to donate donuts from K's Creamery.
6. The HarveStamford Community Supper date will be August 29, 2020. They are seeking donations to support the event, particularly with a tent rental. Mike Denault said he could help with the tent rental.

**RESIDENCE ON CLASS 4 ROAD IN FOREST ZONE**

Brian Jowett has a contract to purchase 1818 County Road. The property is about a half mile past the beginning of the Class 4 section. He would like to build a full time residence. He attended the Planning Commission and spoke with Jim Stimpson, the Administrative Officer, and both support his request. The Road Commissioner, David Tatro, was not at the meeting to provide input due to the weather. Mike Denault said if Brian Jowett was willing to obtain the \$1 million bond to protect the town, he was fine with it. Dan Potvin felt the board should discuss the bond amount. Bill Levine thought the board should consider extending the Class 3 section that the town currently plows further down the road. It would cost a lot of money to upgrade all of County Road and Klondike Road because the state will require that the road meet their standards. Nancy Bushika would like to review the decision about an insurance bond and would like to talk to Dave Tatro. Mike Denault said they would send Brian Jowett a letter stating what the town would need from him if they decided he could plow the road.

**HIGH SPEED INTERNET**

Aaron Malachuk spoke with a Consolidated Communications technician. The town of Chesterfield, NH hired a consultant and Consolidated Communications to run fiber network to every house in their town. The project cost the town \$1.8 million and provides 1 gigabyte per second. The town obtained a 20 year bond to cover the cost. Instead of everyone in town contributing to the cost, only the households that sign up for the high speed internet

pay. Consolidated charges an extra \$10.00/month which it later turns over to the town. The town uses this money to pay back the bond. Aaron Malachuk felt if lines come down during an ice storm, a small internet company might take a long time for repairs. Consolidated Communications has the manpower to fix the lines immediately. Chris Warren felt it was great to have information from more than one group. Aaron Malachuk will see if he can have someone come to a future Selectboard meeting. Anyone interested in serving on a high speed internet research committee should contact the town office or Chris Warren directly.

#### PLANNING COMMISSION

1. Aaron Malachuk presented Stephen Bechtel's resignation from the Planning Commission due to other time commitments. Steven Denault announced his resignation as well.
2. Aaron Malachuk presented a letter of interest from Deborah Burchard which the Planning Commission received on Monday and a letter of interest from John Dupras dated today. Annemarie Potvin also provided a letter of interest to serve on the Planning Commission. Aaron Malachuk asked that the board consider the appointments in the order the letters were received. He conveyed the difficulty the board has had to make a quorum. Both Deborah Burchard and Annemarie Potvin introduced themselves and stated why they wanted to serve.  
MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the resignations of Stephen Bechtel and Steven Denault with regret.  
SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.  
MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Deborah Burchard to fill the seat held by Stephen Bechtel, which would be one year remaining on a four year term. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.  
MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint John Dupras to fill the vacancy from Steven Denault, which would be one year remaining on a four year term. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.  
MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Annemarie Potvin as an alternate to the Planning Commission. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The alternate will be a non-voting position unless the position is needed to make a quorum, during which time the alternate will vote. The alternate will also be next in line for an appointment in the event of a resignation.
3. Helen Fields thanked everyone who has served on the Planning Commission. They have done a great deal of work in the past couple years.
4. Helen Fields advised that the topic of food security was discussed at the last Planning Commission meeting. She would be willing to start conversations between the Seed Savers, the School Directors and the Selectboard concerning food security for the future of our town. She feels it is important to teach children how to garden and take care of themselves. Anyone interested in participating in these conversations should contact Helen Fields.

#### SECOND AMENDMENT SANCTUARY TOWN

Douglas Wright read the proposed resolution to declare Stamford an "Article 16, Constitutional Gun Owner Town and a Second Amendment Sanctuary Town". He said Title 24 gives the Selectboard the authority to make this resolution. The legislature continues to write bills that infringe on our rights, governing how we live and what we do. These are inherent rights and not privileges. This is a symbolic way to send a message to the government. The resolution is non-binding. Several towns and counties in Virginia, Maine and Vermont have already done it. Dan Potvin commented that it was great to see so many young people present. Visitors felt that the government keeps chipping away at our rights and if they succeed at one thing, what will be next. Mike Denault confirmed that this resolution does not give anyone the right to break the law. He said until a year or two ago, the State of Vermont had no gun laws, other than accepting the federal laws, and our state has been one of the top three safest states in over 100 years. He said there is no supporting evidence that any of the proposed gun laws will deter crime. Chris Warren asked why the resolution targeted only the Second Amendment and not the whole Constitution. Mike Denault responded that the Vermont legislature has been creating bills that target Article 16 of the Vermont Constitution and the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. If the government began to make laws restricting freedom of speech or freedom of religion, there would be a resolution for that. Mike Denault noted that the Stamford Sportsmens Club is a place where people can go and exercise their rights to carry and use firearms. More gun laws could put the club out of business. Nancy Bushika said it didn't seem like Stamford or Readsboro

would be against the resolution. She suggested that the topic could be discussed at town meeting. Helen Fields did not think it should be brought up at town meeting and said it could get ugly.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adopt the resolution to declare Stamford an "Article 16, Constitutional Gun Owner Town and a Second Amendment Sanctuary Town" as written. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. 4 in favor. 1 opposed (Chris Warren). Motion APPROVED.

The resolution will be sent to Senator Dick Sears, Senator Brian Campion, Governor Scott and Representative Laura Sibilia. Cindy Lamore thanked the board for doing it.

#### CORONAVIRUS/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LETTER

Dan Potvin prepared a letter to send to our residents to help them prepare in the event of an emergency. He has done a lot of research about the coronavirus and its spread. China has not been able to contain it. He provided the board with an article written by a scientist stating the virus may be a biochemical weapon from the Level 4 lab in Wuhan, China. Whether the emergency comes from a virus, a hurricane, a flood, an earthquake, etc., it is still a good idea to be prepared. He recommends 2-3 months of non-perishable food, access to clean water, vitamins, healthy foods to improve your immune system and purchasing seeds for a garden. For a couple hundred dollars you could have enough food set aside to feed your family for 2-3 months in the event the coronavirus spreads, or the next crisis hits. Bill Levine noted that the virus duplicates quickly and they have already predicted another outbreak in 2022-2023. Dan Potvin recalled when the town office had trouble and it took the state police 1 1/2 hours to arrive. When the Selectboard invited them to a Selectboard meeting to discuss the matter, they told the board you're basically on your own down here. If all of the northeast is in trouble, the government won't be able to help us. Nancy Bushika asked if an insert could be included in the town report which will be going out in two weeks. Bill Levine said he has funds in the emergency management budget to pay for a mass mailing to all residents. Chris Warren made some small changes to the letter.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to send it to all households in town, have it available at town meeting and put the letter on the website. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 23, 2020 as written. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #5 \$8,548.48 payroll

WARRANT #6 \$9,818.25 accounts payable

#### CERTIFICATE OF HIGHWAY MILEAGE

The Class 3 mileage has been reduced by .17 mile due to the portions of town road that were given up in front of the Lincoln (formerly Shippee/Miles) property near Lincoln Road this past summer. Nancy Bushika noted that the state map shows a legal trail going from the end of Lesure Road to Schenk Road. Bruce Richardson recalled that the road was discontinued in 1932 and should not be listed as a legal trail. Nancy Bushika would like to research the trail before reporting the error to the state.

#### RECYCLING

The town received its first hauler registration form for 2020.

#### LAW ENFORCEMENT RESEARCH COMMITTEE

The board has only received interest from two people, Luke McKay and Maura Hawkins. Mike Denault does not feel there is enough interest to pursue the idea and would like to take it off the agenda.

#### DOG VIOLATION TICKET UPDATE

The town clerk received word from the Judicial Bureau that one of the delinquent dog owners paid their tickets and the matter is closed. The other dog owner did not respond to the tickets and a default judgment was entered and the full penalty amount was assessed which is still outstanding.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Nothing to report.

#### BANKRUPTCY NOTICE

The town received a Chapter 7 bankruptcy notice for owners of land in Alpenwald. Sally Bohl is aware that she can no longer collect the delinquent taxes because of the bankruptcy notice.

#### UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMIT

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit application from Newport Sand & Gravel, Inc. / Carroll Concrete Co., Inc. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

#### DOG KENNEL INSURANCE COVERAGE

The dog kennel has been added to the town's insurance policy. The premium was \$1.00 and it was waived by the Vermont League of Cities & Towns.

#### BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S CONTRACT

The Bennington County Sheriff's Department submitted a contract for 15 hours per week at the rate of \$43.25 per hour beginning February 1, 2020 through January 31, 2021. The Selectboard signed the contract.

#### BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP GRANT

Pat Sullivan is seeking a grant through the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. She would like the board to sign a Fiscal Sponsor Form. There are no matching funds required. The board was in support and signed the form.

#### EMPLOYEE UPDATE

William Wheeler was injured outside of work and is under a doctor's care. He will be out of work for a while.

#### SCHOOL MERGER MEETING

Nancy Bushika advised that there was a an interstate merger meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 6 p.m. at the school. It would be great if some Selectboard members could attend.

#### OWNERSHIP OF THE TOWN/SCHOOL BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Mike Denault asked about the status. He feels the attorney's letter was very clear that the Selectboard has authority to oversee and make decisions concerning the property. The School Directors should have blanket permission during school hours. The School Directors wanted to wait until budget season was over to discuss the attorney's findings. Nancy Bushika will schedule an informal meeting with the School Directors and Selectboard to discuss this further.

#### PARCEL MAPPING

Bruce Richardson has been working with Sally Bohl and Nancy Bushika to review the parcel mapping data. It's not as bad as it could be, although there are some unusual parcels. He feels the town shouldn't ignore anything under 5%. All maps should be reviewed for accuracy because some of the configurations aren't quite right. He believes most of the maps can be cleaned up easily.

## ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Nancy Bushika would like to research the past decisions concerning plowing Class 4 roads and suggested the town may need to consult with the attorney. Bill Levine thought it might be in the Selectboard's best interest to extend Dave's plowing route another half mile or so down County Road. It would be a better solution if there will be a full time residence. The board has repeatedly denied requests for the town to plow Class 4 roads but it was always to seasonal camps. This is a different situation. Nancy Bushika said at some point they will have to consider opening up the whole road, but that will cost a lot of money. Carol Fachini asked the board to consider the town plowing the Class 4 section of Brown Brook Road. Dan Potvin has talked with Dave Tatro about this who said he doesn't want to be liable if a car is going up when he is coming down the steep hill. Carol Fachini would like the town to consider upgrading Brown Brook Road if they are going to consider upgrading other areas. Nancy Bushika thought the town should upgrade a little each year. Mike Denault stressed that he wants to make sure when the board makes decisions that they are treating everyone equally. Carol Fachini felt the Selectboard's decision to discontinue Old County Road during the ancient roads process was very detrimental to her and she hopes the board will consider Brown Brook Road. Mike Denault asked if there were any grants out there to help with upgrading the roads. Clarksburg can't maintain their end of West Road which affects Klondike Road. Bill Levine suggested the hazard mitigation grant but said the project needs to meet their criteria. Perhaps the board could contact Laura Sibilila about grants becoming available.

## SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR TOWN REPORT

The Selectboard reviewed the new sections from Dave Tatro and finalized the report.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to adjourn. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini  
Clerk

CAF/las

## REMINDERS

1. . Anyone interested in serving on a high speed internet research committee should contact the town office or Chris Warren directly.
2. Anyone interested in serving on the Fire Department roster committee should contact the town office, a Selectboard member or Paul Dupuis.
3. Please visit the town's new official website: [townofstamfordvermont.org](http://townofstamfordvermont.org).
4. The town clerk's office hours are: Monday: closed; Tuesday: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Wednesday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Thursday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and Friday: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.