

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
April 15, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin, and Michael G. Denault.
Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Theresa Denault, Cynthia DiBartolo, Donna Engel, John Engel, Helen Fields, Stephen Greene, Peter Grudin, Kevin Hoyt, Karen Kuranda, Michael Kuranda, Marta Miller, David Orton, Ryan Rush-Booth, Pat Sullivan, Susan Welsch, and Ruth West.
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. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Mike Denault to find that premature public discussion of employee matters would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
MOTION by Mike Denault to enter executive session to discuss employee matters pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:01 p.m. Ryan Rush-Booth was invited to participate.
MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 6:30 p.m. A letter will be written regarding the Justice of the Peace position.

COVID-19 VACCINATION

Karen Kuranda read her letter (attached) concerning the coronavirus vaccine to refute the statements made by Dan Potvin at a previous meeting. Nancy Bushika thanked her for coming and providing her information. Mike Denault said he did not want people feeling that the Selectboard was using their meetings as a platform to promote information so it was important to him to invite Karen Kuranda to come tonight. He agreed that the Selectboard meeting is not the place to debate this issue any further.

PETITION SIGNATURES

Ruth West was concerned that the minutes from March 4, 2021 stated that she did not have the required 5% of signatures on the petitions she submitted. She wanted to clarify that all the petitions had the appropriate number of signatures except the petition asking that the 8% delinquent tax payment be eliminated and be replaced with a flat charge of \$50.00.

GREEN UP DAY

Pat Sullivan announced that Green Up Day is scheduled for May 1, 2021 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and hopes that everyone will attend.

LIMITATION OF TOWN BUSINESS

Helen Fields asked that the Selectboard limit the topics that should be discussed at Selectboard meetings to town business only. Mike Denault said he supports the constitutional right of freedom of speech and the Selectboard has never prevented anyone from bringing a concern or issue forward at a Selectboard meeting.

GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY ORDER

Ruth West asked the Selectboard to support our residents' rights to travel across the border for non-essential services. The Selectboard had a lawyer who was willing to represent the town on a pro bono basis in its defense as a border town, but before a letter could even be sent to the Governor, the lawyer dropped out and said she couldn't win the fight.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 1, 2021 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #13 \$6,018.05 payroll

WARRANT #14 \$9,920.50 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

Nothing to report.

RECYCLING

The summer hours at the transfer station will begin on April 28, 2021, the last Wednesday of the month, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

TOWN MEETING PREPARATION

1. Town Meeting will be held outside near the library on Monday, April 19, 2021 at 7 p.m. The tent inspection was held today and it will be set up on Monday. Bill Levine will handle the emergency procedures and signage. Nancy Bushika will ask the School Directors to come early and help set up. The law prohibits or any remote participation at town meeting because there is voting. The Secretary of State and Vermont League of Cities & Towns guidelines recommend that only discussion on warned articles should be conducted and all other discussion should be deferred to another time. There should be no guest speakers, no bake sales and no informational tables set up.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to authorize Nancy Bushika to sign the tent rental contract when received.

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

2. The auditors have provided the fund balance figures. The town's fund balance is \$36,415.70 and the highway's fund balance is \$6,201.68. Article 2 allows for up to 25% of the fund balances to be used to reduce the raise and appropriate.

3. The election of officers will be held on Tuesday April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in the gym/ community room. There will be social distancing procedures in place and attendants to disinfect the booths in between voters. The town clerk has been issuing absentee ballots for many voters who have requested them.

2020 AUDIT

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve and sign the management representation letter to the auditing firm Love, Cody & Company confirming all financial statements and records were presented for the 2020 audit for the Town of Stamford. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOWING BIDS

The town has used the same mowing company for three years. The Selectboard will send invitational

bids to Yard Work by Dan, Stanley Lawrence, Jr., Countryside Landscaping, Mountain Home Landscaping, and Deerfield Valley Property Maintenance. Helen Fields asked that no Roundup weed killer be used on the school playground and said if there were any questions about the school garden or blueberry bushes, to contact her.

EMEGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bill Levine advised that there were some trees that came down but they have been taken care of.

COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

The CUD received 3 or 4 proposals they are seriously considering for various work from management to construction. Please view their website at dvfiber.net for the latest information and how to attend upcoming meetings remotely. Stamford and Readsboro continue to be targeted for the first installation.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the permit application from Casella Construction, Inc. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The proper fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Mike Denault has tried to get in touch with Sheriff Lloyd Dean to advise that the board would prefer they rearrange their budgeted patrol time to provide weekend hours, but has not been able to connect.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Dan Potvin said there is trouble brewing with Russia and Ukraine and wanted to remind everyone about the How to Survive a Nuclear Fallout flyer he sent out a few years ago. If you are interested and can't find your copy, please contact the town office.
2. Mike Denault asked Dan Potvin if the topics he brings up under new business are his opinion and Dan Potvin agreed that they are.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

Letter received by Karen Kuranda:

Invited guest speaker at the Selectboard meeting

April 15, 2021

Thank you for letting me respond in person to the Vaccine Information section posted in the previous minutes by Dan Plotvin.

However, the vaccine information section was over a half page in the minutes. People in town attending the Selectboard meetings are given 5 minutes to speak each. This is significantly longer in length and appears that after the controversy in December the Selectboard has been researching current available vaccine information - and then presented their findings and recommendations with Dan Potvin speaking as an official board member representing the town to the townspeople.

I am sure that Dan Potvin is well educated and sincerely cares dearly about our town. However, he is not a scientist and does not have the qualifications to carefully evaluate Covid-19 data and offer a recommendation whether or not people should be vaccinated. This also sets a dangerous precedent if someone listens to this information that looks like official information from the town Selectboard, chooses as a result to follow the guidance not get vaccinated and then gets seriously ill or dies.

I again feel compelled to come forward about this as other people not familiar with this kind of science could be easily misguided by these statements, especially as he has referenced a lot of people and supposed facts.

I have a PhD in Genetics and was a Lab Head in a leading biotech company in the Boston area focusing on human genome cloning and analysis. My husband Mike and I retired here a bit over four years ago and so very much love this town even more every year.

I feel that I have the qualifications to carefully examine Dan Potvin's statements in this Vaccine Information section for scientific accuracy. My husband, who holds a Ph.D. in Biochemistry, has also read through the response that is attached.

Based on what I have looked at, it is completely scientifically inaccurate. I am therefore requesting that this be stricken from the minutes. I have not added in any covid vaccine information to this section.

Laura Sbilia, our Vermont representative for the Windham Bennington district, has offered to provide accurate up to date information about covid and the vaccines currently available. I am asking that she be allowed to present this to the town.

Respectfully submitted, Karen Kuranda, PhD in Genetics

I have indicated the previously submitted information presented to the Stamford Selectboard in italics, followed by a response.

Dan Potvin wanted to get information about the vaccine out to the townspeople. He suggested people consider signing the Great Barrington Declaration which has over 50,000 signatures from scientists, doctors and medical personnel.

The document was drawn up following a meeting hosted by the libertarian think-tank American Institute for Economic Research. Named the "Great Barrington Declaration" after the Massachusetts town in which it was drafted, the paper was signed by scientists and health experts across the world. But a British broadcast station researched this and found that some of those who signed the letter online used fake names, including "Dr. Person Fakename" and "Dr. Johnny Bananas." When questioned about this, the signatures and search functions based on names were then made private.

The plan was put together by three scientists from prestigious universities: Dr. Sunetra Gupta of Oxford University, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya of Stanford University, and Martin Kulldorff of Harvard University.

But none in the group have published any peer-reviewed studies about the coronavirus, and some have advocated for herd immunity over lockdowns for months, telling policymakers that the virus isn't that deadly at all. One of the authors of this document has indicated that we will achieve this herd immunity with only 10-20% of the population.

However, the established scientific community has stated that we would need to reach 70-90% immunity in the population to bring the pandemic under control.

Sunetra Gupta has described the Great Barrington Declaration as existing outside of politics. Yet, the network of financing behind its sponsor, the AIER, bankrolled by the Koch foundation, seems to demonstrate exactly the opposite.

The Declaration appears to subsist in a political lobbying network routinely involved in denying the risks to human health from powerful industries such as fossil fuels and tobacco. It is not surprising then that the scientific content of the Declaration has been thoroughly challenged by many leading experts.

Prof Jeremy Rossman, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Virology, University of Kent, stated:

The Great Barrington Declaration attempts to alleviate these impacts by promoting herd immunity and the protection of vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, this declaration ignores three critical aspects that could result in significant impacts to health and lives. First, we still do not know if herd immunity is possible to achieve. Herd immunity relies on lasting immunological protection from coronavirus re-infection; however, we have heard many recent cases of re-infection occurring and some research suggests protective antibody responses may decay rapidly. Second, the declaration focuses only on the risk of death from COVID-19 but ignores the growing awareness of long-COVID, that many healthy young adults with 'mild' COVID-19 infections are experiencing protracted symptoms and long-term disability. Third, countries that have forgone lockdown restrictions in favour of personal responsibility and focused protection of the elderly, such as Sweden, were not able to successfully protect the vulnerable population. While there is clearly a need to support and ease the physical and mental health burdens many are suffering under, the proposed declaration is both unlikely to succeed and puts the long-term health of many at risk."

He said Dr. Geert Vanden Bossch, a leading scientist in vaccines and immunology, gave an interview on Highwire.

Bossch spent an entire hour promoting his theories in this Highwire 'interview' to Del BigTree one of the recognized leaders of the antivaxxer movement. Bossch kept saying this

was so urgent he must speak now, but has not sought feedback from other scientific experts in the field or published his findings in scientific literature. Unfortunately, this has gone viral on social media and many antivaxxers have incorrectly adopted this as some kind of proof of their beliefs.

*Dan Potvin mentioned Dr. Sherri Tenpenny, and Dr. Vernon Coleman from England.
These doctors can be found on brighton.com.*

The quoted website brighton.com points to a shopping site for women's luxury bags and jewelry.

Sheri Tenpenny is an American anti-vaccination activist who supports the disproved theory that vaccinations cause autism. She has a degree in osteopathic medicine. Since 2017, Tenpenny and her business partner, Matthew Hunt, have taught a six-week, \$623 course titled "Mastering Vaccine Info Boot Camp" designed to "sow seeds of doubt" regarding public health information. During the course, Tenpenny explains her views on the immune system and vaccines, and Hunt instructs participants on how best to use persuasion tactics in conversation to communicate the information.

Vernon Coleman is an English conspiracy theorist and anti-vaccination activist. He has publicly claimed AIDS is a complete hoax, writing, "it is now my considered view that the disease we know as AIDS probably doesn't exist and has never existed". Such claims have been rejected by the medical community. He is a novelist who writes on topics related to human health, politics and animal issues. Coleman's medical claims have been widely discredited for many years and described as pseudoscientific. He was formerly a newspaper columnist and then a general practitioner. He has been under investigation for multiple years until finally his medical license was revoked in 2016. He has since been designated an honorary doctor at the International Open University in Sri Lanka. He has also publicly stated multiple times in February 2021 that any doctors or nurses who administer the Covid-19 vaccine will be tried in Nuremberg trials as war criminals.

He said our natural immune system has K cells which naturally fight infection. Since the virus has a 99.91% survival rate, it shows that your natural immune system works well. These scientists are coming forward with information indicating that the coronavirus vaccines will suppress our natural immune system which is currently non-specific and created to fight an innumerable amount of viruses, and will make it specific, to fight only the specific coronavirus strain that came out last March.

Since neither of these two people are scientists or doctors with any expertise in virology or epidemiology, they are putting forth this information with no scientific backing at all. People receive vaccines for all kinds of childhood and other illnesses. Getting a vaccine for polio, for example, does not shut your entire immune system down to the ability to fight any other virus. Secondly, the survival rate for covid is not 99.91%. We have currently lost more than 542,000 in our country alone. The death percentage rate varies by country, but the US is currently listed as 2% of those infected also die from the disease. This is 22 times higher than the death rate stated above.

The use of the term K cells is completely incorrect. There are NK cells which are cytotoxic lymphocytes critical to the natural immune system. However, due to a genetic variation where 4% of the population naturally lack the activation receptor and also where in 30% of the population this receptor is only partially available, it has been shown very recently that people with partial or total absence of this receptor are most likely to develop severe Covid-19 for any age class. This is irrespective of any age based or co-morbid pre-existing conditions.

*The vaccine antibodies will become dominant and will block our own antibody cells.
As the virus mutates and creates new strains, the vaccine antibodies will not fight*

against other strains. We will lose our innate immune system. This vaccine is long lived and once you take it, you can't get it out of your body.

Viruses like Covid-19 mutate all the time, another reason to get vaccinated. Viruses can't mutate if they aren't replicating during an infection, helping to prevent the emergence of new variants in the population. So, the higher the vaccination rate, the less infections and therefore less chance of variants.

Data so far has suggested that the current vaccines prevent mild/moderate cases of some of the variants and as well as severe cases and death.

The Pfizer and Moderna mRNA based vaccines can also be tweaked rapidly to address emerging variants. This can easily lead to a booster shot for variants later on.

Dr. Bossch and Dr. Tenpenny's fear is what's called a "Gain of Function" which is something bioweapon labs study when making a biological weapon. Not only will the vaccine hinder your natural immune system in its effectiveness to fight other viruses, including other coronavirus strains, but each vaccinated person will give the virus a Gain of Function which will make the coronavirus stronger, more deadly, and spread more rapidly.

In the US we are up to 2 million vaccinations per day and are pushing for 3 million per day. Israel has already vaccinated 5 million out of a total population of 9 million. Dr. Bossch and Dr. Tenpenny say this vaccine is an extinction-level science that has been unleashed. They have not done animal studies because they have been working on mRNA vaccines since 2004 and every time the vaccinated animal is later exposed to a new strain of the virus, it dies.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines both had careful animal clinical trials in addition to clinical trials in over 75,000 people. Clinical trials in animals were studied in both mice and macaques. Due to the urgency of the global pandemic, both companies were granted permission to run their animal studies overlapped with early Phase I safety clinical trials. This significantly cut down the timeline developing the vaccine. No shortcuts in safety were made.

India has already banned all coronavirus vaccines.

This is completely incorrect. Currently, two vaccines are approved in India. One is the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine—which is being distributed under the local name of Covishield—and another is called Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech, a drugmaker based in Hyderabad, India.

Dr. Tenpenny said this vaccine could slowly attack up to 28 organs in your body over a 3 to 18 month period and by the time you come down with some sort of liver dysfunction, they won't connect it to the vaccine.

This is inaccurate. It is not the vaccine that has been shown to attack organs in the body. Rather, the Covid-19 virus itself affects much more than simply just the lungs. It has been shown to cause micro blood clots in multiple organs causing subsequent impairment in the heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, pancreas, and spleen and brain.

Dan Potvin wants all people to have access to this information. He hopes people will choose not to take the vaccine. Dan Potvin said the best thing you can do is to beef up your immune system, take Vitamin D, and eat healthy. A strong, healthy immune system is the best way to fight the virus.

Of course, you should always strive to eat a healthy diet. However, this alone will not protect you from catching Covid-19.

It is my sincere hope that this new information will encourage everyone to please get vaccinated as soon as possible.

Respectfully submitted to the Town of Stamford Selectboard,
Karen Kuranda, Ph.D in Genetics

ACTUAL VACCINE INFORMATION

From John Hopkins Medical Center, Lisa Maragakis, M.D., M.P.H., senior director of infection prevention, and Gabor Kelen, M.D., director of the Johns Hopkins Office of Critical Event Preparedness and Response, review some common myths circulating about the vaccine and clear up confusion with reliable facts. This is directly quoted:

MYTH: The side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine are dangerous.

FACT: The COVID-19 vaccine can have side effects, but the vast majority are very short term —not serious or dangerous. The vaccine developers report that some people experience pain where they were injected; body aches; headaches or fever, lasting for a day or two. These are signs that the vaccine is working to stimulate your immune system. If symptoms persist beyond two days, you should call your doctor.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccine enters your cells and changes your DNA.

FACT: The two COVID-19 vaccines available to us are designed to help your body's immune system fight the coronavirus. The messenger RNA from two of the first types of COVID-19 vaccines does enter cells, but not the nucleus of the cells where DNA resides. The mRNA does its job to cause the cell to make protein to stimulate the immune system, and then it quickly breaks down — without affecting your DNA.

MYTH: The messenger RNA technology used to make the COVID-19 vaccine is brand new.

FACT: The mRNA technology behind the new coronavirus vaccines has been in development for almost two decades. Vaccine makers created the technology to help them respond quickly to a new pandemic illness, such as COVID-19.

MYTH: The COVID-19 vaccine was developed with or contains controversial substances.

FACT: The first two COVID-19 vaccines to be authorized by the FDA contain mRNA and other, normal vaccine ingredients, such as fats (which protect the mRNA), salts, as well as a small amount of sugar. These COVID-19 vaccines were not developed using fetal tissue, and they do not contain any material, such as implants, microchips or tracking devices.

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. Town Meeting will be held outside on Monday, April 19, 2021 and the election of officers will be held on Tuesday April 20, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. by Australian ballot in the community room. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office and throughout election day. Absentee ballots maybe requested until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 19, 2021. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

3. Upcoming HHW Days are scheduled as follows: May 8, 2021 in Bennington and September 11, 2021 in Dorset and a smaller event on July 24, 2021 for Searsburg and Stamford which will be held at the AOT highway garage on Main Road in Heartwellville.
4. Green Up Day is scheduled for May 1, 2021.
5. The summer hours at the transfer station will begin on April 28, 2021, the last Wednesday of the month, from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
6. 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.
7. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.