

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
September 2, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Michael G. Denault and Daniel J. Potvin.
Brandon Field was not present.

Visitors: Pamela Tworig, Marta Miller, Natalie Yorke, Debra Burchard, Scott Lamore, Bonnie Lamore,
Shelley O'Dowd, and Beth Phelps.
Luke McKay, Dog Officer
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:10 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, a zoning violations update and a school use update. There was no change to its order.

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 Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to enter executive session to conduct interviews pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:11 p.m. Debra Burchard and Shelley O'Dowd were each invited individually to participate.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to exit executive session. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 6:50 p.m. No action was taken.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Bonnie and Scott Lamore complained that their neighbor intentionally moves sticks, leaves and debris from the back yard to the front yard which the wind blows into their yard and they have to pick up. The neighbor never picks up sticks or debris after storms and everything keeps blowing across the road to their yard. They showed the board pictures and felt the town should enforce the placement of debris within its right-of-way. Bonnie Lamore stated that they can't take the training wheels off their grandchild's bike because of the debris. The board cautioned that it cannot get involved in a neighborly dispute but agreed to look into it.

DOG UPDATE/STRAY DOG

1. Luke McKay sent out letters to all the delinquent dog owners requesting they license their dogs by September 12, 2021. A couple owners have come in.

2. Luke McKay requests that people contact him by either calling the town office or his cell phone. Please do not use his Facebook page for town business.

3. Luke McKay has a 10-12 week old puppy that was found on East Road. He has contacted the local shelter who advised that they changed several rules since COVID-19. They now charge \$150.00 minimum surrender fees to accept the dog. The last dog in 2019 had a bad temperament and Luke McKay was concerned about biting. Although several residents were interested, he was uncomfortable adopting the dog out. The Selectboard revised the ordinance so that all dogs would be turned over to the shelter. Luke McKay requested the board change the ordinance to state that dogs would be adopted out at the discretion of the Dog Officer or the Selectboard to a Stamford resident. Mike Denault suggested a clause that the town would not be liable. The decision would be made on a first-

come, first-served basis and would be contingent upon the dog being properly vaccinated and licensed with the town.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to change the Dog Ordinance to allow Stamford residents to adopt dogs. There was no second and the motion FAILED. An ordinance cannot be changed by motion, there is a process to follow.

MOTION by Mike Denault to allow a Stamford resident to foster the puppy after the 10 days expire and until the Selectboard is able to update its ordinance. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ATV/UTV TRAILS

Marta Miller wondered if we could be a No-VASA town so that we don't have a lot of riders coming in and things could be like they were. Mike Denault was not sure. He would like to see just our residents and maybe issue Stamford stickers. Connie Yorke confirmed the location of the Stamford roads that allow ATV use. She stated that the resolution to allow ATV use could be changed by a voice vote at a Selectboard meeting and she asked the board to consider overturning the decision. In 2007 when the decision was made to allow ATV use there was no VASA organization. Mike Denault said ATVs are not the problem, neither is our town or our residents. He feels that VASA is the problem. As much as he enjoys riding, as a board member he feels the Class 4 roads are atrocious and safety is a major concern. MOTION by Mike Denault that we take back our resolution and do not have any approved ATV roads at this time and no more VASA trails in our town. With no second, the motion FAILED. Dan Potvin would like to wait for Brandon Field and a full board.

Dave Tatro noted that ten years ago when the resolution was made, the machines were not as powerful and fast as they are today. There is no gravel left on the Class 4 roads and we are down to bare rock. We will have to start spending money to add gravel and improve the road. Pam Tworig feels the board has a fiduciary responsibility to its taxpayers and allowing this ATV use is costing the town money.

MINUTES

Deb Burchard would like the minutes revised to include her son John Burchard who attended the last meeting but was not listed. MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 19, 2021 as revised. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #31 \$ 5,823.32 payroll

WARRANT #32 \$11,275.31 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to rescind the resolution made in the August 28, 2008 minutes and no longer allow ATV traffic and no longer allow as ATV trails as originally designated: the roads from the Pownal town line on County Road, then taking a right on Klondike Road, another right on Risky Ranch Road and back to the Pownal town line. SECONDED by Mike Denault. 3 in favor. Carol Fachini abstained. Motion APPROVED.

Lori Shepard was directed to notify VASA and have the trail removed from their maps. Mike Denault suggested that if town residents want to consider forming a new town group, they could approach the board with a proposal.

2. The chip sealing work started on Tuesday and will resume on Friday.

3. Dave Tatro continues to work on the Clean Water Act project on County Road.

4. Mike Denault noted that the flyer the board sends out at tax time requests that people keep debris out of the road, mostly as a courtesy. Dave Tatro agreed that we tolerate a lot. People rake debris off their lawn into the roads every spring and we allow it. The board asked Dave Tatro to look at Clayton Avenue.

RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika suggested calling residents if it's easier than sending out bills for the demo that has been dropped off at the transfer station.

2021 TAX RATE

Lori Shepard reviewed a spreadsheet explaining the calculation of the 2021 tax rate. The board set the 2021 tax rate as follows: to accept the state education homestead rate of \$1.4996 and the non-homestead rate of \$1.7508 as calculated by the State of Vermont. The Selectboard set the municipal tax rate at \$0.3196 and the highway rate at \$0.4471. The total homestead tax rate will be \$2.2663 and the total non-homestead tax rate will be \$2.5175.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the treasurer's figures as presented. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard reviewed the tax bill insert and made some updates. They also approved and signed the warrant authorizing the treasurer to send out tax bills. The 2021 tax bills will be mailed to property owners shortly.

WOOD CHIPS

There has been no response from the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union concerning the letter sent by the Selectboard concerning the pile of wood chips.

ACCEPTANCE OF NAME OF PRIVATE ROAD

MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept the name of Blaze Line Road for the new private drive off Lesure Road. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The first road sign is installed by the town and Dave Tatro will order it.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine explained that at the end of the year the board will need to certify their Emergency Management Response Plan. He asked if the board members had taken the ICS400 course yet. The board thought it was going to be set up at the school. Bill Levine indicated that the course is available online and can be done individually.
2. Bill Levine would like to pull out the Red Cross trailer and review the contents. He would like some help. Anyone interested in helping should contact Bill Levine directly or the town office. He would also like volunteers to consider forming a Citizen Response Group in the event the shelter is necessary.
3. The recent wind storm damaged several flags and flag poles around town. Bill Levine spent \$940.00 replacing 20 flags and 12 poles. The line item was budgeted for \$250.00.

FOREST FIRE WARDENS

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to recommend Harry Klein as Town Forest Fire Warden and Mitchell Meranti as Deputy Town Forest Fire Warden. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The forms were signed and will be mailed to the state.

MUNICIPAL MITIGATION GRANTS IN AID PROGRAM

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the Vermont Standard Grant Agreement for the Grants in Aid FY22 project. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

BUILDING PERMIT VIOLATIONS

Nancy Bushika contacted Ryan Rush-Booth, the town's Zoning Administrator, and Jim Sullivan with the Bennington County Regional Commission. The BCRC indicated that we are following the correct process and although you can ultimately charge a fine of up to \$200.00/day, it is often difficult to navigate the court system to collect the money. It is usually easiest to work with the property owner to obtain compliance. Ryan Rush-Booth stated that he doesn't like to have to hound people to get permits when they are uncooperative.

SCHOOL USE/SCHOOL MEETINGS

1. Nancy Bushika submitted a school use form reserving all first and third Thursdays for the rest of the year in case there are too many people attending a Selectboard meeting and use of the gym is necessary. She has not received a response.
2. The Selectboard would like to revive their joint meetings with the School Directors over the ownership and authority of the school building and grounds. There has not been a response from the Schoolboard to date.
3. The principal was previously invited to attend a Selectboard meeting. Nancy Bushika will follow up with him to set a date.

CARS ON SCHOOL YARD

Nancy Bushika received a complaint that cars are driving across the school yard. The board reiterated the importance of driving on the left of the ballfield and staying along the north line of the property because of the septic system and leach field. Mike Denault offered to contact A-1 Septic if the school needs assistance in determining the location of the system and leach field.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE VACANCY

Pam Tworig volunteered to fill the Justice of the Peace vacancy. A letter will be sent to the Governor requesting that she be appointed.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The town office is open with the following hours: Monday – Closed; Tuesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Wednesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Thursday – 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
2. 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.
3. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.