

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
October 17, 2024
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, John Dunn, Kurt Gamari, and Douglas Wright.
Visitors: Debra Burchard, Carol Ethier-Kipp, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, William Levine, Marta Miller, Debra Righi, James Righi, and James Stimpson.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Additional correspondence was added to the agenda. Jed Gramlin recorded the meeting.

HEARING OF VISITORS

Jim Stimpson spoke to the board about a Vermont law he found that he believes gives the town an exemption to install its sign. Jim Stimpson's interpretation is that people who want to put up signs need to go to the Planning Commission with their plan and guidelines would be put on them, but municipalities are exempt as long as the sign is not in the road right-of-way. He feels the setbacks are for buildings not signs. Kurt Gamari feels this verifies what he has been thinking for years that towns should be exempt and Mike Denault agreed. Nancy Bushika suggested when the Planning Commission updates the By-laws this should be included. It was noted that neither the town attorney, Vermont League of Cities & Towns nor the Bennington County Regional Commission recognized this law as providing a sign exemption for the town. Deb Burchard spoke to the Zoning Board of Adjustment Chair prior to the meeting and she felt the town should follow through with the appeal process at this point. Bill Levine asked if the local Zoning Administrator's decision was in error should the original Zoning Board of Adjustment's decision be reversed? Bill Levine would like to have the last sign attached to the school building behind the generator. Nancy Bushika noted that the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. and will go forward. Mike Denault recommended that the Planning Board discuss this change to the By-laws at their next meeting.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of October 3, 2024 as written.
SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro left a brief report with Nancy Bushika. The garage roof is completed and has been paid for with ARPA funds, the Freightliner is back in service, and the trees at the intersection of The Lane and East Road should be cut down tomorrow.
2. Deb Burchard asked if there were any plans to paint the highway garage. It something they can talk to Dave Tatro about.

RECYCLING

Nothing to report.

HIGHWAY ORDINANCE

Dave Tatro, Lori Shepard and Nancy Bushika reviewed the ordinance. The suggested changes will be reviewed at the next meeting.

FIRE TRUCK LOAN

MOTION by Mike Denault to designate Nancy Bushika to sign the loan paperwork. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

INSURANCE RENEWAL

The renewal figures were reviewed.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the proposed insurance renewal figures as presented. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DELINQUENT DOG UPDATE

One dog owner has come in and one dog has passed away. There is only one dog owner with two dogs left and they need rabies vaccinations. Luke McKay confirmed that the dog owner does have a vet appointment scheduled.

DVFIBER INTERNET

There has been one resident who has requested an application for assistance with installation costs.

SCHOOL GROUNDS

John Dunn asked about the flowers in the front circle and if the lawn mowing contractor or custodian could cut them back. He also noted that the bushes along the school building are growing taller than the windows. Mike Denault suggested the town talk to the school and asked if Selectboard members or volunteers could do jobs without liability.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. Bill Levine noted that there have been many executive sessions and asked if the board will let the townspeople know when the matter has been resolved. The board agreed.

2. MOTION by Mike Denault to find that premature public discussion of an attorney/client/civil action would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to enter executive session for an attorney/client/civil matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F). SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 6:48 p.m. Lori Shepard was invited to participate.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:30 p.m.

Action: 1. The board will continue to gather information on the first legal matter.

2. The board previously made an offer to purchase the St. John Bosco Church for \$175,000.00 and the offer has been accepted. A special town meeting will be scheduled for Monday, November 25, 2024 at 7 p.m. to decide whether to purchase the St. John Bosco Church and fund the needed renovations for a town community center.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:34 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

/las

REMINDERS

1. Tax bills have been issued and are due in hand by 8 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, 2024. By town vote, postmarks will not be accepted. Any unpaid tax will be subject to a one-time 8% penalty and 1% interest per month for the first 3 months and 1.5% interest per month thereafter until paid.
2. The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 at the Stamford Elementary School from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
3. Applications to the checklist will be accepted through Election Day. Application forms can be requested by calling the town office at 802-694-1361 or you can register to vote online through Vermont's My Voter Page at <https://www.mvp.sec.state.vt.us/>.
4. Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 4, 2024. Please call the town office at 802-694-1361.
5. There is a ballot drop off slot in the rear of the town clerk's office to provide a safe and secure way to drop off your completed ballot at any time, day or night.
6. Townspeople should sign up with the state's free communications network, VT-Alert. You can sign up at vtalert.gov to receive notifications. You can choose how you would like to be alerted (phone call, text or email) and can choose what type of alerts you would like to receive, i.e. weather, road closures, public health, etc.
7. Anyone interested in applying for the part-time Assistant Assessor Clerk position should submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard.
8. The Wednesday afternoon summer hours at the transfer station will end on Wednesday, October 30, 2024.
9. The town office is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays.