

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECT BOARD MEETING
October 24, 2024
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, John Dunn, Kurt Gamari, and Douglas Wright.

Visitors: Carolyn Brooks, Debra Burchard, Theresa Denault, Carl Dolle, Shirley Dolle, Paul Dupuis, Jedidiah Gramlin, Peter Greenbush, Cynthia Lamore, Robert Lamore, William Levine, Marta Miller, Debra Righi, James Righi, and Christopher Vadnais.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone.

**WARRANT FOR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TO PURCHASE AND FINANCE
THE ST. JOHN BOSCO CHURCH BUILDING**

Nancy Bushika stated that the Select Board has signed a purchase and sale agreement contingent on town meeting approval. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to sign the warrant to have a special town meeting on November 25, 2024. This will give the townspeople the opportunity to decide if they would like to have a community center. The Select Board explained that they made a deposit on the building which is fully refundable if the purchase is voted down. There are so many ideas and reasons to purchase the building, the board has not decided on the purpose yet. If the purchase goes through the board will be open to ideas.

The purchase and sale agreement has no financing contingency. The Select Board would like to use funds from the town reserves for the purchase and borrow money for the renovations. The Select Board can add a financing addendum if they choose to. It was suggested that borrowing was more prudent instead of using reserves that the town might need in an emergency.

The Selectboard answered questions about the emergency meeting and the hurry of pulling it all together when everyone knew the building would be going up for sale. When the town was given the opportunity, the board was not given much time to respond. Father Chalifoux, the priest in charge, recognizes that the church served Stamford parishioners and our community for years and would like to give back by giving the town the first option. The church does not want to pay for heat and maintenance costs through the winter and was not willing to wait for our regular town meeting in March. The emergency meeting notice did not refer to the statute used for the executive session. The Selectboard has had many executive sessions lately due to a pending legal matter and this purchase. Discussing legal matters and contracts are valid reasons to enter executive session. A request was made to add more information to the Select Board agendas.

It was suggested that the board have some community outreach or listening sessions for use of the building. There are many grants available for buildings within the village district designation and the Select Board will look into these grants and other resources. The Selectboard can choose to either mail or publish the notice for the special town meeting. The Selectboard may send an informational letter with the warning. The purchase of the church for a town community center will be added to future Select Board meeting agendas and people who are interested in learning more are urged to come to the meetings. The board will present this

opportunity to the town and it will be up to our residents to vote yes or no. The Selectboard is having the building inspected and will have estimates for the cost of repairs and renovations. The town can back out if the inspection reveals problems that are too expensive. The Selectboard will have as many numbers to present to the town as they can, i.e. estimated utilities, insurance, upgrades and maintenance costs, and what kind of tax increase the town can expect.

A question was asked about the rocks and gravel left behind when Consolidated Communications removed telephone poles. The Selectboard agreed they could look into it as several residents are unhappy with the mess left behind when they finished their pole work.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept Article 1 as written: Shall the Town of Stamford purchase the former St. John Bosco Church building located at 818 Main Road in Stamford, Vermont for the price of \$175,000.00? SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept Article 2 as written: Shall the Town of Stamford release and deplete the balance in the Future Needs Fund, estimated to be \$32,660.00, toward the purchase price? SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept Article 3 as written: Shall the Town of Stamford release up to \$155,000.00 from the Invested Funds toward the purchase price? SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept Article 4 as written: Shall the Town of Stamford borrow a sum not to exceed \$100,000.00 (if Articles 2 and 3 are passed) or \$288,000.00 (if Article 2 and 3 are not passed), said sum to be repaid over a five year period? SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Discussion ensued regarding the borrowing of funds and the need to add a financing contingency to the purchase and sale agreement. The board considered voting on the purchase first, then waiting until March to vote on borrowing the renovation money, but that would lock voters into the renovation loan.

MOTION by Mike Denault to amend his prior motion by changing Article 4 to read: Shall the Town of Stamford borrow a sum not to exceed \$100,000.00 toward renovations, at a rate to be determined, said sum to be repaid over a five (5) year period? SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The board reviewed the inspection contract. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the contract as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to adjourn. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 7:45 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.