

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECT BOARD MEETING
April 17, 2025
(UNAPPROVED)
6:00 p.m.

Present: Select Board: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Douglas Wright, John Dunn, and Kurt Gamari.

Michael G. Denault was not present.

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Alden Finney, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Lawrence, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Sheila Pecor, Ron Pulchaski, Debra Righi, James Righi, David Saldo, Diane Saldo, and James Stimpson.

Martina Barnes, Stacy Stratton and Steve Pytlik from Green Mountain National Forest.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

Lori Shepard, Select Board Secretary.

Nancy Bushika opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. The agenda was amended to include the following: an executive session for a personnel matter, a website update, and the open meeting law webinar review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature general public knowledge of a personnel matter would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session for employee reviews pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(B). SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Select Board entered executive session at 6:02 p.m. Sheila Lawrence was invited to participate and requested that Dave Saldo attend as well.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to exit executive session. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 6:15 p.m. No action was taken.

Nancy Bushika reconvened the meeting at 6:17 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Jed Gramlin recorded the meeting for his YouTube.

PAVING BIDS

The Selectboard received one bid from All States Construction, Inc.: 1" hot mix asphalt shim at \$120.00/ton for \$150,000.00 and a single chip seal at \$3.65/square yard for \$81,033.65. Dave Tatro felt the bid was in line with his expectations. The town received a grant to pave East Road so no tax money will be needed to complete the project.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the bid received from All States Construction, Inc. as presented. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The certificate of insurance was included in the bid package.

GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST UPDATE

Martina Barnes, Stacy Stratton and Steve Pytlik from Green Mountain National Forest each spoke about the upcoming projects in Stamford and the surrounding areas. Several

questions were asked by the audience. The National Forest appreciates having a partnership with the Stamford Ridge Riders who have worked hard to clean up areas and improve the trails.

GREEN UP DAY

Marta Miller hopes everyone will come out for this community event on Saturday, May 3, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. Gloves and trash bags will be provided.

SECOND ANNUAL RESILIENCY FAIR

The Second Annual Resiliency Fair is scheduled for Saturday, May 10, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be a number of speakers as well as a meal, vendors, and live music.

BUILDING RENOVATION

A question was asked whether a permit was obtained prior to the building renovation in town. Since it is an older building, there is concern about asbestos or lead paint and the safety of residents. Discussion ensued as to whether it is a town or state matter and that the contractor should be responsible for obtaining the proper permits. Deb Burchard said she would contact the property owner to see who the contractor is.

MINUTES

1. MOTION by John Dunn to accept the regular meeting minutes of April 3, 2025 as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the special meeting minutes of March 27, 2025 as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECT BOARD ORDERS

The Select Board reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #15 \$10,355.33 payroll
- WARRANT #16 \$35,992.13 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

The Select Board reviewed financial statements for the month of March 2025.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro has begun the spring road grading this week. He will work on the East Road ditches when the weather doesn't cooperate for grading.
2. The Ram truck is finally back from the shop. The repair cost was over \$7,200.00. The truck's reliability is becoming a factor and Dave Tatro will be looking for a replacement for next year.
3. Dave Tatro will also be looking at the next set of roads for the five year road resurfacing project.
4. Jim Henderson from the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) will visit next week to pick out the next project for the mandated Grant-in-Aid project. Jim Sullivan suggested a Better Backroads Grant for the Sportsmen Road/Suzanne Drive culvert project. Dave Tatro anticipates the 50 foot culvert would cost \$5,500.00 and maybe a deal could be worked out with Alpenwald and Barcus to install it. A concrete headwall is also part of the state's proposal and Dave Tatro will need to get a price for that.

5. Laura Champagne asked if the highway crew could work on Brown Brook Road as the metal culvert is sticking up as well as a lot of rocks.

RECYCLING

1. The summer recycling hours will begin the last Wednesday in April from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
2. Nancy Bushika attended the recent alliance meeting. Two BCRC representatives have offered to come discuss the required update of the SWIP plan. The Household Hazardous Waste Facility will be open beginning May 19, 2025. You will need an appointment which can be done online. Nancy Bushika asked if another Select Board member would like to become the alliance representative.

PROPOSED BYLAW REVISION

Nancy Bushika asked the Select Board if they had any changes to the proposed new Bylaws which were presented by the Planning Commission at the last meeting. Dave Saldo doesn't want to see the town get in trouble for putting up a sign on Main Road since it is part of the state's Scenic Highway system. The Select Board scheduled the public hearing for the Bylaw revision on Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 6 p.m. Dave Saldo will invite his contact to attend the public hearing to review and discuss the Bylaw sign wording. Jim Stimpson said he and the Planning Commission spent hours revising the Bylaws and feels the completed proposal is good.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST and ETHICAL CONDUCT POLICY

The Select Board signed the Conflict of Interest and Ethical Conduct Policy which was accepted at the last meeting.

CODE OF ETHICS INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT ORDINANCE

Doug Wright requested a few changes. The process will entail filing a complaint with the state. Informal letters or verbal complaints will not generate an investigation. If the state ethics board receives a complaint that it feels warrants further investigation, the state will notify the town. Doug Wright would like to see a definition of the liaison position in the ordinance. He felt the town should not limit itself to only picking an investigator from the pool, the Select Board should be able to choose anyone they want to investigate, on a case by case basis. He stressed that the investigator pool is only fact finding, and not decision making. The evidence will be presented to the Select Board who will make the decision.

JOB DESCRIPTIONS

1. The Transfer Station Monitor job description was signed by the Select Board.
2. The Road Commissioner and Highway Laborer job descriptions were reviewed and signed by the Select Board.

EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK

The Select Board will review for the next meeting.

SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY APPROPRIATIONS POLICY

MOTION by John Dunn to approve the Social Service Agency Appropriations Policy without changes. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The policy will be signed at the next meeting.

TOWN WEBSITE

Nancy Bushika stated that the town needs to look into cloud storage so that the audio recording of meetings can be uploaded to the website.

LOCAL ELECTION

There will be a town vote on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to vote on the revised school budget and the three lister positions. The town clerk asked the Board of Civil Authority members to count the ballots Wednesday night.

OPEN MEETING LAW WEBINAR

Doug Wright, Mary Lou Wright, Nancy Bushika and Lori Shepard attended the Open Meeting Law webinar. The Secretary of State has a lot of information and Nancy Bushika urged the chairs of all town boards and commissions to take the training and familiarize themselves with the changes to this law.

KEYS TO TOWN OFFICE/BUILDING

Jim Stimpson asked for permission for either the vice chair or another member of town boards to have a key to access the building. The Planning Commission chair was not able to attend a recent meeting which created some confusion. Nancy Bushika noted that the town's Key Policy only allows for the chair of each board to have a key and they have to sign the policy accepting the responsibility if the key is lost.

PEDDLER/FOOD TRUCK ORDINANCE

Jim Stimpson suggested that the Select Board consider adopting an ordinance to regulate food/mobile trucks in town. It would make the Zoning Administrator's job easier and would give the Select Board control over it. He reviewed the permit details from various other town ordinances. The board suggested he work with Lori Shepard to prepare something for their review. In light of the prior discussion, Deb Burchard reconsidered whether she should be contacting the property about their demo contractor or if it should be the town Health Officer. After further discussion, the board felt the renovation job is completed, and there's not much to be done at this point. Jim Stimpson suggested amending the Bylaws to require a permit for razing a structure. Kurt Gamari feels the town should be making it easier for residents to start home businesses, not making it harder.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSTABLE

Jim Stimpson suggested appointing an Administrative Constable to enforce the town ordinances. They could also serve civil paperwork.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

The Select Board approved and signed the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit applications from Riggs Distler & Co. and Structural Wood Corporation. The appropriate fees and insurance information were received from the applicants.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of a pending or probable civil litigation would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session for a pending or probable civil litigation pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F). SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Select Board entered executive session at 8:20 p.m. Lori Shepard was invited to participate.

MOTION by John Dunn to exit executive session. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:34 p.m.

Action: MOTION by Kurt Gamari to contact the attorney to expedite the matter. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to adjourn. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:35 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

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REMINDERS

1. There will be an informational meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. to provide information on Article I of the School District Warning.
2. Voting will be held on Wednesday, May 14, 2025 from 10 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Town of Stamford Community Room. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office up to and throughout election day.
3. Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. Please call the town office at 694-1361.
4. 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.
5. Anyone interested in applying for the transfer station substitute position should submit a letter of interest to the Select Board.
6. Anyone interested in serving as an ethics investigator should submit a letter of interest to the town office or Select Board.
7. Anyone interested in joining the town highway crew should fill out an application or get in touch with a Select Board member.
8. The dog license due date was April 1, 2025. Please come in as soon as possible to license your dog. The new dog license fees for 2025 are \$16.00 for spayed/neutered dogs and \$20.00 for real/intact dogs.
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.