

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
June 6, 2024
(UNAPPROVED)

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

Visitors: Sally Bohl, Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Alden Finney, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, William Levine, Marta Miller, Thomas Nazzewski, Sheila Pecor, Debra Righi, and James Righi.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

Robert Briggs, Emergency Management Director.

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. There were no additions or changes to the agenda. Nancy Bushika stated that Jed Gramlin was video recording the meeting.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Bill Levine and Bob Briggs presented a draft DV Fiber application for financial assistance for the board's review. There are some people who are waiting for the installation of fiber to their home because a conduit or other reasons. They suggested that the board review the form and adopt a policy to address how these funds will be disbursed. Nancy Bushika would like to see copies of policies other towns have signed.
2. Deb Burchard asked where Dave Tatro buys his firewood for the highway garage and if he bids it out. The cost is small enough that he does not use the bidding process.
3. Deb Burchard asked if the magnesium chloride Dave Tatro spreads on the road is corrosive and harmful to plants and the environment. He said the magnesium chloride is much less corrosive than the calcium chloride and it helps to stabilize the road so there is less grading. He doesn't use a lot of it, he only spot treats as needed.
4. Deb Burchard said the FEMA buyout program deadline is approaching. She would like the Selectboard's decision not to participate in the program put into an ordinance so it is fair to other applicants and not subjective.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 16, 2024 as written.

SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #21 \$ 9,297.55 payroll

WARRANT #22 \$17,675.87 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew has been working on the road-side mowing. Kurt Gamari appreciated the timeliness of the mowing as it is being done before the invasive species on the roadway go to seed. Dave Tatro has added gravel to Lesure Road and Klondike Road.

2. Mike Denault stated that two residents on Klondike Road thanked Dave Tatro for the great job he did on the roads.
3. Nancy Bushika asked Dave Tatro to work on Millard Road when he can.
4. Nancy Bushika asked if Dave Tatro has addressed any of the concerns in VLCT's inspection report. Dave Tatro has not had a chance to look into it. He will consider the eye wash kit.
5. Nancy Bushika asked about his summer hours. He has been working from 5:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Mike Brothers works 6 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
6. Lori Shepard received an email that the town was in line for approval of the Class 2 road grant.
7. Dave Tatro expects that the guardrails on Mill Road will be replaced the week of June 16th.

COUNTY ROAD DECLASSIFICATION

In October 2022 the board agreed to declassify the 0.3 section of County Road from the westerly side of the high tension lines to the Pownal line. This will help the ATV club and remove the town's liability. The Agency of Transportation said the town retains its ownership of the legal trail even though National Forests owns property on both sides of the road. Lori Shepard was directed to begin the declassification process.

REQUEST TO PLOW CLASS 4 SECTION OF COUNTY ROAD

The Selectboard reviewed the request. The lot is a little past the Rum property. The board has allowed another property owner to live full-time and plow the Class 4 section. They would be willing to enter into the same agreement if the owner provides the proper liability insurance policy. Kurt Gamari asked if the board was going to keep stacking these agreements or at some point will the board have to consider changing the road to a Class 3 road.

RECYCLING

1. Nancy Bushika attended the recent Alliance meeting. The budget was set at \$224,000.00 which is a 4.5% increase from last year. It is distributed between the 13 member towns.
2. The town received a \$1,900.00 reimbursement check for the funds collected to build the household hazardous waste facility in Bennington. The Alliance was able to receive additional grant funding which reduced the amounts needed from each town.
3. A group in Bennington collected 115,000 eclipse glasses and will recycle them by giving them to various astronomy groups.
4. Nancy Bushika was informed that dog owners are bringing their dogs to the transfer station and some people are allowing them to run freely while they dispose of their trash. Buzz Wheeler has treats for them. John Dunn noted that the town has a leash law and people should be following it.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bob Briggs summarized the changes he made to the Local Emergency Management Plan.
MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the Local Emergency Management Plan as presented.
SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. Mike Denault asked about the ICS-100 class that Bill Levine wanted the board members to take. Bob Briggs will look into it.

DELINQUENT DOG LIST

There are 35 dogs that have not been licensed for 2024. The due date was April 1st. The list will be turned over to the Dog Officer to bring the dog owners into compliance.

TOWN EMAIL ADDRESS

Deb Burchard does not want to use her personal email address for her work as Zoning Administrator and does not want her cell phone number listed on the application forms. The board was concerned that every appointed town official would want a town email address and it would be very costly. Mike Denault noted that record keeping is part of her job and not every board member has the responsibility that would require a town email. Nancy Bushika confirmed that all decisions on permits will still be noted on the permits and kept in the town office.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to establish an email address for the Administrative Officer. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE

The treasurer provided two proposals. One from Adams Community Bank for 5.25% and one from Berkshire Bank for 4.6% for a \$300,000.00 loan which will be payable in November when taxes are due. Mike Denault likes working with Adams Community Bank and asked the treasurer to see if they will match the 4.6% bid.

MOTION by Mike Denault to authorize Nancy Bushika to sign the promissory note to borrow money in anticipation of taxes. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

FLAG CEREMONY

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks has invited a designee of Stamford to their annual Flag Day Ceremony on June 8, 2024 in Bennington, Vermont. Unfortunately there were no board members available to attend.

ASSIGNMENT OF TOWN'S INTEREST

The Selectboard approved the transfer of its interest in Lot 276 in Alpenwald. The Selectboard signed the assignment conveying its interest in the redemption period.

JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Last week the Selectboard met with the Schoolboard. They discussed ways the boards could reduce taxes. Erika Bailey will look into some of the ideas that were mentioned and get back to the board.

TENNIS COURT

There has been no response from the Seed Savers concerning the building and equipment on the tennis court. Dave Tatro thought Heidi Peterson has taken over the Seed Savers Group. The board discussed sending a second letter.

LAWN MOWING BID

The bid requested an initial cleanup of the plowing damage and sticks before the first mowing. This has not been done. Nancy Bushika will contact the mowing contractor.

ELECTED LISTERS/APPOINTED ASSESSOR

1. The board considered returning to elected listers. You can elect a lister and allow them to learn on the job, but a hired or appointed assessor must have all the training and certifications. Dave Tatro felt the Selectboard needed to pay more to entice people to do the job. VLCT was consulted and they recommended holding a special town meeting to vote to return to elected listers so that people could take out papers for the March election.

MOTION by Mike Denault to go back to elected listers and to hold a special meeting for the vote. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. After grievance hearings are complete, the contract with NEMRC will expire and a new contract will have to be signed to cover the period until listers can be elected. There could be a transition period where NEMRC continued to be the assessor at the same time as the elected listers.

TOWN SIGN

John Dunn said the town needs a sign. Mike Denault agreed. Discussion ensued as to whether one of the former signs could be modified and reinstalled or whether a completely new sign should be made. The board also discussed asking the Planning Commission to modify the By-laws.

MOTION by Mike Denault for permission to attend the next Planning Commission meeting on behalf of the Selectboard to request the Planning Commission to amend the By-laws to exempt the town. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

BILL H.875

VLCT is requesting that towns contact the Governor urging him to veto Bill H.875. Lori Shepard explained that this bill would pile responsibility on municipalities to deal with ethics complaints, conduct investigations, enforce compliance and would entail a lot of record keeping. Many town officials would be required to attend training. As a small town we just don't have the money, personnel or resources to take on this sort of thing. It should remain at the state level.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of a personnel matter would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session for a personnel matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:25 p.m.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:55 p.m. No action was taken.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:57 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

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REMINDERS

1. 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.

2. The transfer station is open on Wednesday afternoons from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the summer months.

3. 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.