

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
August 15, 2024
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Kurt Gamari, Douglas Wright, and John Dunn.
Visitors: Judy Audette, Robert Briggs, Laura Champagne, Carol Fachini, William Levine, Thomas Nazzewski, Sheila Pecor, Debra Righi, James Righi, Trevor Tatro, and Dara Zink.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
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.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Dara Zink from the Bennington County Regional Commission has worked with town officials to complete the Hazard Mitigation Plan. It has received Vermont Emergency Management approval. Once the Selectboard adopts the plan it will be sent to FEMA for approval and will remain in effect for five years.

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the Hazard Mitigation Plan as presented as well as the agreement with the Bennington County Regional Commission for their work. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Bill Levine presented a quote from Adams Community Bank to obtain a loan to purchase the new fire truck for the Fire Department. The Fire Department is also looking at fundraising. The loan is for \$270,000.00 over six years with an estimated monthly payment of \$4,551.17. The town cannot go out more than five years unless it is bonded. The Fire Department will negotiate a five year term with the bank. Bill Levine estimated the payments would begin in January 2025.

3. Carol Fachini asked if some gravel could be added to Brown Brook Road. The road is in good shape now but she feels it would be a shame to let it go. Dave Tatro agreed but felt there are other Class 4 roads in towns that are much worse and serve many more people. Dave Tatro said he exhausted his summer maintenance budget with the stone needed to get through mud season. Kurt Gamari feels the board needs to have a conversation about our roads. Mike Denault feels the town is living on a shoestring and we need to talk about the future sustainability of our town. Nancy Bushika feels the board should look at these costs at budget time.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the site visit and public hearing minutes of August 1, 2024 as written. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 1, 2024 as written. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #31 \$ 8,861.56 payroll

WARRANT #32 \$12,906.52 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro is working with Dara Zink from the Bennington County Regional Commission on a \$600,000.00 culvert replacement grant for East Road.
 2. Dave Tatro has asked for a price for cutting the trees at the intersection of The Lane and East Road. The company has begun removing the debris left from the recent storm.
 3. The road crew has been ditching.
 4. Dave Tatro will be working on the grant project planned on Jepson Road.
 5. The town was awarded the Class 2 grant to resurface a portion of East Road.
 6. The Freightliner truck has a transmission problem and is in the shop. The truck is getting to that age where things are starting to break down and cost money.
 7. Dave Tatro feels the board was given incorrect information about the town's authority over a class 4 road vs. a legal trail. Dave Tatro has researched the statutes and feels the town retains its full authority to regulate traffic over a legal trail, but it is relieved of its responsibility to maintain the road. He recommends the board move forward with the declassification of the 0.3 mile portion of County Road to a legal trail. The board debated the pros and cons and what was best for the town. They discussed the importance of retaining the right for jeeps as well as ATVs and how the decision would impact the local riding club. Nancy Bushika would like to wait to have the topic on the agenda before a decision is made.
- MOTION by Mike Denault to table discussion until the next meeting and include the topic on the agenda. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

RECYCLING

1. Dave Tatro advised that the steel bin at the transfer station should be emptied soon.
2. Dave Tatro discussed rearranging the transfer station so that the shed could be hooked up to electricity and the dumpsters could be moved to make room in between to plow the snow instead of shoveling it. The board was ok with the changes. Nancy Bushika was concerned with people crossing back and forth.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Bob Briggs has signed up for a Vermont Emergency Preparedness two-day conference. Nancy Bushika advised that there is money in the budget for training.

SETTING THE TAX RATE/WARRANT

1. The town clerk explained how the tax rates were set. The proposed homestead rate will be 1.4403 (town rate: 0.2084, highway rate: 0.3733 and homestead education rate: 0.8586). Last year's homestead rate was 2.2667. The proposed non-homestead rate will be 1.7111 (town rate: 0.2084, highway rate: 0.3733 and non-homestead education rate: 1.1294). Last year's non-homestead rate was 2.7288.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to approve the tax rates as presented. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. The Selectboard signed the warrant to collect taxes.

DELINQUENT DOG LIST

Luke McKay left word that he has sent out the next round of papers to bring dog owners into compliance. No one has licensed their dogs in the last two weeks.

TAX BILL INSERT

The Selectboard reviewed the tax bill and thought it should be added to the website.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the tax bill insert. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

RECYCLING UPDATE

Mike Denault confirmed that the town can get rid of all the items it accepts. The board acknowledged that the transfer station runs in the red but is a benefit to our residents. A few items on the recycling update were revised.

UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMIT

The Selectboard approved the uniform municipal excess weight permit application from Beacon Sales Acquisition. The appropriate fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

STAMFORD SIGN

John Dunn received a quote for the construction and installation of a new town sign in the amount of \$850.00. It will be cedar wood with black lettering and will be less than the 12 square foot requirement in the town By-laws. He believes he will be able to obtain donations to cover the cost. Anyone wishing to make a donation toward the new sign should stop by the town office.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to file a permit application for the installation of the new sign. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2023 AUDIT

The completed audit report was given to the Selectboard to review. The auditor's recommendations were discussed.

DVFIBER

No one has applied for financial assistance to help with their DVFiber installation costs.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Many residents have noticed the state troopers in town more frequently.

HIGHWAY GARAGE

Dave Tatro received quotes to repair the highway garage roof. He obtained a quote from Vermont Roofing for a new roof with 3" insulation and a quote for a screwed-on metal roof without insulation from Stevens Roofing in Woodford. The roof leaks and the beams are beginning to rust. The board asked for additional quotes for a metal roof and insulated roof from each company.

2. The energy assessment of the garage was completed. The state has all the information so if funding becomes available, the town could apply for a grant.

CDL DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING

The Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT) is using a different contractor for its CDL testing. Due to a staff shortage, they do not want to conduct testing on site, but want to send employees out for testing. Our town employees would have to travel to Bennington Hospital. The Selectboard will send a letter describing the difficulty this will present and requesting the mobile testing.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of a contractual

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 a contractual matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(2). SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:05 p.m. Dave Tatro was invited to participate.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:10 p.m. Action: A follow up letter will be sent to request the status of the offer.

2. 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 8:11 p.m.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:21 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 8:22 p.m.

Kurt Gamari
Clerk

/las

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.