

TOWN OF STAMFORD
ALL BOARDS MEETING
November 6, 2019
(UNAPPROVED)

Present: Nancy L. Bushika, Carol Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin, Kurt Gamari, Jenifer Hughs, Helen Fields, Kelly Holland, Jessica Tatro, Barbara Malinowski, Cynthia Lamore, David R. Tatro, Luke McKay, David McKay, William Levine, Paul Ethier, Janice Farinon, Carol Ethier-Kipp, Pat Sullivan, Linda Rodovick, Carolyn Burch, Robert Briggs, Tyna Senecal, James Stimpson, Chris Robare, and Lori Shepard.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., opened with the pledge of allegiance and welcomed everyone. The all boards meeting began in 1994 to meet new board members, increase communication, and learn what other boards were doing. The last all boards meeting was held in the spring of this year and everyone felt it was very successful. Everyone took turns introducing themselves and stating what board or group they belonged to.

TOWN CLERK/TREASURER: Lori Shepard spoke about the state's increase in recording fees from \$10.00 per page to \$15.00 per page. She has been busy selling hunting licenses, recycling cards and collecting tax payments. Taxes are due November 21, 2019 and about 35% of taxes are paid.

MODERATOR: Bill Levine stated that town meeting is coming up.

CEMETERY COMMISSIONERS: Janice Farinon explained that Dave McKay has worked very hard doing projects for the commission and said it is nice to have a man on the board. There have been several cremations but no full burials recently. They did not clean any stones this year; they couldn't find anyone to do it. They will be closing Millard Cemetery for the winter.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES: Caroline Burch announced that the library has a lot going on. Danielle Smith and Jennifer Ryan are working well as co-librarians to provide great service for our patrons. They are bringing in new books and taking unused books out of circulation. They are utilizing the inter-library loan program and OverDrive which allows the library to offer thousands of ebooks and audio books. Many community groups use the library as their base of operations which brings new people into the library. The summer reading program brought lots of children which morphed into the summer garden camp. The tile project coordinated by Victoria Jefferies brought people together and will be integrated into landscaping around the building. She encouraged people to visit their website: stamfordlibrary.org. Tyna Senecal said they are redistributing books to area nursing homes instead of throwing them away, which is a great program. Jen Ryan obtained a \$2,500.00 grant to purchase books for the students.

SELECTBOARD: Nancy Bushika advised that the Selectboard is still working on getting all dogs in town registered and has issued tickets through the Vermont Judicial Bureau for the first time. It is similar to speeding tickets where people either have to send in a fine or request a hearing. They will be revising the Dog [and Wolf-Hybrid] Ordinance. The Selectboard has been working to answer the question of who owns and has authority over the town/school building and grounds. They will be discussing the matter at their next meeting. The board has requested a proposal from the high speed internet company for Stamford. The board has contracted with a firm to carry out the reappraisal ordered by the state and conduct the assessor work thereafter.

SCHOOL BOARD: Their next regular meeting will be on November 13, 2019. The big Superboard meeting on November 18, 2019 will be held in Stamford. It is usually rotated between towns. On November 19, 2019 is the Interstate Merger Committee meeting. Cindy Lamore stated they are heading into the budget season and Carl Taylor, who served on the Finance Committee, will be greatly missed. They will also be reviewing and updating their policies.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER: Jim Stimpson said things are going pretty well. There have been a lot of firsts for him. 23 building permits have been issued and a lot of houses this year. The Planning Commission has been reviewing the Zoning By-Laws which are in the final stages.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR: Bill Levine announced that the generator worked for a total of 15 hours recently due to a blown transformer. It was a good test and the generator worked successfully. He had hoped to complete an exercise with the Red Cross emergency trailer but will organize it for next summer instead. He asked for volunteers interested in serving in the event of an emergency. The town will be responsible for the first 72 hours and the Red Cross will respond after that. He recommended anyone needing information or guidance to various resources should call 211 which is the state's universal aid system.

DOG OFFICER: Luke McKay stated that the last couple weeks have been very hectic. He has picked up two dogs and both of them required veterinary care. One had to be euthanized and he is working with the Vermont State Police on the investigation. All dogs need to be licensed with the town office by April 1st of each year so please visit the town office this spring.

ENERGY COORDINATOR: Jenifer Hughs attended a workshop recently on climate change. She is working with the Planning Commission on its effort to update the Zoning By-Laws.

PLANNING COMMISSION: Dan Potvin said the commission has accomplished a lot this year. They updated the town plan to include an energy plan which gives the town a say in deciding where renewal energy such as wind turbines are placed. They are almost done updating the Zoning By-Laws with the purpose of simplifying the language, encouraging small business and making them less restrictive. The commission signed up for a free housing feasibility study by the Bennington County Regional Commission which will provide valuable planning data on how Stamford could grow. They are considering the designation of a village center. Helen Fields noted that this designation could open up a variety of grants and could help the Building Community Group with their goals. Helen Fields has asked the BCRC to provide a GIS map of Stamford. Helen Fields said there has been great, in-depth discussions at their meetings and encouraged people to attend. She asked for a centralized calendar since meetings from different committees are often held on the same evenings preventing residents from attending both.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION: Kurt Gamari said the board has been stagnant. Sheila Lawrence provided a report saying the commission is still interested in preparing an information sheet regarding invasive species and endangered wildlife.

ROAD COMMISSIONER: Dave Tatro said winter is coming. He reminded residents that the town has a reduced service policy, which is basically no service between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. If you get stuck, don't call the Road Commissioner or the State Police, call a tow truck. The highway department purchased a new truck last February which is a great asset. They have installed a well and septic system at the garage.

BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION (BCRC) REPRESENTATIVES: Dan Potvin has attended several meetings this year, the most recent was a tour of the wood chip burning furnace in Bennington. The BCRC works between the towns and the state and supports towns to push back the state when necessary. At another meeting a speaker showed how small businesses and stores are better for the local economy than large chain stores.

GREEN UP DAY COORDINATOR: Pat Sullivan announced that Green Up Day is scheduled for May 2, 2020. Each year the program has grown and she especially encourages kids to participate. Last year she had a high of 65 volunteers who picked up 110 bags of trash and she would like to see more this year. She thanked Dave Tatro for providing the town truck at the school for the morning.

HEALTH OFFICER: Kurt Gamari said there is not much to report. He didn't have many calls about free range chickens this year.

STAMFORD/CLARKSBURG MERGER COMMITTEE: At their next meeting on November 19, 2019 they will be interviewing for the 2nd phase of the merger which will ultimately provide concrete numbers and a shape of how the district will look like. iBerkshires does a great job relaying information about their activities.

STAMFORD VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY, INC .: Paul Either reported that the fire department had a busy year. They obtained \$51,000.00 in grants and purchased 12 sets of turnout gear with a 10% match. They also received a grant to purchase an industrial-strength clothes washer at the fire house to wash their turnout gear. They received funding to install two new dry hydrants, one at the old state garage on Main Road and the other at the Tatro Road bridge. Their roster is a challenge and they would like to recruit new members. They painted two sides of the firehouse this summer and made repairs to the repeater on the windmill tower. They own a 1988 vintage pumper which they purchased in 2009 from California and a 2006 tanker. It is time to replace the pumper but the cost is \$360,000.00. They have applied for a grant every year but have not been selected. They will apply again this year but if they are denied again, they will need to look at other ways to fund the purchase.

BROADBAND GROUP: Bob Briggs said the group is trying to keep their heads above water. This summer they installed a fiber connection at the firehouse which provides the best connection in town. There was discussion on social media about outages they sustained this year. They are a cooperative with only a few members who do this work for free. They are interested in learning what the Matrix Group has to offer for the high speed fiber network but are concerned that it might be too expensive for Stamford. They are looking into a Communication Union District where multiple towns participate to obtain high speed internet.

STAMFORD SEED SAVERS: Helen Fields said they had a lot of success this summer. They had a seed library in the town lobby and many people started gardens for the first time this year. They sold many plants at the church bazaar in June. They built eight more beds at the tennis court gardens and started a summer camp for 25 kids and parent volunteers. The community harvest festival was a great way to use vegetables grown in the garden and bring people together. They obtained several different grants and purchased a Jura composting machine that teaches school children the importance of composting. She has been working with two children to create a website and will be finishing construction of a shed at the gardens. The shed will have space for classroom study and run-off for rain collection. She invites volunteers of all ages. This winter they would like to invite speakers to their meetings.

BUILDING COMMUNITY GROUP: Pat Sullivan explained that their group meets each month. They are working with Norwich University students to design a community building. They will be finishing a tiled sign and benches outside in the front of the building, a sign over the town office window and a bulletin board outside the library. The Norwich architectural class came to Stamford to view the space. It was great to meet them and see them work. Next they will need an estimate to move forward. If anyone is able to provide an estimate and/or to build the building, please let her know. She has five or six funding sources but needs the budget figures first. Pat Sullivan is interested in the Planning Commission's designation of a village center. With the cooperation of the Seed Savers Group, they held the community harvest supper which was attended by 80-85 people. She hopes to do it again next year.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS COMMITTEE: Helen Fields stated that this is a newly formed group by appointment of the Selectboard. It was created to provide support to other groups, to promote their ideas for the benefit of the town. They are creating a packet of information of the various groups in town and different things that are happening. Helen Fields has been working with Sally Bohl to gather telephone numbers to create a communication network in town with captains appointed to call or email residents in their neighborhoods.

VETERANS DINNER: The pot luck dinner to honor our veterans will be held on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at 5 p.m. at the school.

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA: The ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, December 15, 2019 at 12 p.m. at the Stamford School and wreaths will be placed on graves in the two town cemeteries. They are short 32 wreaths. Anyone interested in purchasing a wreath should contact Donna Engel, Donna Whitcomb or stop at the town office where forms are available.

Nancy Bushika thanked everyone for coming and asked if another all boards meeting should be scheduled in 6 months or a year. Only a couple responses of 6 months were received.

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Nancy L. Bushika
Clerk pro tem

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