

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
November 6, 2020
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Carol A. Fachini, Daniel J. Potvin, Christopher Warren, and Michael G. Denault.

Visitors: Marta Miller, Pat Sullivan, Ruth West, and Zach Winokur.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone. She read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Some correspondence added to the agenda but there were no changes to its order.

OPEN RECYCLING BIDS

The board received one bid from Casella Waste with the following prices:

Food waste (2 food waste carts at the transfer station and 1 cart at the school) - \$313.49/month
Comingled recycling (30 yard container) – current market prices (now \$154.00 per ton)
with a haul fee of \$295.00

Construction debris and MSW – current market price (now \$102.00 per ton) with a haul fee
of \$295.00

Metal – current market price (now \$143.40 per ton) with a haul fee of \$295.00

The board will take some time to review these prices and compare them with our current charges. Ruth West asked if the town could negotiate the fees with the contractor.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Ruth West asked the Selectboard to consider postponing the tax due date for a month or two because many people might have trouble paying on time this year. Chris Warren mentioned the town's abatement process. Nancy Bushika noted that we have many residents that make monthly payments toward their taxes and plan ahead so they don't have to come up with the full amount at once. Mike Denault felt the decision should be placed on the agenda for the next meeting. He said the town also needs money to function.
2. Pat Sullivan stated that the Building Community Group is still active. All of the grants she is aware of have re-directed their funding to COVID-related needs.
3. The Wreaths Across America program will take place on December 20, 2020 at 12 p.m. We are short on wreaths compared to last year's donations. Information will be circulated soon.
4. Marta Miller shared that she is now living in town full time and wanted to come to the Selectboard meeting and be part of the community. Zach Winokur agreed and would like to contribute also.

MINUTES

MOTION by Chris Warren to accept the regular meeting minutes of October 16, 2020 as written.

SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #43 \$ 9,586.09 payroll

WARRANT #44 \$125,774.52 accounts payable

WARRANT #45 \$ 7,277.15 payroll

WARRANT #46 \$309,523.91 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro said the trucks are ready for winter and have already handled their first snowstorm.
2. Dave Tatro has received most of the parts for the Zetor tractor. The entire engine needs to be rebuilt and the crew hopes to work on it over the next week.
3. Nancy Bushika suggested that now would be a good time to write a letter to Green Mountain Power concerning the tree work completed by Davey Tree Service. Dave Tatro agreed.

RECYCLING

1. Nancy Bushika asked if we should consider punching cards yet or accepting money for demolition. The town office is selling new access cards as of November 1, 2020.
2. The town office received a phone call from a resident feeling uncomfortable using the recycling center because the attendants are not always wearing masks. Dan Potvin noted that they are working outside. They can also remain socially distanced, which is why the town is not punching cards. Dave Tatro has purchase masks for the workers and said they usually wear masks but if they take a break in the garage, they might forget to put it back on when they go out.
3. A company in Wilmington will take our freezers, air conditioners and appliances with coolant once we have accrued a truck load. Readsboro will only take electronics, not other appliances. Dave Tatro feels the state will not allow us to accept the appliances because we don't have a proper storage area. If the town cannot dispose of them or if the state won't allow us to accept them, how will residents dispose of their old appliances? Bill Levine suggested the town contact Central Radio to see if they would be willing to work with us.
4. Nancy Bushika attended the last Alliance meeting. They are in the process of updating the Solid Waste Implementation Plan (SWIP). Stamford's share to participate in the Alliance this year is \$4,800.00, which is slightly less than last year. The state requires three household hazardous waste days per year. Rutland collects hazardous waste year round. Bennington and Dorset each host an event and Stamford and Searsburg might hold a small joint event this coming year. The Alliance is considering forming a Solid Waste District.

SELECTBOARD MEETING DATES

Mike Denault feels meeting on a Friday night is very difficult for many board members as well as visitors. He would like to change meetings to Tuesday night since disinfection of the gym could take place on Wednesday, the remote learning day. Chris Warren said Tuesdays are very difficult for him and Thursdays are best. Dave Tatro suggested if too many people show up and social distancing cannot be accommodated, the meeting could be adjourned to Friday and planned for the gym.

MOTION by Mike Denault to move the regular Selectboard meetings back to Thursday evenings at 6 p.m. with the plan to adjourn the meeting to the next Friday night in the gym if social distancing cannot be maintained. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Zacharias Clay, Heather Tietgens, and Tyna Senecal have volunteered to serve on the Finance Committee. The board will keep the same guidelines. They are not required to do the school budget and the fire department is also a gray area. Pat Sullivan expressed her frustration in trying to work with the Schoolboard last year. The budget is prepared primarily by the WSSU and the Schoolboard did not know answers to many of the questions and they do not have their final numbers by the time the Finance Committee needs to make their decisions. Mike Denault feels transparency is important. The

town provides the Finance Committee with copies of their budget and is willing to discuss every expense. Shouldn't someone on the school side be held accountable to provide answers so our voters can understand the school budget. Ruth West noted that the Schoolboard sold the pre-k change to the voters, saying tuition paid by non-resident preschoolers would offset the huge budget increase. Ruth West said not only did this not happen, but she said they are not offering pre-school at all this year. MOTION Dan Potvin to appoint Zacharias Clay, Heather Tietgens, and Tyna Senecal to the Finance Committee through the 20201 budget season. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine stated there were two power outages recently because tree limbs fell on the lines.
2. Bill Levine asked the board to consider moving Harry Klein up to Fire Warden and appointing Mitch Morandi as Deputy Fire Warden. He said Charlie Dolle who is the current Fire Warden is not doing the job and Harry Klein is doing all the work. Nancy Bushika noted that the current Fire Warden terms expire on June 30, 2021. Charlie Dolle will be contacted to see if he is still interested in doing the Fire Warden job.

APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

The Planning Commission has posted the vacant Administrative Officer position around town. There is construction in town that needs to be addressed. The Selectboard considered appointing a temporary Administrative Officer until the position can be filled. Mike Denault considered himself and Dan Potvin acting as temporary Administrative Officers if they cannot find anyone. Dave Bugbee was appointed temporary Administrative Officer last time and the board will contact him to see if he will accept it again.

GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST PURCHASE

The National Forest submitted a draft letter for the Selectboard's signature indicating that they would not oppose the sale of land in Stamford to the Green Mountain National Forest. Mike Denault stated that he is against their purchase of the land, but he was not at the last meeting and the board voted not to oppose it. Mike Denault feels their purchase hurts the town because we receive less tax money than when the property is owned privately. He feels the Selectboard can't prevent the sale, but could have expressed opposition to sell to an entity that doesn't pay taxes. They are taking over 1,000 acres of land that we will never get back and they will impose restrictions on the use of the property, especially ATV use. The National Forest now owns more than half the acreage in Stamford. Dan Potvin noted that if groups want to organize mountain biking, cross country skiing or hiking, the National Forest will consider allowing trails to be made and work with these groups.

MOTION by Chris Warren to sign the letter as presented. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Mike Denault). Motion APPROVED.

FINANCIALS

The 3rd quarter financials were given to the board and Lori Shepard is available to answer any questions.

VETERANS SIGN

Nancy Bushika told Dan Potvin that the sign to honor our veterans out front looks beautiful. It was a great idea and is very impressive. Dan Potvin said he would like to do a new sign every year.

TOWN OFFICE

1. Nancy Bushika thanked Mike Denault for installing the Plexiglas shield at the town office window to protect the town clerk and assistant town clerk. He did a great job.
2. Nancy Bushika thanked Lori Shepard and Theresa Denault for handling the November election. It went very smoothly and the ballot counting went well.
3. Lori Shepard noted that the ballot drop box/mail slot installation was very successful and was used by numerous voters. It is already being used by taxpayers to drop off their tax payments.

CORRESPONDENCE TO SELECTBORD

Nancy Bushika read a letter from a resident on Main Road asking the highway department to dig a ditch along his property to control water runoff. The resident will be referred to the Bennington Agency of Transportation office since it involves working within the state's right-of-way.

2019 TAX SALE

Sally Bohl submitted delinquent tax bills for the properties the town acquired at last year's tax sale. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to pay the tax bills. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

APPROPRIATION REQUEST

The town received a letter from Vermont Family Network asking for a \$250.00 appropriation to help them in their mission to assist families with children with special needs. The Selectboard's policy states that new appropriation requests need to submit a petition with the signatures of 5% of the voters. The board considered whether they should temporarily suspend their policy in light of the COVID pandemic and allow the request to be on the warrant without a petition. The board members were unfamiliar with this organization from the Burlington, VT area and whether any assistance is received by Stamford families. A letter will be sent explaining the town policy and the necessity to submit a petition with signatures to be on the warrant.

DRAFT BUILDING PERMITS AND NOTICE

The board reviewed the drafts of the Application for a Building or Conditional Use Permit, the Application to the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and the Notice of Building Construction. A few changes were made to clarify and simplify the forms.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the two applications and the notice with the revisions. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The town office continues to be closed in accordance with the Governor's Stay Home – Stay Safe

Order to slow the spread of COVID-19, but we are open by appointment and are willing to assist our residents by email, regular mail, or telephone.

2. Tax bills have been issued and are due in hand by 8 p.m. on Thursday, November 19, 2020. 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.

3. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org.