

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
August 9, 2021
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Pamela Tworig, Megan Bouchard, Robert Bouchard, Richard Cristofolini, Marta Miller, David McKay, E-Jay Tatro, Jessica Tatro, Luke McKay, Natalie Yorke, John Carpenter, Carolyn Brooks, Barbara Barlow, James Beaupre, Caroline Beaupre, Jo-Ann Irace, Louis Irace, Jessica Tatro, Paul Dupuis, Deborah Darling, Seth Bardo, Scott Boettle, Amal Lebbos, Nancy Torres, Douglas Wright, Mary Lou Wright, Candice Voghel, Damien Wimpenny, Debra Burchard, Robert Burchard, Morgan Roy, Tyler Wojkowski, Bryer Crawford, Jamie Williams, James Williams, Peter Greenbush, Pat Sullivan, Caroline Burch, Clay Zeller-Townson, Beth Phelps, Dorothy Howe, Sally Bohl, Sheila Pecor, Kurt Gamari, Tracy Markland, Sandra Clough Howard, Barbara Goldstein, Margot Falkner, David Senecal, Emma Strohmaier, Amy Johns, April Sanders, Sid Sanders, Ruth Vosburg, Linda Rodovick, Carolyn Bloniaz, Mitchell Mullett, John Paul Potvin, Janet Green, Joseph Tracy, Pricilla Tracy, Bruce Harley, Mieke Kohl, Debra Righi, James Righi, James Senecal, Tyna Senecal, Michael Senecal, Pamela Senecal, Wendy Powell, Stephen Bechtel, Michael Kuranda, Bruce Richardson, Tina Lemaire, Charles Lemaire, Leanne Briggs, Robert Briggs, Jeff Drasin, Dena Drasin, Marie Kelly-Whitney, Stephen Greene, Elijah Greene, Lynn Austin, Paul Austin, Liz Fusco, Aiden Earley, Joseph Miller, Bernadette Aubin, Rachelle Bleau, Lois Bona, Gary Bellows, Maria Moulton, Denise Rondeau, Eleanor Derby-Kilfoyle, Chris Derby-Kilfoyle, Maura Hawkins, Theresa Denault, John Engel, Michael Brothers, Angela Trudeau, Jennifer Bushika, Kenneth Bushika, Laura Champagne, Trevor Tatro, and Michael Milazzo.

Travis Buttle, Justin Turner and Jake Johnson, Game Wardens.
Danny Hale, Vermont ATV Sportsman's Association (VASA).
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. The agenda was amended to add correspondence. There was no change to its order.

HARVESTSTAMFORD COMMUNITY SUPPER

Pat Sullivan thanked many who worked hard, but announced that the supper was cancelled since they could not ensure it would be COVID-19 safe. Instead, on Saturday, August 28, 2021 they will collect donations of food from 9 a.m. to noon which will be delivered to the Food Pantry in Bennington, Vermont. Last year they collected 400 pounds of food.

ATV/UTV TRAILS

Jessica Tatro spoke on behalf of the Stamford Ridge Riders, a newly formed local ATV/OTV Club. Their mission is to provide access to Green Mountain trails safely while having fun exploring recreational riding. She said the club members live here and raise kids here and want to encourage community involvement and partnership. The local club would like to take over maintenance of the existing trails

on Klondike Road, Risky Ranch Road and the small portion of the Class 4 section of County Road which is already approved by the town for riding. They feel educating members in safety practices is important.

There were very many residents who voiced their opposition to allowing ATV/OTVs to ride on town roads. They cited many negatives that were repeated throughout the discussion such as excessive noise, erosion to roads and environment, speeding, liability issues, increased drinking, littering, dirt and dust, abuse of personal responsibility, disruption to animal life, inability to properly police trails, etc. The game wardens also spoke of their experiences, both good and bad, and stated they are spread very thin, sometimes dealing with 14-18 towns in one day. They said Forest Road #364 from Mill Road to Stamford Pond was torn up so badly, it was the worst he's ever seen it. Danny Hale, the Executive Director of VASA said the town should respect the residents who want to start a club, do it the right way, and are willing to take on the responsibility to manage and improve the roads and trails. He noted that they are not asking for any more trails, or new use of town roads, they are just asking to keep and maintain sections where riding is already allowed. Many people felt the increased use of ATVs in general will prevent their peaceful enjoyment of their property and ruin the beauty of the area. There was a lot of confusion and Mike Denault confirmed with Danny Hale that dirt bikes are not allowed on VASA trails. He is frustrated that the state passed a law requiring that all riders be a member to ride on VASA trails. Dave Tatro felt the local club has a lot of good people, but he has seen roads in other towns that are torn up very bad every weekend from riding. He felt we would be better off without VASA and keeping things local. The Selectboard also received many written letters of opposition from residents.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

1. Steve Bechtel asked about the resurfacing of the roads. The first coat is complete and the company will return in the next few weeks to finish with the chip seal coat.
2. Deb Darling asked if money could be included in next year's budget to clean out the culvert on Clough Road. Dave Tatro advised that he can only work within the town's right of way which may not be enough.
3. Laura Champagne would like the town to consider using different sand and gravel. Dave Tatro said he uses materials that are readily available and conform to state code and standard.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #31 \$ 6,554.37 payroll
- WARRANT #32 \$55,212.94 accounts payable

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 5, 2021 as written.

SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew is working on the culvert project under the Clean Water Act Grant and hopes to be finished next week.
2. The roadside mowing is almost done.
3. Dave Tatro has been re-grading roads due to the rain and still has a lot of ditching to do.
4. The new truck might be completed and ready in the next couple weeks.
5. Dave Tatro noted that the new ATV club offered a completely different proposal than what was stated by the Jack Pine Pirates Club in Readsboro. Dave Tatro said he is against opening up other roads for ATV use but if the board wants to consider allowing ATV use to continue on the existing roads, he

would be willing to negotiate maintenance with the local members. Mike Denault agreed that we don't need VASA. Discussion continued and Mike Denault will look into what is allowable now under the new law.

RECYCLING

The Recycling Monitors are not collecting payment for demo at the transfer station. People are receiving statements to pay at the town office, and although a few have dropped off payment, most people have not paid. The board agreed that the Recycling Monitors should begin to accept cash or check payments for demo when it is dropped off. Anyone with outstanding demo receipts should send payment to the town office by mail, utilize the mail slot, or stop in when the office is open.

TOWN WEBSITE

The board reviewed the two proposals they received. 10F Design in Brattleboro bid \$2,850.00 to build the website with a monthly support plan of two hours/month for \$190.00/month or \$135.00/hour emergency tech support as needed without a monthly support plan. Jason Morin from Berkshire Web and Tech, LLC bid \$3,000.00 for the initial website build. His minimum monthly charge is \$49.00/month but he estimates the needs of a small town government to be around \$200-\$300/month if all administration is not handled in house. 10F Design proposed a WordPress website which is what the town currently has and is trying to move away from to increase cyber safety and security. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the proposal from Jason Morin for a new website design and town email addresses. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

DELINQUENT DOGS

Luke McKay, Dog Officer, stated that he contacted all of the dog owners who have not yet licensed their dogs. He got some flak from people who did not want him calling. After waiting three weeks, he called the dog owners again. There has been very little response and eleven people still have not licensed their dogs. The town cannot consider the dog licenses as expired until 90 days after the Governor's Emergency Declaration ended, which would be September 12, 2021. Luke McKay suggested sending a letter indicating that the dog licenses will be considered expired on September 13, 2021 and penalties will be assessed and tickets in the Judicial Civil Court will be issued at that point. The Selectboard was in agreement.

BUILDING PERMIT VIOLATIONS

It was discussed at the last meeting that there is no penalty for people who build structures without getting a building permit. The town is losing a lot of tax dollars because these buildings are not being assessed. Nancy Bushika will contact Jim Sullivan at the Bennington County Regional Commission to learn what options the town has to enforce building permit applications before building.

BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Mike Denault noted that the sheriff's department is patrolling less hours per week than their budgeted contract amount. He will reach out to the sheriff.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The town has complied with the first step in the Hazard Mitigation Plan grant process and will be taking the next step shortly.

TOWN OWNED PROPERTY

1. The Selectboard signed deeds transferring Lots 176, 178, 264, 265, 278 and 378 in Alpenwald to Charles Gregg.

2. Aaron Tyler placed an offer to purchase two lots in Alpenwald.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the offer from Aaron Tyler to purchase Lot 308 for \$500.00 and Lot 401 for \$500.00. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Lori Shepard advised that the town received the payment of \$892.00 which is the remaining portion of the school's half of town meeting costs.

TOWN ASSESSOR/ASSESSOR CLERK

1. The Selectboard received one letter of interest for the Assessor Clerk position from Debra Burchard. MOTION by Mike Denault to consider the application and schedule an interview during an executive session at next Selectboard meeting. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Last week Nancy Bushika, Sally Bohl, Mike Denault and Lori Shepard met with Ed Clodfelter and John Tiffany from NEMRC. The meeting went well and NEMRC agreed to provide Assessor services at \$95.00/hour beginning August 2021 and will provide a reappraisal proposal next year. They were willing to assist the town while our new Assessor Clerks receive training.

MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept and sign the Agreement for Assessment Services and hire NEMRC as Assessor. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

RESIGNATIONS

1. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to accept the resignation of Pat Sullivan from the Community Projects Committee and as Green Up Day Coordinator, with much regret. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. MOTION by Nancy Bushika to acknowledge the decision by Angela Brothers not to accept the Justice of the Peace position. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Anyone interested in becoming a Justice of the Peace for the town should send a letter of interest to the Selectboard.

VACCINATION MANDATES

Dan Potvin said there are some Governors who are requiring all public employees to be vaccinated and asked if our town employees would be considered public employees. The board questioned whether the Governor had jurisdiction over town employees and Dan Potvin wants the board to stand behind our employees.

REMOTE ACCESS TO SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

The Selectboard was asked to begin Zoom participation again. They will probably only return to hybrid zoom meetings if the Governor makes another emergency declaration order.

JOINT MEETINGS WITH SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Nancy Bushika has not heard back from the School Directors about resuming joint meetings to discuss the ownership and authority of the building and grounds. The board will request the reservation of the gym for the first and third Thursdays of every month for Selectboard meetings if too many people attend and cannot fit in the town room.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Brandon Field. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The town office is open with the following hours: Monday – Closed; Tuesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Wednesday – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; Thursday – 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.
2. The HarveStamford Community Supper has been cancelled. Instead, on Saturday, August 28, 2021 food donations will be collected from 9 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and delivered to the Food Pantry in Bennington.
3. Anyone interested in becoming a Justice of the Peace for the town should send a letter of interest to the Selectboard.
4. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org for town information and updates.