

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
August 20, 2020
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Theresa Denault, Bonnie Lamore, Scott Lamore, Debra Johnson, Pat Sullivan.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
Eunice Rice, Health Officer.
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She led the Pledge of Allegiance and welcomed everyone. She read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. There were several additions to the agenda: a Household Hazardous Waste Day announcement, a letter of representation to the auditors, the warrant to collect taxes, the review of the tax bill insert and discussion of the Zoning Bylaws and the public hearing. There were no changes to the order of the agenda.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

1. Eunice Rice was appointed Health Officer by the state. She introduced herself to the board, summarized her background and her employment at the Bennington Veterans Home. She was recently contacted for advice by a representative of the Stamford Community Church about a sales event they are planning. Eunice Rice stated that it is not her job to enforce mask wearing or social distancing requirements, but to educate and assist the community. She said she is available to help residents as needed.
2. Debra Johnson submitted a letter to the Selectboard with several pictures portraying difficulties she is having with her neighbors. Several of her complaints were outside the jurisdiction of the Selectboard and while they sympathized with her, they stated that the town cannot get involved with neighborly disputes. Mike Denault suggested that Eunice Rice, the town Health Officer follow up on her complaint that the neighbor's dumpster regularly overflows and poses a health risk. Dave Tatro will fix the ruts on her grass that were caused by the plow truck turning around. Although normally the highway department does not repair ground due to winter plowing, Dave Tatro acknowledged that the turnaround area is extremely small and the large town truck cannot turn around without driving a bit on her property.
3. Bonnie and Scott Lamore agreed with Debra Johnson's statements. They tried to submit pictures by email and ended up showing the Selectboard pictures on their phone. Several of their complaints were beyond the Selectboard's control and Chris Warren suggested they contact a lawyer or the police. Their main complaint was that a neighbor is leaving piles of sticks, pine needles and debris in the road. Bonnie and Scott Lamore have paid for many nails to be removed from their tires. The Selectboard agreed that debris should not be left on the road or in the town's right-of-way. The board will send letters to all residents on the road with the reminder that it is illegal to put debris in the roadway.
4. Pat Sullivan advised that the HarveStamford Community Share is planned for Saturday, August 29, 2020 from 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. She asked residents to donate any fresh produce they can share to help others in need. Mike Denault will set up a tent for them.

ZONING BYLAW CHANGES AND PUBLIC HEARING

There was a question as to whether the wording in the revised Bylaws would allow accessory buildings to be built without a primary building. Aaron Malachuk spoke to Jim Sullivan at the Bennington County Regional Commission. He advised that Section 2.2.1 allows for one small accessory building not more than 300 square feet in area and 10

feet in height to be built without a permit. This clause is required by law. Jim Sullivan stated that our Bylaws do allow for a shed or small building to be built, without the need of a primary building, but would require a building permit. Jim Sullivan recommended the Selectboard reduce the permit application fee for these structures so that it is less than the fee to build a house. Jim Sullivan said a secondary building without a primary building would, in essence, become the primary building.

MINUTES

Lori Shepard noted that the minutes from the last meeting were erroneously dated August 16, 2020 instead of August 6th. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of August 6, 2020 as revised. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #33 \$ 8,052.70 payroll

WARRANT #34 \$30,401.06 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

The Selectboard reviewed and confirmed financial statements for the months of June and July.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The roads are very dry. Dave Tatro is planning to grade the roads after a good rain.
2. The highway department has been doing a lot of ditching. They are trying to finish the roadside mowing and the Class 4 roads.

RECYCLING

1. The next free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 12, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dorset School in Dorset, VT.
2. The recertification application for the transfer station was discussed. Cassandra Wolfanger from the VT Department of Environmental Conservation advised that the town signed up to collect e-waste in 2018. All e-waste must be properly stored, dated, labeled and reported. Dave Tatro advised that we do not have a suitable area to store e-waste which would meet the required specifications of the state.

MOTION by Chris Warren to decline to participate in the e-waste collection program due to the town's inability to comply with the state's storage regulations. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The towns of Readsboro and Searsburg accept e-waste at their transfer stations for free. Readsboro's transfer station is open on Wednesdays from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sundays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Searsburg transfer station is open on Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

BUDGET/EXPENSES

The treasurer offered to answer any questions concerning the 2nd quarter financials which were provided to the board. She reviewed the new teleconference and zoom fees incurred in order to conduct meetings during COVID.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine has not had a chance to view the visibility of house 911 numbers around town.
2. Bill Levine has ordered the new phone system. It contains one microphone in the base and comes with four wireless microphones. He hopes that everyone will be able to hear better at Selectboard meetings with this phone.
3. The state has allocated masks for 25% of the town's population and Bill Levine has received the order. They are made of a soft white cloth and fit very well. Any residents who are in need of a mask should contact Bill Levine or the town office at stamfordvt@live.com or (802) 694-1361.

2019 AUDIT

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve and sign the representation letter to the auditing firm Love, Cody & Company for the 2019 audit. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2020 TAXES

MOTION by Dan Potvin to approve and sign the warrant authorizing the treasurer to send out tax bills. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard also reviewed the tax bill insert. The 2020 tax bills will be mailed to property owners shortly.

2020 BUDGET

Mike Denault asked Nancy Bushika to explain her comment at the last meeting that the town was over budget. She explained that income from punch cards will be low this year since the monitors are not punching cards due to the virus. Late fees for dog licensing have been waived so that expected income is also lost. There may be some other reduced income as well.

COVID-19 GRANTS

Lori Shepard explained several different grants being offered to reimburse municipalities for COVID-19-related expenses. Qualifying expenses are very specific but she believes the town qualifies for reimbursement of some of its costs. The due dates are in early September. Although there is a land records digitation grant available, she will not pursue that one. The state will cover the initial startup costs to scan records and make them available online, but there is a sizeable monthly cost which the town will be responsible for after that.

REQUEST TO USE FOYER

Mike Denault stated that Pat Sullivan's request to use the building's foyer during the HarveStamford Community Share was originally denied and then the School Board reversed their decision and agreed that the foyer was a community area. Mike Denault acknowledged that the school Board is working under the declared emergency guidelines of the Agency of Education, but he feels they apply directly to buildings that only contain schools. Our building is different since it is also used by the community.

LOCATION OF SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

The Selectboard will not be able to hold meetings outside much longer as the weather turns colder. If several visitors come to their meeting, they will not be able to hold them inside and meet the social distancing guidelines. The Selectboard asked to continue using the gym to hold their meetings but were denied. They offered to disinfect the gym after their meetings, but were still denied. Dan Potvin asked Bill Levine if he could declare the need to conduct town business an emergency and command use of the gym. Bill Levine said he could look into that and also suggested holding Selectboard meetings at the firehouse. Mike Denault does not want to put children at risk, but he is also concerned that if the town is not firm, they will lose the community's right to use the building. Mike Denault noted that the School Board is allowing the November election to take place in the gym. The children will leave on Monday and not return until Thursday after the election so the area should be germ free by then. Bill Levine suggested the Selectboard move their meetings to Friday evenings. This would provide adequate time for sanitization and it is the same time frame that is acceptable for the election. The Selectboard is unable to comply with the open meeting laws and acceptable social distancing without the use of the gym if they have more than a couple visitors. A letter will be written to the principal and School Board Chair.

FOOD SHORTAGES

Dan Potvin is very concerned about food shortages this fall. He feels the Selectboard members are the leaders of the town and they have to be prepared to help community members in need. He has been handing out grain corn to people to plant in the spring. He feels it is important for people to stock up on food and to make plans to plant a garden in the spring. If Walmart and grocery stores closed, we would have a big problem. Many farmers have gone out of business this year.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The next free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on September 12, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dorset School in Dorset, VT.
2. The Selectboard scheduled a public hearing to receive comments and questions concerning the proposed revisions to the Zoning Bylaws for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7 p.m.
3. 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.
4. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org.