

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

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

Visitors: Theresa Denault, David Orton, Laurence Potvin, Pat Sullivan.
Caroline Burch and Linda Rodovick, Library Board of Trustees
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
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 no changes to the agenda or its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS:

LIBRARY IMPROVEMENTS

On behalf of the Library Board of Trustees, Caroline Burch, presented pictures of the library's project to install a new desk and shelving area for the librarian. It should allow the librarian to function more effectively. She hopes the project will begin next month and they will not need any funds from the town.

HARVESTAMFORD COMMUNITY SHARE

The August HarveStamford Community Supper has been cancelled due to the coronavirus. In its place, a HarveStamford Community Share is planned for Saturday, August 29, 2020. Please drop off any fresh produce you are able to share at the Stamford School between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. All donations will be delivered to Berkshire Food Project in North Adams, MA. The Berkshire Food Project was chosen because they are still functioning at this time and are willing to prepare a meal with the donations free of charge to anyone at the North Adams Congregational Church on August 31, 2020 from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of July 16, 2020 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Carol Fachini asked that her comment be added to the July 22, 2020 minutes that she agrees with Pam Tworig on getting the town involved in all decisions concerning the school/town building and land.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of July 22, 2020 as revised. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #31 \$ 8,158.30 payroll

WARRANT #32 \$16,287.55 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The road crew had to pick up several tree limbs that came down during the storm, but the roads did not suffer any damage.
2. Dave Tatro noted several driveways that need to be addressed because water is spilling into the road. On East Road silt has run off and filled up the ditch and culvert. There is also a driveway that was paved and the contractor paved right into the road. The property owner did not obtain a driveway permit. Dave Tatro will speak to the homeowners and will follow up with letters.

3. Dave Tatro suggested other intersections in town with reduced visibility for cars pulling out. The letter asking residents to trim their hedges in the road rights-of-way will be sent out.
4. The board discussed the offer made by a resident to donate their property to the town. The property is located on the left of Mill Road just after the intersection with Henry Hill. While the board appreciated the consideration, they did not feel the property would be useful to the town.
MOTION by Dan Potvin to decline the offer to donate property to the town. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. A letter will be written to the resident.
5. Dave Tatro continues to receive complaints from residents concerning the tree work by Davey Tree Service. He spoke to their supervisor who was very nice. He doesn't want to send a letter to the company asking that they correct problems in town until their work is done so that all areas can be addressed.

RECYCLING

1. The recertification application for the transfer station was reviewed. Lori Shepard worked with Dave Tatro to determine the town's daily and yearly maximum capacities. Nancy Bushika recalled that the town requested a waiver of the professional engineer requirement last time and the waiver has been requested for this filing also. The town no longer accepts electronic waste (e-waste) and a sign will be posted at the recycling center. Electronic waste is accepted for free at the Readsboro and Searsburg transfer stations. The board signed the application.
2. The town is fortunate to have Roy Gibson to help out when a transfer station monitor is out.

PROPOSED ZONING BYLAWS

The draft of the new Zoning Bylaws was presented to the Selectboard. The Bylaws passed with minor changes at the Planning Commission's recent public hearing. The Selectboard scheduled its public hearing for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 7 p.m. Dan Potvin is very happy with the updated Bylaws. At the last public hearing, Jim Sullivan from the Bennington County Regional Commission stated that there are only five reasons that Zoning Boards of Adjustment should be granting variances so the legislature now allows waivers to be granted for many instances instead of variances. Nancy Bushika asked what the reasons are and suggested that the information be sent to our local Zoning Board of Adjustment.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. The state is providing all emergency management directors with free masks for distribution in towns. Stamford is eligible to receive up to 25% of the town's population, which is 175-200 masks. Mike Lavarriere expressed an interest in receiving some masks at the transfer station. The town clerk just received a large box of masks, gloves and sanitizers from the elections division.
2. Bill Levine will work on the fire department's 911 listing and will work with the town clerk since the office is behind with the 911 updates.
3. The Vermont Emergency Management Board requires that all houses have their 9111 number posted in a location that is easily visible when driving by. Bill Levine will make another inspection of the town so he can work with residents who are not in compliance.
4. Cold weather is coming and at that point we will not be able to hold meetings outside. Bill Levine would like to use funds from the emergency management budget to purchase a phone system with microphones so that people can call in, hear and participate. Mike Denault was agreeable but confirmed that in-person meetings would still be available for those who want to attend. Bill Levine hopes that this will facilitate communication.

2020 TAX RATE

Lori Shepard and Nancy Bushika reviewed a spreadsheet explaining the calculation of the 2020 tax rate. The board set the 2020 tax rate as follows: to accept the state education homestead rate of \$1.4628 and the non-homestead rate of \$1.7168 as calculated by the State of Vermont. The Selectboard set the municipal tax rate at \$0.3053 and the highway rate at \$0.4881. The total homestead tax rate will be \$2.2562 and the total non-homestead tax rate will be \$2.5102.

ANIMALS ON SCHOOL/TOWN GROUNDS

At the board's request, Dave Tatro installed signs on each of the fences stating No Dogs or Animals Allowed on Town/School property. The Schoolboard is aware of the signs and agree with them.

PERMISSION TO USE PROPERTY

Mike Denault stated that they have given permission to groups to use the property, such as the Seed Savers Group to use the tennis courts. He asked if things go awry in the future and a group doesn't take care of or keep up their project, is it up to the school or the town who gave the permission to deal with it. Bill Levine suggested if the Selectboard gave the permission, they can withdraw the permission if needed.

DOG REMINDER LETTERS

1. The town office has received several responses from residents to license their dogs, or to let the office know they no longer have the dog.
2. The town clerk asked the Vermont League of Cities and Towns if the town's liability would be waived if there is a dog bite incident involving a dog without a rabies vaccination during the emergency declaration period. There was no response.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

The election will be run a little differently because of COVID-19. There will be separate entrance and exits and the election booths must be disinfected in between each voter. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the election. Many residents have voted by absentee ballot so it may be very quiet on election day. The state said voters will not be required to wear masks, and a voter cannot be turned away or prevented from voting if he or she comes to the polls without a mask.

FIRST AMENDMENT

Dan Potvin saw a statement made by Laura Sabilia where she stereotyped a section of the voter base. Although the statement bothered him, he realizes that she has the right to say how she feels under the First Amendment. He feels the idea of political correctness started a slow silencing of people's right to speech. He reminded the board that they took an oath to uphold the constitution. Nancy Bushika felt everyone who has attended Selectboard meetings is able to speak their mind freely. Dan Potvin feels it will continue to heat up as the election gets closer and wants the town to have an environment where we can debate and talk about issues.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Carol A. Fachini
Clerk

CAF/las

REMINDERS

1. The primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at the Stamford Elementary School Hall from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Voters are encouraged to vote by absentee ballot. There will be changes in how the election is run to accommodate the ACCD coronavirus safety guidelines such as a separate entrance and exit and six-foot distancing. Voting booths will be disinfected in between voters. More information will be available as the election draws nearer.

2. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office. Forms can be obtained by calling the town office at (802) 694-1361 and can be returned by mail or by appointment.
3. Absentee ballots will be available until 12:00 p.m. on Friday, August 7, 2020. Please call the town office at 802-694-1361.
4. Two free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Days will be held, the first on Saturday, August 8, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Mt. Anthony Union Middle School in Bennington, VT and the second on September 12, 2020 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Dorset School in Dorset, VT.
5. 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.
6. The town office continues to be closed in accordance with the Governor's 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.
7. Please visit the town's official website: townofstamfordvermont.org.