

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
November 16, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Pamela Tworig, Marie Kelly-Whitney, and Kurt Gamari.

Michael G. Denault was absent.

Visitors: Sally Bohl, Debra Burchard, Robert Burchard, Laura Champagne, Tammy Elias, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Lawrence, Sheila Pecor, Deborah Righi, and James Righi. William Levine, Emergency Management Director.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. Additional correspondence and an Executive Session were added to the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING

Dara Zink from the Bennington County Regional Commission reviewed the cost benefit analysis with the Selectboard, which is now a requirement of the state. When the Hazard Mitigation Plan is approved, it will be good for five years.

MINUTES

1. MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the regular meeting minutes of November 2, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
2. MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the special meeting minutes of November 8, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #45 \$ 7,877.78 payroll
- WARRANT #46 \$555,039.79 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Marie Kelly-Whitney would like Dave Tatro to take a look at Lesure Road as she noticed a washed out area on the right side of the road near the top.
2. Laura Champagne asked to have Dave Tatro to look at Brown Brook Road and add funds to the budget. She feels it hasn't been worked on in a while and there are four or five culverts that are still metal.
3. Laura Champagne requested that the town change the name of Brown Brook Road back to Old County Road since that designation still exists on the online and GPS maps. She does not think it should have been renamed in the first place. Nancy Bushika will look into why it was changed.

RECYCLING

At the last meeting the board decided not to pursue the cameras at the transfer station and highway garage which they had voted to purchase at the prior meeting. Pam Tworig was informed by a recycling attendant that someone dumped a lot of shingles in the demo bin after hours when

the transfer station was closed. This shingle disposal will cost the town a lot of money. The board discussed the fact that the facility is not locked when it is not in use. Dave Tatro said people will just dump their garbage at the gate and then he has to deal with it the next day so it is easier for him to leave the gate unlocked. Kurt Gamari asked how much the board wants to enforce this. Motion cameras will pick up so much other activity. Pam Tworig wished Dave Tatro was present to discuss these issues. The board will talk to Dave Tatro.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine discussed the Continuity of Operations Plan which will become an appendix to the town's Emergency Response Plan. The board scheduled a meeting for Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 6 p.m. to review the plan.
2. Dara Zink hosted a zoom meeting with the National Weather Service from Albany, NY and discussed the ongoing flood prediction plans and the GIS mapping layers they are working on.
3. Bill Levine advised that Dara Zink is trying to get the Emergency Management Resource Group working again.

STAMFORD MAIN RENEWABLES WIND TURBINE PROJECT

1. Nancy Bushika talked to Annette Smith, Executive Director of Vermonters for a Clean Environment. She indicated that the advance notice period ends on November 27, 2023 so the town should file its comments by then. Norwich Technologies has cleared land to install the met tower. They have already installed the SPIDAR equipment. The board questioned this activity since they are only in the notice stage, not the installation stage. Nancy Bushika reviewed several questions that Annette Smith recommends the town should ask and is willing to file on the town's behalf.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to accept Annette Smith's suggestions and prepare this filing immediately. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Kurt Gamari feels this shows the company's total disregard for the town and its permitting process.
3. Deb Burchard previously contacted National Forest to make them aware that the proposed road to the met tower location crosses National Forest land. She will contact them again and ask them to attend a meeting.
4. Annette Smith also suggested the town should contact Rep. Laura Sibilila and Rep. Nelson Brownell.
5. Nancy Bushika noted that everyone who filed comments or questions with the Public Utilities Commission during the advanced notice period should re file them once the petition is filed.

DIGITAL SPEED RADAR SIGNS

Deferred until the next meeting.

FEMA BUYOUT

The Selectboard listened to Bob and Deb Burchard concerning their request for the town to apply for a FEMA buyout on their behalf. The Selectboard felt it was a very difficult decision to make, feeling compassion for their predicament and yet not wanting to go down that road. There are potentially 26 houses in the flood plain and 15 houses in the river corridor. The board previously attended a remote work session to learn about the process. Nancy Bushika suggested waiting until the new FEMA maps are completed. The Burchards stated that the river has moved and their septic system is compromised and wanted a decision from the board. After much discussion, the board

decided to get more information on the FEMA buyout process.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to ask Stephanie Smith what steps the town would need to take at this time, how it would initiate the process, and if this can be done on a case by case basis. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR PAYMENT STRUCTURE/PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

Deb Burchard said she has done a lot of research on Zoning Administrator compensation and the way we do it here is antiquated and counter-productive. She asked to defer discussion tonight and add this topic to the separate meeting the board scheduled to discuss the Continuity of Operations Plan with Bill Levine. The board agreed and the item will be added to the agenda for the Thursday, November 30th meeting.

ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR RETIREMENT FUND AUDIT

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to approve and sign the revised engagement letter from Marcum Accountants to conduct the retirement fund audit on behalf of the state. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

BUSINESS HOURS

The Selectboard received a complaint that the local business is operating outside of the hours set by the town. Marie Kelly-Whitney researched the Zoning Board of Adjustment files as far as back as the Maher's ownership when the hours were established from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. After discussion, the board asked Deb Burchard as Zoning Administrator to speak to the new owners to see if they would like to apply to the Zoning Board of Adjustment to modify the hours or comply with the set hours.

AUDITING SERVICE BIDS

Sullivan, Powers & Company submitted a letter concerning the audit. Nancy Bushika will review the letter.

BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

1. Pam Tworig received a call from a resident concerning recent break-ins and wanted to discuss hiring the sheriff. Kurt Gamari felt the sheriff will rarely be in town when something happens and it is an inherent risk of choosing to live in Stamford. It was noted that we have had more patrols by the state police, cost free, than we ever had when we had a contract with the sheriff. The board discussed the matter further.
2. Marie Kelly-Whitney was approached by a resident who suggested having someone carry a gun to protect the school and school children.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Pam Tworig requested a joint meeting with the School Directors. The last joint meeting was in August. Nancy Bushika thought the next meeting was tentatively scheduled for January. Nancy Bushika will talk with Erika Bailey.

DOG UPDATE

No delinquent dog owners have come in to license their dogs.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Pam Tworig to find that premature public discussion of a personnel matter would place

the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to enter executive session for a personnel matter pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 313(5) and 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3). SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 9:14 p.m.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to exit executive session. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 9:50 p.m. No action was taken.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to adjourn. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 9:52 p.m.

Marie Kelly-Whitney
Clerk

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REMINDERS

1. Townspeople should sign up with the state's free communications network, VT-Alert. You can sign up at vtalert.gov to receive notifications. You can choose how you would like to be alerted (phone call, text or email) and can choose what type of alerts you would like to receive, i.e. weather, road closures, public health, etc.

2. All dogs 6 months and older must be licensed by April 1st of each year. State law requires a valid rabies vaccination certificate to be filed with the Town Clerk's office. Licensing your dog is very easy. Rabies certificates can be faxed to the town office at 802-694-1636 or emailed to the town office at townclerk@stamfordvt.net. Once the current rabies certificate is on file, license renewals can be handled in person, by mailing a check, by utilizing the mail slot in the back wall of the town office or by telephone with a credit card. License fees are \$9.00 for each spayed/neutered dog or \$13.00 for each intact dog. Checks should be made payable to the Town of Stamford.

3. The town office is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and on Thursdays from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Closed Mondays.