

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
November 2, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Marie Kelly-Whitney, and Kurt Gamari.

Pamela Tworig was absent.

Visitors: Tammy Elias, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Pecor, Deborah Righi, and James Righi. William Levine, Emergency Management Director.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

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. The Continuity of Operations Plan was added as additional correspondence under Emergency Management.

AUDITING SERVICE BIDS

The board received one bid from Sullivan, Powers & Company in Montpelier, Vermont for auditing services for five consecutive years beginning at \$26,000.00. This cost is significantly higher than the town has paid in the past. The board debated the pros and cons of having a yearly audit and decided it could impact the ability to borrow money.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the bid from Sullivan, Powers & Company for auditing services.

SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

BENNINGTON COUNTY REGIONAL COMMISSION, HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Rescheduled to the next meeting.

MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of October 19, 2023 as written.

SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #43 \$ 7,715.00 payroll

WARRANT #44 \$86,225.18 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The mowing and ditching work is done for the year. The equipment has been swapped over for winter plowing.

2. The board reminds everyone to keep items out of the town's right-of-way as we are nearing the winter plowing season. Nancy Bushika will contact a few people who have significant encroachments in the town's right-of-way.

RECYCLING

1. Dave Tatro does not feel there is a problem with illegal dumping or salt being taken for commercial use. The board decided not to purchase cameras at this time. Disposal fees were discussed. Kurt Gamari does not want to increase fees that would affect people's regular trash.

2. The compactor should be delivered soon.
 3. The Selectboard discussed the Casella contract. There is no one else in Vermont to hire and the state won't allow us to send trash outside of Vermont.
- MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the Casella contract. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
4. Dave Tatro will work with Casella to rent a dumpster for tire removal.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine and Sheila Lawrence attended an exercise hosted by Vermont Emergency Management. They discussed how they would handle the loss of utilities for one day, three days, one week and one month. Bill Levine will try to get some pamphlets to help people prepare.
2. Bill Levine purchased fifty self-inflating sand bags in case of another flooding event.
3. Bill Levine asked the Selectboard to review the Continuity of Operations Plan and hopes to begin discussion on how the town would continue to run in the event employees were unable to work.

STAMFORD MAIN RENEWABLES WIND TURBINE PROJECT

1. Nancy Bushika on behalf of the Selectboard submitted an email supporting the site neighbors' request to ask for the extension until after Jan 1, 2024. The Public Utilities Commission approved the extension until December 15th and will most likely grant another extension if the National Grid report is not submitted.
2. Pam Tworig talked with Annette Smith. She suggested the town question the Act 250 violations and the status of the enforcement on the Dunn property. Mike Denault questioned what that had to do with the subject matter. He feels Act 250 is the state's responsibility to enforce, not the town's. Visitors felt it is another stepping stone to build objections to the windmill project. Ultimately the board decided to request the information.
3. A letter will be prepared by November 8, 2023 for submission to the Public Utilities Commission. The board brainstormed many objections to include in the letter.

DIGITAL SPEED RADAR SIGNS

Deferred until the next meeting.

GUN CRIMES

Mike Denault noted that Vermont never used to have gun laws and since the state has implemented them, gun crimes have increased significantly and most of the gun crimes are connected to drugs. He noted that drug-related deaths have also increased. As we talk about emergency preparedness, we need to be able to defend ourselves and discussed the use of a gun, a dog, or by talking with your neighbors and planning ahead.

FEMA BUYOUT

The Selectboard will meet with the FEMA representative on Wednesday, November 8, 2023 at 4 p.m. to discuss a FEMA buyout. Kurt Gamari counted 14 houses in the flood zone and 26 houses in the river corridor and feels moving forward could start a problem for the town. He explained the difference between the flood zone and the river corridor. Marie Kelly-Whitney said the town will have to pay for 25% of the buyout costs and FEMA only reimburses the town for 75%. Mike Denault would like to see how the town benefits.

STAMFORD SIGN

The Selectboard received the attorney's opinion concerning the sign. Nancy Bushika wanted to wait until the next meeting to discuss so that Deb Burchard and Pam Tworig could be present. Mike Denault felt the sign discussion has gone on long enough. He recalled a past meeting that he could not attend on a topic he felt strongly about and the board did not wait to make their decision. He feels the attorney's opinion is clear that the town should have and still needs to apply for a permit. The town should do what's right for the integrity of the town. He is willing to attend the Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting in support of the sign. He is also willing to ask for a greater variance so smaller signs can be hung from the main sign saying School and Town Office. Kurt Gamari agreed and said the town should apply for a conditional use permit to enlarge, alter and expand the pre-existing, non-conforming sign. Mike Denault said this is a good learning lesson that the Zoning Administrator needs to document everything and put everything in writing. Bill Levine suggested the board update the By-laws concerning signs for municipal or religious organizations.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to apply for a permit for the sign and to appeal the denial if it is denied.

SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The Community Projects Committee funds will be used to pay for the permit fees.

DOG UPDATE

1. Luke McKay has issued tickets to the dog owners who have not licensed their dogs.
2. The two dogs are still in our care and will be going to the animal shelter next week.

HALLOWEEN

Trick or treating was very nice this year and the board thanked the Fire Department for their presence.

ZONING APPLICATION FEES

Deferred to the next meeting.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The meeting ended at 8:10 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.