

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
December 7, 2023
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Pamela Tworig, Michael G. Denault, and Kurt Gamari.

Marie Kelly-Whitney was absent.

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Theresa Denault, Tammy Elias, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, Sheila Lawrence, 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. Additional correspondence was added to the agenda as well as a tax filing matter under new business.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Theresa Denault stated that the Christmas Tree Lighting had to be cancelled due to the downpour on Sunday. She thanked the Selectboard, Pam Tworig, Lori Shepard, Deb, Bob and Nick Burchard, Mike Denault, Peter Rondeau, Randy Lichtenwalner, Glenn Thurber, Paul Ethier and the Fire Department, Luke McKay, Santa and Mrs. Claus for their support and help. The Selectboard thanked her for her hard work also.

2. Pam Tworig announced that the Wreaths Across America ceremony will take place on December 16, 2023 at 12 p.m. at the Stamford Elementary School followed by the laying of wreaths on the veterans' graves in both cemeteries. She is still trying to locate some veterans' graves. Anyone interested in participating should meet at the school.

MINUTES

1. MOTION by Pam Tworig to accept the regular meeting minutes of November 16, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the special work session minutes of November 30, 2023 as written. SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #47 \$ 8,613.39 payroll

WARRANT #48 \$533,590.22 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew took some time off for hunting season.

2. There was a landslide on Mill Road on Thanksgiving day. Pam Tworig thanked Dave Tatro for his immediate attention and for making sure it was taken care of.

3. The freeze and thaw weather has made conditions difficult.

4. Someone ran over the orange highway cones on Mill Road. Someone has been stealing road signs and Dave Tatro has had to replace a few.

5. Dave Tatro viewed the area Marie Kelly-Whitney questioned at the last meeting. He said there is a culvert inlet there which could give the appearance that there is a hole when there isn't.

RECYCLING

1. The compactor has been delivered and is working well.
2. The tires have been removed.
3. Pam Tworig brought two loads of trash to Casella and another load to North Adams. She compared what she was charged to the demo prices the town charges at the transfer station and feels the town is losing money. Dave Tatro feels the demo bin is only dumped four or five times a year so it's not that big of a problem. The Selectboard could begin to look at the demo receipts to see if a local contractor is abusing it.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. The Selectboard reviewed the Continuity of Operations Plan with Bill Levine and made some additional changes. Bill Levine feels it is good for the Selectboard to be thinking about these things and feels it should be reviewed every other year. This Continuity of Operations Plan can be added as an appendix to next year's Local Emergency Management Plan.
2. Bill Levine discussed the Vermont Enhanced 911 Address and Standards regulations. It includes detailed sections on how to name and number roads.
3. Nancy Bushika responded to Laura Champagne's request at the last meeting concerning the road name change from Old County Road to Brown Brook Road. Nancy Bushika said the regulations say you cannot have two roads with the same or similar sounding names. Because the center of Old County Road was discontinued, it created two separate roads with the same name which is why the Selectboard had to rename one of them. Nancy Bushika noted that the state also requested that the houses on Old County Road be re-numbered but the town has not done that for the sake of the residents.

STAMFORD MAIN RENEWABLES WIND TURBINE PROJECT

Nancy Bushika announced that the town received notice that the windmill project will not go forward at this time. Lisa Gramlin thanked the board for all they've done to help.

DIGITAL SPEED RADAR SIGNS

Mike Denault spoke to Glenn Ethier who can order the digital radar signs but he does not install them. If the board can find someone to install them properly, he's willing to order them. Kurt Gamari suggested getting the radar signs as a compromise to hiring the sheriff. He said speeding has always occurred in town no matter what you do. Pam Tworig feels that a lot of people want a sheriff and voted for something at town meeting that didn't happen. Mike Denault felt that the town would only get half of the patrol time they expected for the same amount of money. They agreed that it needs to be presented clearly this year for the voters to decide. Mike Denault will contact the sheriff.

FEMA BUYOUT

Nancy Bushika obtained answers to the board's questions from the last meeting. The Selectboard can take each request on a case by case basis and they do not have to say yes. They are not aware of any legal ramifications if the town says no. Pam Tworig wanted to show the board pictures of the house and the FEMA maps. Pam Tworig reviewed the houses that are in the flood zone and created a list of reasons that she would agree to a FEMA buyout. The board discussed how many houses in

the flood zone and river corridor might come forward. There are 14 houses in the flood zone and 26 in the river corridor. Kurt Gamari suggested not accepting houses in the river corridor. Mike Denault would rather see FEMA invest in a flood mitigation program to control the water flow instead of paying to buy out the houses. They discussed setting parameters for what conditions they would be willing to accept the buyout. Mike Denault said the potential tax loss if all 14 houses applied for the buyout would be upwards of \$70,000.00 per year. He asked the board if they were willing to accept that loss. Dave Tatro said FEMA's engineers have already set eligibility requirements. The town doesn't have engineers to make qualified decisions as to what houses to accept or not. Bill Levine felt that funds could be available to compensate for the loss of tax revenue by not moving forward with the sheriff contract. The board continued to debate the issue and whether to set standards for buyout requests. Ultimately Mike Denault felt the board keeps kicking the can down the road and wanted to make a decision.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to file an application on behalf of the Burchards to sell their house to FEMA. SECONDED by Mike Denault. 3 in favor, 1 abstained due to a conflict (Nancy Bushika). Motion APPROVED.

ZONING ADMINISTRATOR PAYMENT STRUCTURE/PERMIT APPLICATION FEES

1. The board and Deb Burchard reviewed and increased the permit application fees for various types of buildings. They will review the draft at the next meeting.
2. The board asked Deb Burchard if they did change the payment structure from a permit-based fee structure to an hourly amount, what she would be looking for. She said she found several towns paying \$20-25.00/hour or the towns have created a set amount of hours and pay a flat yearly salary.

STRAY DOG

Pam Tworig noted that there was a stray dog running around the north end of town for several days. She questioned social media posts and whether it had been found by its owner. The Selectboard will get in touch with the Dog Officer about it.

ENGAGEMENT LETTER FOR 2023 AUDIT

The board signed the engagement letter from Sullivan, Powers & Company to conduct the 2023 audit.

TAX PAYMENTS

1. The town clerk advised that the IRS requires W-2s and 1099s to be filed digitally this year. It has a new multi-factor authentication system that requires biometric data verification. She is not comfortable providing her personal data. She will see if there are alternative ways to file or if there are other options available.
2. The town clerk advised that the IRS changed the town's tax deposit schedule from semi-weekly to monthly. Now that the town is filing monthly, the IRS is penalizing the town for it. The town clerk sent a letter disputing the charges. The board reluctantly agreed to pay the fees so no additional charges accumulate while the issue is being resolved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of a personnel matter would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika 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 Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The Selectboard entered executive session at 9:50 p.m.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 10:50 p.m. No action was taken.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 10:52 p.m.

Nancy L. Bushika
Clerk pro tempore

/las

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. 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.

PETITIONS FOR WARRANT ARTICLES & ELECTED POSITIONS

The deadline for filing petitions with the town clerk for warrant articles to be included in the town meeting warning is Thursday, January 18, 2024. These petitions must be signed by 5% of the registered voters or at least 36 signatures. V.S.A. 17:2642(a)

The required signatures on a petition to run for an elected office are 1% of the registered voters or at least 8 signatures. The deadline for filing these petitions with the Town Clerk is Monday, January 29, 2024 by 5:00 p.m. Nominating papers and the Consent of Candidate form may be picked up at the Town Office. V.S.A. 17:2681(a) (b).

Elected positions to be filled this year are:

Town Moderator - 1 year term (*Paul Dupuis*)
School Moderator - 1 year term (*Paul Dupuis*)
Selectboard member - 2 year term (*Pamela Tworig*)
Selectboard member - 3 year term (*Marie Kelly-Whitney*)
School Director - 2 year term (*Elizabeth Parrington*)
School Director - 3 year term (*Kelly Holland*)
Collector of Delinquent Taxes - 1 year term (*Sally A. Bohl*)
Cemetery Commissioner - 3 year term (*David McKay*)
Cemetery Commissioner – 1 year remaining on a 3 year term (*Sheila G. Lawrence*)
Library Trustee - 3 year term (*Caroline S. Burch*)

Town meeting will be held on Monday, March 4, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. with the town portion first, followed by the school.

Voting will be held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Town of Stamford Community Room. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted at the town office up to and throughout election day.

Absentee ballots will be available until 5:00 p.m. on Monday, March 4, 2024. Please call the town office at 694-1361.

Anyone interested in serving as an appointed board member, please review the expiring appointed positions in the town report and contact a member of that board or the Selectboard.