

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
February 1, 2024
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Carol Ethier-Kipp, Lisa Gardner, David Saldo, Diane Saldo, Douglas Wright, and Mary Lou Wright.
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 information regarding a legislative bill were added to the agenda. There were no changes to its order.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Mary Lou Wright spoke on behalf of the Stamford Community Church concerning a disturbance that took place at their service last week. The lack of police presence and police response time was discussed. The school and town office have safety measures in place.
2. Laura Champagne asked about Stamford's leash law and will talk to the Dog Officer concerning a dog on her property.
3. Laura Champagne noted that Mill Road has many potholes and the gravel on Brown Brook Road is diminishing.

FEMA BUYOUT PROGRAM

Dave Saldo noted that the board decided to move forward with the program and feels it should be brought to the tax payers since it will affect the whole tax base. The amount of potential houses in the flood zone and river corridor was reviewed. Dave Saldo was a part of the adoption of the flood hazard regulations and he pointed out sections and noted other resources. Pam Tworig brought in a picture showing how much the river behind her house has moved over the years. The board discussed the workshop they attended earlier and although Vermont Emergency Management can oversee the buyout program, there will be a lot of administrative responsibility the town will have to undertake. Deb Burchard said it is a lengthy and stressful process that she wishes she didn't have to go through.

MINUTES

1. MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 18, 2024 as written. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. 4 in favor, 1 abstained (Nancy Bushika who was not able to attend). Motion APPROVED.
2. MOTION by Kurt Gamari to accept the regular meeting minutes of January 25, 2024 as written. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #3 \$12,307.02 payroll

WARRANT #4 \$32,092.40 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

The warm and cool weather has made the roads very muddy.

RECYCLING

Nothing to report.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Nothing to report.

DV FIBER

Crews are working to install fiber to the southern part of town. Installation fees were discussed.

WARRANT

The board increased the amount for the digital speed radar signs.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the warrant as revised. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD REPORT FOR TOWN REPORT

The Selectboard reviewed the final draft.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the Selectboard Report for inclusion in the Town Report as presented. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

CERTIFICATE OF HIGHWAY MILES

The board reviewed the Certificate of Highway Miles. There have been no changes since last year.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the Certificate of Highway Miles. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MUNICIPAL ENERGY RESILIENCE PROGRAM

Lori Shepard applied for a grant for an energy assessment of the town garage. There should be no cost to the town.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to sign the Memorandum of Agreement for the grant. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2024 GRANTS IN AID

The Bennington County Regional Commission would like to assist the town with the upcoming Grants in Aid project and has submitted a Scope of Work to be signed by the board.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept and sign the Scope of Work. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

HAULER REGISTRATION RENEWALS

The Selectboard reviewed and signed letters sending the hauler registration forms to local recycling and trash haulers.

NEW STAMFORD SIGN

1. The Selectboard sent a letter to the Zoning Board of Adjustment requesting an extension of the sign removal date to allow the board to pursue an appeal through the State Environmental Court.

There is a filing fee of \$295.00. The board also considered requesting a waiver through the Zoning Board of Adjustment, which is different than the variance previously requested. Mike Denault did not want to spend any more money.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to file the appeal with the Judicial Bureau Environmental Court appealing the decision of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and to pay the filing fee with the remaining Community Projects Committee grant money. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Dave Saldo asked if anyone was pursuing a permit from the state for the sign. It was explained that the sign is too close to the road because of the town setbacks, but it is not in the highway right-of-way.

3. Pam Tworig noted the numerous times the Community Projects Committee met to discuss the sign and how it was staked out for weeks on the front lawn and no one said anything.

4. The validity of the Zoning Board's removal date decision was questioned again. Dave Saldo said the Zoning Board is a quasi-judicial board and it did not have to be done in an open meeting.

5. The Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold a meeting on February 20, 2024 to discuss the Selectboard's request for an extension of the sign removal date.

LEGISLATIVE BILL H-629

The legislature is discussing a bill that will have great negative impacts on municipal tax auctions. Attorney Kevin O'Toole is testifying against the bill and has asked the town to write a letter also.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to send a letter from the town against the bill. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 7:45 p.m.

Marie Kelly-Whitney
Clerk

/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. Anyone interested in serving as Green Up Day Coordinator should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

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.

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.