

**TOWN OF STAMFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
March 21, 2024  
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Chair, Michael G. Denault, Kurt Gamari, Douglas Wright and John Dunn.

Visitors: Charlene Alfaro, Samantha Barkus, Robert Briggs, Debra Burchard, Michael Cole, Tammy Elias, Jedidiah Gramlin, Lisa Gramlin, Amanda Kurek, Sheila Lawrence, Aaron Malachuk, Marta Miller, Sheila Pecor, Debra Righi, and James Righi, Brian Rower, David Saldo, Diane Saldo, James Stimpson, and Richard Whitcomb.

David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.

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. There was additional correspondence and an executive session added to the agenda. The Hearing of Visitors was moved to the beginning of the meeting.

#### HEARING OF VISITORS

Michael Cole spoke on behalf of Alpenwald Village to request that the culvert at the intersection of Sportsmen Road and Suzanne Drive be replaced with a larger culver. It has flooded four times since 1997 causing significant damage to Suzanne Drive. Mike Cole has dug out the culvert to protect Suzanne Drive. Dave Tatro did not feel a 36" culvert would solve the problem because it is angled. Dave Tatro will need to have a hydraulic study done by the state which will determine what size culvert is necessary.

#### APPOINTMENTS

1. Zoning Board of Adjustment. Sheila Pecor submitted a letter requesting re-appointment.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Sheila Pecor to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for a 3 year term. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. Zoning Board of Adjustment. Dave Saldo stated that he would like to continue to serve.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Dave Saldo to the Zoning Board of Adjustment for another 3 year term. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

3. Emergency Management Director and Emergency Management Coordinator. The town received an email from Bob Briggs expressing his desire to help as Emergency Management Director. Bill Levine said Stewart Johnson would like to assist Bob Briggs as Coordinator. Bill Levine felt Sheila Lawrence is currently the Emergency Management Coordinator and he would like to keep her as she is a great resource with the people and has a significant knowledge of the town.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Bob Briggs as Emergency Management Director and Stewart Johnson and Sheila Lawrence as Emergency Management Co-Coordinators for 1 year terms. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

4. Dog Officer. Luke McKay responded to the Selectboard's letter with a willingness to continue as Dog Officer.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Luke McKay as Dog Officer for another 1 year term.

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

5. Energy Coordinator. Jenifer Hughs did not respond to the Selectboard's letter. The Selectboard will consider the position vacant. Anyone interested in serving as Energy Coordinator should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

6. Septic Officer. Maura Hawkins did not respond to the Selectboard's letter. The Selectboard will consider the position vacant. Anyone interested in serving as Septic Officer should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

7. Planning Commission. Lisa Gramlin, Peter Greenbush and Alden Finney submitted letters of interest. Aaron Malachuk stated that he did not want to renew his term due to personal time constraints. Deb Burchard felt it was a conflict of interest to serve on the Planning Commission and be Zoning Administrator and was willing to resign to allow someone else to serve. John Dunn suggested that she submit her resignation in writing.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the resignation of Deb Burchard. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by John Dunn to appoint Peter Greenbush to the 4 year term vacated by Aaron Malachuk. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to appoint Lisa Gramlin to finish the 1 year remaining on Deb Burchard's 4 year term. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Conflicts were discussed as well as consistent attendance on boards.

8. Conservation Commission. Kurt Gamari said he was not interested in serving. The board meets in an advisory capacity only concerning invasive species, contaminated water and other conservation issues. Marta Miller offered to serve in his place.

MOTION by Kurt Gamari to appoint Marta Miller to the Conservation Commission to the 4 year term vacated by Kurt Gamari. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The board did not receive any response from Jessica Tatro. The Selectboard will consider the position vacant. Anyone interested in serving on the Conservation Commission should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

9. Road Commissioner. MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Dave Tatro as Road Commissioner for another 1 year term. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

10. Tree Warden. The Selectboard received no response from Bruce Richardson indicating he wanted to be reappointed. The Selectboard will consider the position vacant. Anyone interested in serving as the Tree Warden should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

11. Bennington County Regional Commission Representative. Deb Burchard asked to be reappointed. There was no response from Dan Potvin seeking reappointment.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Deb Burchard to serve as the Bennington County Regional Commission Representative for a 1 year term. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The Selectboard will consider the second position vacant. Anyone interested in serving as the Bennington County Regional Commission Representative should contact a Selectboard member or the town office.

12. Green Up Day Coordinator. The town received an email from Charlene Alfaro who was interested in serving as Green Up Day Coordinator. Brian Rower stated that he and Marta Miller wanted to volunteer for the position.

MOTION by Mike Denault to appoint Brian Rower as the Green Up Day Coordinator for a 1 year term. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The three volunteers will work together.

13. Community Project Committee. The board recognized that a vacancy exists.
14. DVFiber Representative. Bill Levine stated that CJ Vadnais was not interested in being re-appointed as an alternate. Bob Briggs and Bill Levine will serve as representative and alternate.

#### MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of March 7, 2024 as written.  
SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #11 \$ 10,686.34 payroll
- WARRANT #12 \$60,207.16 accounts payable

#### ROAD CONDITIONS

1. March has brought a lot of wet weather. Plowing is harder when the roads are soft.
2. Dave Tatro has found a 2017 John Deere loader. The cost is \$106,000 and they will take the town's current loader in trade. There is very little rust and he feels it is a good deal.  
MOTION by Kurt Gamari to purchase the loader. SECONDED by John Dunn. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.
3. Dave Tatro will apply for a \$200,000.00 Class 2 Roadway Grant to resurface East Road. Allstate Asphalt is such a big company, they can do jobs for less money than the town can do.
4. MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the Municipal Roads General Permit annual report form and pay the \$500.00 fee. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### RECYCLING

Nancy Bushika did not attend the last Alliance meeting. The new hazardous waste facility will be opening soon in Bennington. Nancy Bushika was happy that the transfer station was cleaned up.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine would like to continue to handle the 911 emergency numbering system until the Emergency Management team is ready to take it over. He plans to be their on-call mentor. Mike Denault thanked Bill Levine for his 40 years of service to the town.
2. Nancy Bushika suggested the new appointees can look into forming an emergency shelter committee.

#### VIDEO RECORDING OF SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

Nancy Bushika obtained a Social Media model policy from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns but it seemed lengthy. If the town posts the recording on its website, they become public documents and part of the town's retention responsibility. The board saw the inconsistency if a volunteer wanted to stop doing it after a year.

#### STAMFORD SIGN

At the last meeting Mike Denault was supposed to talk with Dave Tatro to take the sign down but it didn't happen. Mike Denault is sick of talking about the sign. He feels it is not in the best interests of the town to take the sign down and Kurt Gamari agreed. Mike Denault referred to 24 V.S.A. section 4413 saying the town might be exempt from its By-laws. Nancy Bushika noted that the Selectboard doesn't meet the criteria to change the By-laws in the interim while they wait for the

Planning Commission to update the By-laws. The board and visitors discussed the matter at length. MOTION by Doug Wright that we follow the current By-laws and take the sign down. SECONDED by John Dunn. 3 in favor, 2 opposed (Kurt Gamari and Mike Denault). Motion APPROVED. The board asked Dave Tatro to take the sign down the next chance he gets.

#### FEMA BUYOUT PROGRAM

Nancy Bushika asked the board if they had reviewed the paperwork from the last meeting and if they were comfortable signing it. They discussed the program and what criteria makes your house eligible and what stipulations have to be met for FEMA to tear your house down. Deb Burchard said they use an algorithm. John Dunn researched and found many other programs that offered various remedies instead of tearing down the house. Riverbank repairs to one property can affect other properties down the river. Mike Denault recalled the Spruces in Williamstown and FEMA will not allow the town to put up a fence to create a dog park. He doesn't like that the town will have to do their audit and maintain records forever. Kurt Gamari did not feel stream alterations were suitable for this property. The board discussed the program and ramifications at length.

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the paperwork. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. 2 in favor, 2 opposed (John Dunn and Doug Wright), 1 abstained (Nancy Bushika). Motion FAILS.

The question was asked if this ended the process for one person or if participation in the program was ended. Several visitors voiced opinions. The board considered the motion and the vote. Mike Denault noted that the two new Selectboard members have not been involved in the whole process. He suggested they contact Brian McWalters from Vermont Emergency Management and get more information and vote again at the next meeting.

MOTION by Mike Denault to reconsider the vote to make sure the new members understand what they are voting on. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. 3 in favor, 2 abstained (Doug Wright and Nancy Bushika). Motion APPROVED.

#### MOWING BIDS

The board reviewed the package from last year. They will add winter plow damage and debris cleanup to the quote and changed the mailing list. Nancy Bushika will work with the town clerk to pick dates and send it out.

#### JOINT MEETING WITH SCHOOL DIRECTORS

Nancy Bushika contacted Erika Bailey and a date is being set for a joint meeting.

#### BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY TRAINING

Nancy Bushika contacted VLCT to request training but does not have a firm date.

#### REVIEW DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

Nancy Bushika stated that this policy was adopted using a model policy from the Vermont League of Cities & Towns. It only covers the two highway workers with CDLs. She has asked if they have an updated policy. The board agreed this was not something that could easily cover all employees.

#### UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMITS

MOTION by Mike Denault to approve the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit applications from Consolidated Communications and AmeriGas. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fees and insurance information were received from each applicant.

#### TAX SALE RESULTS

Nancy Bushika explained that 5 properties went up for auction. Two were purchased and 3 were acquired by the town. The Selectboard received a letter from a resident interested in purchasing the town's interest in the redemption period for the 5.75 acre Main Road parcel acquired by the town. Some felt the land was rather wet.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the offer to purchase the town's interest, and if they want to back out, they can. SECONDED by Kurt Gamari. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### OPEN MEETING LAW WEBINAR

A webinar on the Open Meeting Laws is scheduled for April 17, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the town office. All people appointed to various town boards are invited to attend.

#### PROPOSED REGULATION FOR FUEL TANKS

John Dunn explained new legislation being proposed to restrict above ground fuel storage tanks.

#### HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

The draft of the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan is ready for public review and will be put on the town website.

#### LOCAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Bill Levine stated that there is an upcoming webinar on what goes into the Local Emergency Management Plan and felt it would be good for the Selectboard to attend.

#### GREEN UP DAY

Bill Levine asked if the \$50.00 appropriation which was not voted on at town meeting could be granted so the Green Up Day team would have funds. It was explained that the appropriation goes to the state toward their program, not to the town volunteers who organize it.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to find that premature public discussion of personnel matters 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 9:00 p.m.

MOTION by Mike Denault to exit executive session. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 9:30 p.m. No action was taken.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Doug Wright. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 9:31p.m.

Kurt Gamari  
Clerk

/las

## REMINDERS

1. Townspeople should sign up with the state's free communications network, VT-Alert. You can sign up at [vtaalert.gov](http://vtaalert.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 the town in one of the vacant appointed positions, 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.