

**TOWN OF STAMFORD  
SELECTBOARD MEETING  
June 1, 2023  
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Robert Briggs, Carolyn Brooks, Debra Burchard, Laura Champagne, Ann Manwaring from DVFiber, Tom Nazzewski, Sheila Pecor, Deborah Righi, and James Righi.  
Luke McKay, Dog Officer.  
William Levine, Emergency Management Director.  
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., opened with the Pledge of Allegiance, welcomed everyone, and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting. There was no additions or changes to the agenda.

#### DVFIBER COMMUNICATIONS UNION DISTRICT

Ann Manwaring from DVFiber talked about the high-speed internet. The CUD is recognized as an independent municipal district comprised of 24 towns in 3 counties. They will begin hooking up customers in mid-July. She needs the Selectboard to sign an agreement concerning the \$7,500.00 payment the town voted to contribute at town meeting. In order to obtain the matching funds from the Vermont Community Broadband Board, the town needs to confirm that the funds given were ARPA funds and not raised through taxation. DVFiber will use the \$7,500 match to build out its network. The \$7,500.00 town contribution will be used to assist town residents of limited means with any one-time connection costs. The Selectboard was under the impression that the entire \$15,000.00 was to assist townspeople with the one-time hook up cost and had conveyed that to taxpayers at town meeting. Ann Manwaring explained that there will be no cost for a standard hook up, which is to a house within 400 feet of a pole. Residents who are farther than 400 feet or that have underground conduit will be charged for the hookup. A DVFiber representative will work with those in need to delegate the \$7,500.00 to our residents. Mike Denault asked how much it would cost per foot and Ann Manwaring will let the board know. The Selectboard can decide if they want to set aside additional funds to help our residents. The board will review the agreement and made plans to sign it at their next meeting.

#### NATIONAL FOREST

Deb Burchard stated that Stacy Stratton from the National Forest would like to come to a Selectboard meeting. They are beginning the forestry work this summer. The board was agreeable.

#### STAMFORD SIGN

Sheila Pecor said several people are unhappy with the new sign in front of the school and asked to have the old one put back. She said since the sign is facing the road, it is not easily visible when you are driving by and does not indicate the location of the town office or library like the old sign did. Pam Tworig said the sign is meant to announce the Town of Stamford, not to state where the town office, school and library are located. Mike Denault agreed that directional signs would be a good idea and the board discussed adding the town office, library and school sections from the old sign to the new one. Carolyn Brooks said several of the decisions were made based on what materials were donated for the sign. The sign project was handled by the Community Projects Committee which has a vacancy if anyone is interested in joining.

## MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 18, 2023 as written.

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

## SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #21 \$ 9,199.11 payroll

WARRANT #22 \$28,129.49 accounts payable

## ROAD CONDITIONS

Dave Tatro was not present and left the following report with Nancy Bushika:

1. The highway crew is still working on grading the Class 4 roads.
2. The street sweeper should be here next week, weather permitting.
3. The highway department is getting the equipment ready for summer mowing.

## RECYCLING

The household battery recycling box is full. Carol Fachini sealed the box and it was mailed out today from the town office. Pam Tworig asked if household batteries will be accepted at the new Bennington facility. Nancy Bushika will look into it.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Nothing to report.

## TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE

MOTION by Mike Denault to sign the promissory note to borrow money in anticipation of taxes with Adams Community Bank in the amount of \$400,000.00 at the rate of 4.75% per annum interest. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

## SCHOOL LOAN

Nancy Bushika saw in the paper that the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union will be asking for their payment from schools up front this July. This will put Stamford School along with the other schools in the district in a position where they will have to borrow funds to make the payment. The schools were not prepared, they did not plan or budget for the costs associated with an unanticipated loan. The school union contacted Lori Shepard, the school treasurer, to indicate that will be looking for around \$300,000.00 from Stamford School. The Selectboard will support the School Directors if they want to push back and choose not to borrow and pay the School Union like they have in the past. Kurt Gamari, the school liaison, will contact the School Board Chair to request to be on their next meeting's agenda to discuss this matter with them. Nancy Bushika has not received a response to schedule a joint meeting with the School Board. Kurt Gamari feels there has been an air of tension during past joint meetings that prevents progress. He will talk to Erika Bailey about the joint meeting also.

## CAPITALIZATION POLICY

The policy was recommended by the auditors and is important to have for bookkeeping standards.

Steve Love from the town's auditing firm provided updated numbers for the capitalization threshold.

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the Capitalization Policy with the auditor's recommendations.

SECONDED by Pam Tworig. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

The Selectboard signed the Conflict of Interest Policy which was approved at their last meeting.

## FUND BALANCE/ARPA FUNDS

The auditors have completed the audit for 2022 and have sent the draft audit report. The town received ARPA funds in 2020 which were delegated toward the repair of the Lincoln Road bridge. In 2022 the town received an additional payment. After the application of the \$7,500.00 payment to DVFiber which was voted in March, the town has \$113,728.00. There is plenty of time for the Selectboard to determine the best use for these funds. The town's fund balance was determined to be \$75,969.45.

## MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT

The section of guardrails that were damaged on Jepson Road have been replaced. The driver's insurance company offered an amount to reimburse the town's cost for the guardrails less depreciation. Although the Selectboard demanded the full amount of reimbursement, the insurance company has refused to pay any more than the depreciated value of the guardrails. VLCT, the town's insurance carrier agrees that this is standard practice and the town's only alternative would be to start legal action in court against Travelers Insurance.

MOTION by Pam Tworig to settle the insurance claim and accept the funds offered. SECONDED by Nancy Bushika. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

## 2023 AUDIT

Love Cody & Company will no longer be performing municipal audits. A quick survey of other towns in the area indicated they are using auditing firms from Burlington, Vermont and Maine. There seems to be no local firms willing to do municipal audits. The treasurer will research firms in Greenfield and other Massachusetts border towns as well and will begin the request for proposal process.

## DELINQUENT DOGS

The board reviewed and accepted the final draft of the Guidelines to Bring Delinquent Dog Owners into Compliance. There are 40 dogs that remain unlicensed. The list was turned over to Luke McKay, the Dog Officer, to bring the dog owners into compliance. Marie Kelly-Whitney will help by contacting people on the list that she knows.

## NOTIFICATION OF PRESEUMPTIVFE ISOLATION ZONE

A landowner in Alpenwald is building a house and a septic system was designed. Because the town owns an abutting lot, it was notified of the septic design and the isolation zone around the system. Pam Tworig talked to Maura Hawkins about the letter. Maura Hawkins stated that it can make neighboring lots unbuildable. Pam Tworig feels this is a strong case not to allow one acre lots. If the property owner has the design prepared and never installs the system, it still affects the buildability of abutting lots. The letter is for notification purposes only and no response is necessary.

## ZONING ADMINISTRATOR

Deb Burchard advised that the trend with most towns is to use an hourly pay scale instead of a fee-based system which encourages enforcement. The board suggested she do some research and come back with information on pay scales for other similar small towns. Kurt Gamari noted that the Planning Commission has had several discussions regarding fees. Some of the regulations in the Zoning By-laws were also discussed.

#### TOWN WEBSITE

Marie Kelly-Whitney has added several pictures and has been updating the website. The town clerk continues to respond to emails from the site.

#### POISON PARSNIP

Kurt Gamari cautioned residents about poison parsnip which is growing along the roadways. It would be best to mow it down before it blooms so it can't reseed. The resin is very nasty.

#### SNOWMOBILE TRAIL/WOODFORD SNOWBUSTERS

Nancy Bushika apologized to Laura Champagne because the snowmobile trail topic was supposed to be on tonight's agenda, but she and Lori Shepard inadvertently left it out. The snowmobile trail topic will be added to the next meeting's agenda.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Marie Kelly-Whitney. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting ended at 8:25 p.m.

Marie Kelly-Whitney  
Clerk

/las

#### REMINDERS

1. 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.
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.