

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
May 17, 2018
(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Christopher Warren, Daniel J. Potvin and Carol Fachini.
Michael Denault was not present.

Visitors: Stephen Greene, Sheila G. Lawrence, Stanley Lawrence, Jr., Bill Levine and Pat Sullivan.
David R. Tatro, Road Commissioner.
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. The agenda was reviewed and a tax anticipation note proposal and Stamford Seed Savers update was added.

OPEN MOWING BIDS

A bid was received from Yard Work by Dan for 18 mowings at \$135.00 per mowing, for a total of \$2,430.00. A bid was received from Lawrence Mowing for \$2,812.00 for 18 mowings. The number of 18 mowings was not specified in the bid invitation, but was discussed during the site visit. Nancy Bushika suggested they table discussion until the end of the meeting to decide during executive session.

GREEN UP DAY

Pat Sullivan handed out Green Up Day reports and thanked everyone who participated for their help. They had about the same number of participants as last year but picked up more bags of trash. It was noted that large items are often dumped on the back roads during the weekends.

COMMUNITY BUILDING GROUP

Pat Sullivan stated that their next meeting is Tuesday, May 24, 2018 at 6 p.m. The group is entertaining other locations and she hopes more will come to learn what they are doing and share ideas.

STAMFORD SEED SAVERS

1. Stephen Greene stated that they had a booth at Green Up Day and sold enough house plants to purchase a grow light for the school. They spent a day at the school planting seeds with the children and the plants will eventually be put in the garden beds on the tennis courts.
2. The Seed Savers received an anonymous donation of \$300.00 to purchase blueberry bushes for the school children. He requested the Selectboard's permission to plant them in a row along the south/west side outside of the tennis courts. They intend to leave room between the tennis courts and the row of bushes so the grass can be mowed in between.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to grant permission to the Seed Savers to plant the blueberry bushes outside the tennis courts as long as the school approves of same. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MINUTES

MOTION by Chris Warren to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 3, 2018 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #20 \$ 7,216.36 payroll

WARRANT #21 \$25,162.00 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

The Selectboard reviewed and confirmed financial statements for the month of April.

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The highway crew has been grading roads.
2. Dave Tatro needs to put the mowing tractor back together.
3. The excavator has been delivered but he has not yet received the bucket.
4. Dave Tatro feels the mowing contractor should have no problem weed whacking along the north fence line even with the broken blacktop pieces. He will clear out behind the tennis courts next week.
5. Dave Tatro received paperwork from the Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) and talked at length with Jim Henderson from BCRC. Dave Tatro recommended that the Selectboard sign the Letter of Intent acknowledging their participation. The town will have to pay about \$2,700.00 and we will be eligible to receive around \$5,100.00 toward a project. Dave Tatro said the map he was given shows every road in town that is near water. Although the road itself may be fine, the program addresses erosion, aquatic species passage and silt run off. He will need to review every area in purple on the map and devise a plan on how to bring the town into compliance. Jim Henderson will view our roads and plan and determine what projects are priorities. Dave Tatro will have to fill out and file biannual reports on what areas need to be addressed, how we intend to address them, and how and when the project was completed. If we were not able to complete a project, he will have to report why. The state has said that lack of money is not an excuse for non-compliance and that participation in the program is the law. Dave Tatro feels this additional work will be very time consuming and will take away from the road work he needs to be doing. Hiring a third person is the direction we need to go in. Nancy Bushika feels the town should make a good-faith effort, do one project per year and it will have to suffice. Dave Tatro feels that weather and erosion play a huge part and he won't even complete the list before areas will have to be repaired a second time.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to sign the Letter of Intent to Participate in the RPC/DEC Municipal Roads Grants-In-Aid Program. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

6. Nancy Bushika asked if Dave Tatro intended to hire a part-time summer laborer. Dave Tatro would like to hire the same person who worked for him last summer.
7. The sweeper will be here on Monday.
8. The black top site visit is scheduled for Monday, May 21, 2018. Nancy Bushika asked if the town should hold off on black topping the school parking lot because of the gazebo/community building project. If the group decides they need electricity, it'd be a shame to cut into the new blacktop. Chris Warren suggested laying conduit before the project just in case. Bill Levine stated he thought they were considering solar powered lights and would not need electricity. The Selectboard will move forward with the school parking lot paving as scheduled.

RECYCLING

1. Michael Batchner will provide 200 Home Hazardous Waste flyers for distribution. It will be held on Saturday, July 28, 2018 from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. in Stamford. The board decided to distribute as follows: the town office, library and Bilmonts, CJ Vadnais' website, handouts at the transfer station and handouts at the tag sale at the Community Church. Nancy Bushika will contact the school principal to send copies home with the school children. The Selectboard will email it out to everyone on their email list. The date will be posted on the phone message board.
2. Dave Tatro will have them set up in front of the garage.

WEBSITE

Lori Shepard contacted town clerks on the clerk's muninet. Some towns created policies and some started websites without policies. Chris Warren felt Stamford should create a policy and will prepare a draft combining the best elements from the samples provided for the board's review. The board discussed what information they would like to have on the website. Chris Warren advised that the next step would be to prepare a paper

version. He recommends using wordpress.com. It is not very flexible and has limited functionality but it is inexpensive, has stability, is low maintenance and is easy to use.

RESULTS OF TAX SALE

Carol Fachini attended the tax sale which was run by Attorney Kevin O'Toole. Sally Bohl, Chip Dunn, Teddy Hopkins, Nancy Bushika and Lori Shepard were also present. One property was paid off that morning and was removed from the tax sale list. James Reid Dunn purchased the John Dunn property at 5033 Main Road for \$2,671.14. The town acquired Lots 176 and 178 in Alpenwald for a cost of \$1,309.37; Lot 191 in Alpenwald for \$1,332.00 and the 1.5 acres located on Main Road for \$2,294.76. Since the Board of Abatement voted not to abate taxes on property acquired by the town through tax sale, the Selectboard authorized the treasurer to forward payment in the amount of \$4,936.13 to Attorney Kevin O'Toole for the three properties.

HAYNES LOT

Dan Potvin walked the lot and determined that it has no real value to the town. There is a steep bank with low visibility because of the hill. The Selectboard previously received an offer to purchase the property. Dan Potvin wondered if the abutting neighbors should be contacted to see if they would like to purchase the lot first. Bill Levine and Nancy Bushika noted that the Haynes lot has been for sale for several years now. It's been on the For Sale list posted at the town office and has been listed in the town report. There's been plenty of time for anyone to make an offer if interested.

MOTION by Carol Fachini to sell the .5 acre Haynes lot to Rev. Robert and Sarah Bellofatto, Jr. for their original offer of \$250.00. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

STRAY DOG UPDATE

The person interested in taking the dog changed their mind. Luke McKay ended up keeping the dog for 13 days before surrendering it to the Second Chance Animal Hospital. Second Chance waived their \$50.00 surrender fee. Luke McKay will be paid the \$3.00/day impound fee for the additional days he kept the dog along with mileage to deliver the dog to Second Chance.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. The Selectboard reviewed the Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP). The new excavator was added under Category I. Allison Strohl was contacted to see if that was the proper category, but we have not heard back. Bill Levine suggested the board sign the plan as is knowing it can be revised at any time if necessary.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to sign the Local Emergency Operations Plan. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

2. At a previous meeting when the principal, Micah Hayre, discussed installing fences, Bill Levine offered to contribute a portion of funds from the emergency management budget if increasing the size of the gates increased the cost of the fencing. Micah Hayre contacted Bill Levine asking whether the fire department would contribute funds toward the purchase and installation of the fence. The fire department did not feel it was their responsibility or concern. What was originally a \$5,000.00-\$5,500.00 amount was now \$7,000.00 for the fences. Bill Levine would like to offer \$500.00 from the emergency management fund toward the fences. Nancy Bushika felt that none of the rest of us have any extra money in our budgets, just in case we need it. If there is some type of emergency, the money won't be available for its intended purpose. The board declined offering any funds at this time.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE

The treasurer spoke with three banks and received one proposal for a loan of \$200,000 which will be payable in full in November 2018. Berkshire Bank offered the loan at 2.25% interest. Last year's loan rate was 1.75% with Berkshire Bank.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to approve the application for a loan of \$200,000 at the rate of 2.25% per annum interest with Berkshire Bank. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

E-WASTE DAY

The town received a bill from the fire department for the items contributed by the town and school. The town's portion is \$80.00 and the school will be given a bill for their share.

GRAND LIST/LISTER CLERK POSITION

1. Nancy Bushika worked with Sally Bohl and John Tiffany, the assessor from NEMRC. The 2018 grand list abstract has been finalized and a date for grievance hearings has been set. Mr. Tiffany has spent about 4-5 days so far so we should be under budget.
2. The contract with NEMRC was for four months and will expire on June 30, 2018. The Selectboard will need to contract with NEMRC again after that date.
3. The town clerk stated that there are two people interested in the Lister Clerk position. One has expressed interest and would like to come to the office to learn more about the position, the other has submitted a cover letter and resume. The Selectboard reviewed the resume. Sally Bohl was hired through June 30, 2018, but it may be helpful to hire the clerk early to receive training. The Selectboard asked for a resume from the second candidate and interviews will be scheduled prior to the next Selectboard meeting.

TRAINING

1. The town clerk and assistant town clerk participated in a cyber security training session. The webinar was very informative and explained many ways to guard against computer viruses, spyware, ransomware, etc.
2. The Secretary of State's office has scheduled a mandatory election training session in July. They would like to see two people from each office attend. The town clerk will need to close the office in order for both to attend the seminar. Dan Potvin likes the way we hand-count votes for elections and does not want to see the town using a voting machine.

CREDIT CARD COMPANY ISSUE

The town clerk believes the issue is finally resolved. Credit card payments are processed with no problem and the credits appear to be straightened out.

TRASH ON CLASS 4 ROADS

It was noted that trash is often dumped on Risky Ranch Road and Klondike Road on the weekends. Dan Potvin will speak to Chad Schmidt at the Bennington County Sheriff's Office to see if they can patrol the back roads on the weekends.

DISTRIBUTISM

Dan Potvin has invited the president of his son's college to come to Stamford next fall to give a talk on distributism. Most people are familiar with the economic models of capitalism and socialism. Distributism is another form which promotes the local economy by encouraging everyone to buy local.

LISTENING SESSION

Nancy Bushika attended a listening session in Bennington hosted by the Vermont League of Cities & Towns (VLCT). VLCT is asking local town officials what they can do to help us. People who attended complained about losing local control. Many complained about the state passing mandates without providing any funding or assistance to help towns comply. One suggested towns band together and storm the state house like the teachers did to say enough is enough. Bulk purchasing and partnering between towns to save money was also discussed. When VLCT finishes holding these sessions around the state, they will send the results to all towns.

PERMITS

Nancy Bushika learned during the session that Administrative Officers have fifteen days by state law to approve or deny permits. If the Administrative Officer fails to act within fifteen days, the permit application is considered approved.

VELCO PERMIT

Carol Fachini asked about the status of Velco's permit to work in the wetlands. They are improving their access road within their right-of-way near Klondike Road. They are working with the state and the town was notified but has no control over the decision.

LAWN BID DECISION

Nancy Bushika requested a motion to enter executive session to discuss the bids received and make a decision. Dan Potvin felt there was no need to enter executive session, that many bids and proposals have been discussed and decided in open session in the past. Dan Potvin felt Yard Work by Dan submitted the lower bid and does good work and he should be chosen. Nancy Bushika felt the town has hired Lawrence Mowing for years and would like to stick with them. Although there was a small problem last year, they corrected it right away. Carol Fachini felt choosing a Stamford resident over a non-resident was best, and we should take care of our own. Chris Warren said hiring someone new is a risk, but the risk is limited since Dan Denault is known by others. Chris Warren felt the job should be bid out each year. Carol Fachini decided that choosing the lowest bidder might be the best way to serve our residents.

MOTION by Chris Warren to accept the quote from Yard Work by Dan in the amount of \$2,430.00 for 18 mowings. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Nancy Bushika).

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to adjourn. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Christopher Warren
Clerk

CW/las

REMINDERS

1. All dogs must be licensed with the town by April 1, 2018.
2. Anyone interested in applying for the lister clerk position should review the help wanted ad and apply at the town office.
3. A free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on Saturday, July 28, 2018 from 9 am to 11 a.m. in Stamford.
4. The Town Clerk's office hours are: Monday: closed; Tuesday: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Wednesday 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.; Thursday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.; and Friday: 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.