

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**July 20, 2017**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Michael Denault, David R. Tatro and Carol Fachini.  
Daniel J. Potvin was not present.

Visitors: Laura Champagne, Jan Farinon, Helen Fields, Bill Levine, and Frederick Nazzewski  
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.

**PRE-SCHOOL FENCE**

Jan Farinon spoke on behalf of the preschool to discuss installing a fence to provide a barrier between the small playground and the parking area. The fence will be plastic mesh and retractable, running from the southwest corner of the school building toward the telephone box. The principal is supportive and will work with Dave Tatro for the placement to reduce interference with winter plowing.

MOTION by Mike Denault to allow the preschool to install the fence as described with the exact placement to be worked out between the principal and Dave Tatro. SECONDED by Dave Tatro. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

**COUNTY ROAD**

1. Fred Nazzewski asked the Selectboard to consider reclassifying County Road from the current end of the class 3 road near Mr. Rum's house down to the Dolle home. There are telephone poles and high speed internet already installed. It would increase the tax base for the town. This area is the future of Stamford and he hopes they will consider the possibilities. It would benefit the highway crew by not having to drive around through Clarksburg up West Road to plow Klondike Road. Dave Tatro agreed that it would substantially reduce the wear and tear on the vehicles by staying in town to plow and not having to go through Clarksburg. Dave Tatro said he has thought about it a lot and it makes sense to make that section a year round, full time road. Mike Denault was concerned as to whether Clarksburg will maintain their end of the road as well as Stamford. Mike Denault asked what process was necessary to change the classification of a road. Dave Tatro referred to our Road Ordinance and said there are some areas that would need work, for instance some areas are too narrow for two cars to pass in the winter. The state establishes minimum codes and standards that should be followed. We would receive additional money from the state if those portions of County Road and Klondike Road were reclassified as Class 3. Mike Denault asked Dave Tatro to look into it and come back with the initial cost for the necessary road upgrades. It would not have to be paved since it is already a town road and not a new road. Nancy Bushika suggested he come up with something for budget time and the board could set money aside in the budget. Dave Tatro thought the cost would be considerable. Nancy Bushika said it would be a Selectboard decision not a town vote. Dave Tatro agreed citing in the ordinance that the Selectboard has the ultimate authority on reclassifying roads and that town votes are advisory only. Mike Denault thinks it's a good idea but recognizes that it may be costly. Dave Tatro believes that it is in the best interests of the town. Nancy Bushika agreed and suggested we start putting money aside in the budget. Dave Tatro said having our own town excavator to do the work instead of hiring it out would really make a difference in the cost. He thought it would take the highway crew a summer to bring the road to where it should be. The board was very supportive.

2. Mike Denault noted that we have discussed buying an excavator several times. Dave Tatro would like to have a machine in mind for purchase when they ask the town to release the funds. We have \$65,000 in our highway equipment fund at this time. Dave Tatro believes we could afford to buy an excavator with the money we would save in not hiring out the excavator work. He stated we would definitely need a third laborer to be efficient.

3. Fred Nazzewski complimented Mike Brothers and Dave Tatro for their mechanical repair work on the town equipment. They save the town lots of money by doing the work in-house and he hopes they are appreciated.
4. Fred Nazzewski asked if when the highway department does work for the school if the school reimburses the highway department. Nancy Bushika said no, we do not bill the school for work done.
5. Fred Nazzewski mentioned the landslide area near Tatro Road. Carol Fachini felt opening up Old County Road would help re-route traffic in the event of a landslide. Mike Denault said a camp owner also approached him about the landslide area. Dave Tatro had the state engineer look at it a year or two ago. It is a big project to fix the area properly and would cost a lot of money. It could qualify for a mitigation grant.

#### OLD COUNTY ROAD

Laura Champagne believes opening up County and Klondike Road is a good idea and wishes the board would be consistent when considering Old County Road. The Selectboard is waiting to hear from the town attorney regarding the petitions. The town clerk spoke with the attorney today who expects to provide her opinion for discussion at the next Selectboard meeting. Mike Denault asked if the attorney could provide the letter sooner so the Selectboard could review it prior to the meeting. Carol Fachini felt reversing the decision to discontinue the road would not require as much road work as if the road was being accepted as a new road. Dave Tatro reminded the board that we are talking about a road that was discontinued legally. He asked Carol Fachini to review the town's code and standards because all roads need to follow that standard. Dave Tatro said before she wastes any more of her time, she should get a copy of the road policy because there are things she needs to do. Nancy Bushika said Maltese Road took about 10 years to update the road, get the rights-of-way and reclassify the road. Nancy Bushika asked why the board would want to reverse their prior decision. Dave Tatro said reversing the decision won't help the Fachinis because in 2010 when they discontinued the road, the section only went to the cellar hole and not to her house. Carol Fachini said there are many property owners already in court because the ancient road process has caused a lot of difficulty for people, and the courts are reversing the decisions. Carol Fachini felt if they paid to bring the road up to standard and the town takes it over it would alleviate a lot of problems. Helen Fields was a Selectboard member during the ancient roads process and recalled the process of holding hearings and notifying all abutters. The Selectboard sent the necessary communications to all interested parties at the time. A lot of property owners liked having the roads become private to omit the public traffic. Laura Champagne noted that many people who received those letters probably didn't understand the ramifications of the changes. Dave Tatro wanted to point out, if the decision is reversed, the road would be classified as a Class 4 road with minimal summer work and no winter plowing. Carol Fachini said John Tatro had told her that he was supposed to be maintaining her road for years but he wasn't due to the confusion surrounding the original discontinuance of Old County Road. Helen Fields felt reversing the decision was possible. Carol Fachini felt she will probably recuse herself from voting and she thought Dave Tatro should do the same since it affects his job. Dave Tatro said he didn't want to discuss it and that she shouldn't tell him whether or not he should vote. She shouldn't suggest it because she's almost intimidating him not to vote on something.

#### SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #29 \$ 5,876.88 payroll

WARRANT #30 \$69,435.17 accounts payable

#### FINANCIALS

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

## ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The roof on the recycling shed has been fixed.
2. The road crew has been mowing.
3. Next week the highway crew will be working with a contractor to replace culverts on Klondike Road, Schenk Road and Sportsman Road.
4. The town truck is up at Carbone's for repair.
5. Nancy Bushika asked Dave Tatro to contact The Lane bridge contractor for a start date.

## RECYCLING

1. There has been no response from the haulers that are late in filing their 1st quarter reports.
2. Nancy Bushika had a teleconference with Josh Kelly at the Agency of Natural Resources. He is contacting all towns who have not started collecting food scraps, which was mandated to start as of July 1st. Josh Kelly said the state will not recognize our food scraps and trash being incinerated for alternative energy as acceptable. Mr. Kelly suggested that we join with another town such as Bennington or Readsboro and residents could bring their food scraps there. Nancy Bushika did not believe that was a feasible solution, but perhaps a Massachusetts town might be. Nancy Bushika requested permission to research the laws further. Helen Fields said some individuals in the Seed Savers Group are interested in composting food scraps as a town. Many residents may be composting at home already. We only need to target those families who are not composting and determine how many pounds would be generated. Composting is easy but it needs management and proper management requires education. Helen Fields felt if the Seed Savers could create an alternative stream for the food waste, the state would probably be satisfied. If our residents composted in town, it would reduce transportation costs and labor costs while avoiding a health issue. These individuals will do research while the board researches joining forces with Massachusetts. Bill Levine noted that only 40-45% of the town even uses the recycling center. The state is offering grants for fencing and the recycling center would need fencing. If we can demonstrate an alternative stream, the town could request a variance from the state.
3. Helen Fields said on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. she will be conducting a worm composting program for children during the library club and invites all to attend.

## SEED SAVERS GROUP

1. The Seed Savers group would like to place the old shed inside the tennis court. Nancy Bushika would rather they do not cut the fence to do this. Helen Fields said they would like to cut the fence where the hole exists and install a double wide gate so the area is still enclosed. Dave Tatro thought having a larger access point would be helpful. Helen Fields will discuss this matter with the board once the gate design has been developed.
2. The Seed Savers have applied for a \$1,000.00 grant.

## CEMETERY COMMISSION

Deferred to next meeting since no Cemetery Commissioner was present.

## TAX SALE

Carol Fachini reported that the tax sale took place on July 12, 2017. There were originally five parcels but three owners paid the taxes prior to the sale. There was only one bidder who bid on the two remaining parcels. He bid \$1,230.12 for Lots 280 and 281 in Alpenwald and \$3,521.52 for Lots 282 and 283 in Alpenwald. The town did not acquire any new property.

## KLONDIKE ROAD BRIDGE

The state submitted the Completion & Acceptance form for the Klondike Road bridge. The treasurer read the response from Carolyn Carlson, the state engineer for the project, describing what work and timeframe the May 31, 2017 bill covered. The Selectboard feels the project was completed last summer

with the exception of checking to make sure the grass grows this year, and yet every month they continue to receive bills. They instructed the treasurer to request a final bill and not to pay any bills until we receive the final bill. In 2013 the cost for the project was \$898,000.00. To date the project has cost over \$1,718,000.00 and the town has paid over \$85,200.00 so far. The Selectboard is frustrated with amount this project is over budget. Dave Tatro said it is not the contractor going over budget, it is the state's cost for engineering and overseeing the project.

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine stated that McLain Electric has started working on the generator project. The shrub has been removed. The old generator has been removed and delivered at the town garage. The wooden enclosure has been set aside for the Seed Savers Group who would like to use the material. The wiring in the kitchen and gym should be completed by mid August.

#### BENNINGTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

The sheriff has requested two certified copies of our traffic ordinance to assist the sheriffs in writing tickets when they pull people over. The cost of certification is \$10.00 per page and the ordinance is 28 pages long. The town clerk will talk to the sheriff's office to see if a signed copy is sufficient.

#### TOWN OFFICE

The town clerk has received positive feedback concerning her change in hours.

#### DELINQUENT DOG LIST

Two dog owners have come in to license their dogs.

#### ALLSTATE ASPHALT

A resident complained that after repeated attempts to contact Allstate Asphalt, they have been told the company will do nothing to fix the tar which covers their vehicles. They are frustrated and hope that their tax money will not be used to hire that contractor in the future.

#### TREE REMOVAL

Dan Potvin has not started work as yet. He will be contacted to see when he will start. The Selectboard would like this job completed before school starts.

#### BID POLICY

The board discussed the benefits of creating a Bid Policy. The town is not required to put jobs out to bid. Dave Tatro felt it would be hard to bid out highway projects caused by weather damage because the roads need to be fixed immediately. There is usually not time for the bid process. Bill Levine suggested that a policy could be created to cover all planned projects in excess of a certain amount. The Selectboard will determine on a case by case basis whether to bid out a job.

#### TAX RATE

The Selectboard received notice that the Agency of Education has set the school tax rates. The homestead rate is 1.1724. Last year's rate was 1.0668. The non-residential rate is 1.4059. Last year's rate was 1.4075.

#### PACIF GRNAT

Nancy Bushika noted in the VLCT News that next year grants will be available to purchase security systems for town garages.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

A new state law will mandate that all towns adopt a Conflict of Interest policy by July 1, 2019. The decision will have to be made at an annual town meeting.

#### TRASH DUMPING ON BACK RODS

Mike Denault said he was notified by a camp owner that a truck and trailer full of trash was headed up Klondike Road. A camp owner pursued the truck and it got stuck on the side of the road. Pictures of the truck, driver and license plates were provided to the State Police and it is under investigation. Mike Denault wanted to assure the board that the police are taking action. He said the State Police have billed and received over \$1,500.00 in fines for illegal dumping.

#### SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

1. Mike Denault would like to see the Selectboard stick to their 5 minutes per person and 15 minutes per topic. Discussion seems to get off track, it becomes heated at times and much time is wasted. The Selectboard agreed and will keep an eye on the time.
2. Mike Denault also noted that several people are talking at once and different conversations are going on simultaneously during the meeting which makes it hard to follow. The board agreed that everyone should raise their hands and be recognized by the chair before speaking.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Dave Tatro. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Nancy L. Bushika  
Clerk pro tem

NLB/las

#### REMINDERS

1. A worm composting program will be held on Wednesday, August 2, 2017 at 10:30 a.m. for children during the library club. All are invited to attend.
2. The town office has new hours: Monday: closed, Tuesday: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Wednesday: 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.; Thursday: 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.; and Friday 8 a.m. – 12 p.m.