

TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
July 6, 2017
(UNAPPROVED)

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

Visitors: Stephen Bechtel, Sally Bohl, Laura Champagne, Deborah Darling, Nancy Lesage, Bill Levine,
Stephen Tworig, and Mary Lou Wright.
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.

OLD COUNTY ROAD

Laura Champagne asked about Old County Road. The Selectboard has received two petitions. The first petition is to accept Old County Road as a Class 3 road and waive the requirement to pave it. The second petition is to accept Old County Road as a Class 3 road and waive the requirement to pave it by reversing their decision to discontinue the road in 2010. The board has 60 days to warn a special meeting. Bill Levine stated that the Selectboard has the authority to revise the language for clarity when preparing the warning. The town's attorney has been contacted and the Selectboard is waiting for her response before taking any action. Dave Tatro stated that reversing the decision would bring the road in as a Class 4 road and it would still have to be brought up to code and standards if they want the town to maintain it. Bill Levine stated that the road precedes the ancient roads legislation. Dave Tatro wants to make sure the process is done properly. Steve Tworig was on the Zoning Board of Adjustment at the time a house was built on Old County Road and a ZBA permit was needed to build. Bill Levine felt at that time a ZBA permit was required to build in a forest zone and the area was marked as a forest zone then.

POULTRY

Nancy Lesage said her son Jesse has been containing the birds and building fences. The amount of his flock has been greatly reduced. The Selectboard was happy to hear and has not received any complaints.

GREEN MOUNTAIN NATIONAL FOREST

Nancy LeSage spoke at great length with Mary-Beth Deller, the Botanist at Green Mountain National Forest. She supports their treatment of the invasive species. Ms. Deller informed her that they use the herbicide directly on the specific plants being targeted in order to kill only the roots of that plant. Stephen Tworig is in favor of the GMNF plan and feels the spreading of these invasive species is much more harmful to ecosystems than the limited herbicide use they are proposing. Carol Fachini heard on the news that the chemicals found in Roundup may be linked to cancer. Nancy Bushika acknowledged an email from Ms. Deller indicating that they had not received permission from all adjacent land owners and if they did not obtain it soon, they would only be working on their own land. The Selectboard encouraged any other residents with questions to contact Mary-Beth Deller at (802) 767-4261 x 5524 or mdeller@fs.fed.us. The Forest Service will also be holding a public meeting in the next 1-2 years to review the forest-wide decisions previously made and recommends that those interested should attend.

CEMETERY COMMISSION

Since the Selectboard created the Insurance Policy requiring all who work for the town to have \$1 million in liability and commercial auto insurance, the cemetery has had difficulty finding contractors. The contractor is charging \$550.00 to dig a full burial hole and \$350.00 for the smaller 2'x2'x3' cremation hole. The Cemetery Commission feels that is a lot to charge families who are already going through a difficult time. The Commission has checked with other towns from Readsboro to Pittsfield and in each town, the town employees dig their graves. We are the only town that contracts that service out. Dave Tatro stated that the highway crew in Readsboro does not work in the cemetery. Sally Bohl said a town employee digs the cremation graves in Readsboro. Town employees are covered by our insurance and Sally Bohl suggested now that we have a third highway laborer, would it be possible for a town employee to dig the cremation graves. Dave Tatro said it

would take away from their road work. Sally Bohl pointed out it was a conflict of interest for Dave Tatro since he is the Road Commissioner and a Selectboard member. Dave Tatro argued that he has the right to his opinion and was going to give it, even if he had to sit on the other side of the table. Sally Bohl estimated the town has about four cremations per year and didn't think that was asking too much, since it is a town cemetery. Dave Tatro stated that the third laborer isn't in the budget, we are already spending money we don't have. The family is charged the fee so the town would be reimbursed for the cost. Dave Tatro thought if the third laborer wanted to do it on his own time, fine, but he did not want it coming out of highway time. If an insurance rider could be purchased for someone else to dig on town property and be covered, that would be an alternative solution. The Selectboard asked Lori Shepard to contact the town's insurance company to see if a rider is available and the matter will be discussed at the next meeting.

MINUTES

MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept the regular meeting minutes of June 15, 2017, as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

- WARRANT #25 \$ 6,198.71 payroll
- WARRANT #26 \$30,137.29 accounts payable
- WARRANT #27 \$ 7,083.15 payroll
- WARRANT #28 \$23,098.58 accounts payable

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. Dave Tatro has been on vacation; everything is going fine.
2. The road crew has been mowing and will do some more culvert replacement and ditching when the mowing is done.
3. Dave Tatro reviewed the municipal roads grant information. He feels there is usually a catch with grant money and is leery about applying. The grant covers work on roads that are next to rivers and streams. The grant amount is about \$4,500.00 and requires a 20% in-kind town match. It would only cover a very small project. Laura Champagne suggested the board get more information before making a decision.

MOTION by Dan Potvin not to apply for the grant at this time. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. 3 in favor. Dave Tatro abstained. Motion APPROVED.

RECYCLING

1. One hauler report for the 2nd quarter has been received. There has been no response from the haulers that are late in filing their 1st quarter reports with the exception of TAM. TAM is only filing reports twice/year in accordance with the discussion at the last alliance meeting. Unfortunately, our ordinance requires quarterly filings.
2. Dave Tatro received a call from a resident. There was a vehicle stuck on Risky Ranch Road and there was concern that the vehicle was trying to dump more trash on the back road. Dave Tatro contacted the Vermont State Police who came down. The vehicle was gone and the officer could find no trash. The Bennington County Sheriff advised that they had received a phone call from a Stamford resident who was either removing items from a camp or bringing items to a camp when their vehicle got stuck. The sheriff feels there was no intention to dump any trash. Nancy Bushika was happy that the Vermont State Police responded timely.
3. Nancy Bushika will be on a conference call with Josh Kelly from the Agency of Natural Resources. She thinks it's a survey on food scraps and composting, etc. Nancy LeSage felt composting should be promoted and we should have an area at the recycling center where people can bring their compost, even if there is an increased cost. The board explained that because our trash is burned and turned into an alternative energy source, they feel they are complying with Vermont law by including food scraps in the trash. Nancy Lesage disagreed. Dave Tatro did not feel it would be utilized very much and would not justify the cost.

TREE REMOVAL BIDS

Dan Potvin recused himself.

Dan Potvin's bid was \$150.00-\$250.00 per tree to cut and remove the trees, rake and clean up debris and haul away the trees. He noted that after one or two trees, he should be able to fine-tune the bid and confirm the full price. 25 trees at up to \$250.00 each would be up to \$6,250.00 total cost.

Greater Heights Tree and Land Management submitted a proposal of \$8,125.00 to remove 25 trees, including full clean up of all debris, and cut the stumps low to the ground.

JCB Law Care submitted a bid to cut down and remove 25 trees (stumps not included) for \$9,375.00.

The board recognized that they do not have money in the budget set aside for this project. Dave Tatro said that because the Selectboard was made aware of the dead trees by the Tree Warden, the board should act.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to hire Dan Potvin for a price up to \$6,625.00 to cut and remove the 25 trees and clean up the debris. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. 3 in favor. Dan Potvin did not vote. Motion APPROVED.

BID POLICY

Stephen Tworig suggested that the Selectboard create a policy to handle the bidding process in the future. The board could choose an amount and jobs over that amount would be bid out following a certain process and jobs under the amount would not be bid out. He felt the tree proposal process was fine, and the town made out, but it would bring uniformity and avoid sticky situations. Dave Tatro felt the tree job just morphed into this and the board did not start out intending to seek formal bids. Dave Tatro felt it might be difficult to bid out highway projects because damage caused by a rain storm would need to be fixed immediately and there is not always time to obtain bids. He felt if we had our own town excavator, it would avoid a lot of that.

OPEN MEETING LAWS

The Open Meeting Law training has been scheduled with Attorney Jim Barlow for Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6 p.m. Nancy Bushika felt it is important for the town to follow the law. All town boards and the School Board will be contacted to attend.

TAX SALE

The tax sale is scheduled for Wednesday, July 12, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. at the town office. Carol Fachini and maybe Nancy Bushika will attend. Four adjoining lots in Alpenwald will be for sale.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine obtained small sharps disposal containers from Tapestry. They are available to anyone and signs will be prepared asking individuals to return the containers directly to Tapestry in North Adams. A medium size container will also be available for convenience.
2. Al McLain requested a partial payment to keep the generator moving on the production line.
3. Bill Levine spoke with the new school principal. He will be given a current Local Emergency Operations Plan and we will obtain his contact information.

KLONDIKE ROAD BRIDGE

1. The statement dated May 31, 2017 has not been paid. The treasurer is waiting for information on what work and timeframe it covers.
2. Dave Tatro said the grass is beginning to grow but not well.

DELINQUENT DOG LIST

Luke McKay has been given the list and is working on it.

TREASURER

The Treasurer provided the board with an Internal Control Checklist for Vermont Towns. The Selectboard felt comfortable with the checks and balances we have in place. A copy is also provided to the auditors.

SEED SAVERS GROUP

The Seed Savers Group has been working hard. They have several beds at the tennis court and have also built a couple benches. Everything looks nice.

BOARD OF CIVIL AUTHORITY

The next Board of Civil Authority meeting will be held on Thursday, July 20, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. to finish the purging of the checklist.

ENERGY LAW

Dan Potvin spoke about the energy law passed in Vermont last year. The state wants to reduce its energy consumption by 1/3 by 2050. The state is encouraging wood heat and pushing electric heat pumps. They are pushing electric cars to reduce fossil fuel usage. They will be encouraging net zero energy homes with grants. They would like to see towns completely energy independent. The state anticipates our electricity usage to increase by 50% but envisions that less resources will be used to generate the same amount of energy. The state wants to see this additional 50% of energy coming from either solar or wind power. The Bennington County Regional Commission has a map of potential energy production areas. Dan Potvin saw on the map that the Hoosac range in Stamford has the highest rating for wind power in Bennington County. If we join forces with the state now, they are saying we will have control over the solar and wind power in our town, instead of the state dictating what will be placed where. Although the state acknowledged that water is the most efficient way to produce electricity, they are against issuing new hydro permits. A 16 acre solar farm will generate 3 megawatts of power. 4 windmills will produce 10 megawatts. Dan Potvin saw on the map that the Green Mountain National Forest land on County Road also has good color for wind power and he would prefer to have windmills up there. Although the Appalachian Trail goes through that area, no one from town will be able to see the windmills and there is already a power line there. Many present stated that windmills are very noisy. Bill Levine noted that water power was used at the old box mill off County Road. There is no cost to get involved at this level. The Planning Commission has agreed to be open-minded. Dan Potvin would like to go forward at this point to investigate the advantages and disadvantages.

PLANNING COMMISSION

The Planning Commission held a public hearing for the adoption of the new town plan. Suggestions were made to update some out-of-date language. Stephen Bechtel noted that the new plan is very similar to the old plan. Some changes include energy development language, flood plan references and new state regulations. The Planning Commission voted to approve the plan with the minor revisions that were suggested.

MOTION by Dave Tatro to adjourn. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Daniel J. Potvin
Clerk

DJP/las

REMINDERS

1. Dog licenses were due April 1, 2017. Please come in to the town office if you have not yet registered your dog.
2. The recycling center has started its summer hours and will be open on Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
3. 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.
4. The tax sale has been scheduled for Wednesday, July 12, 2017 at 11:30 a.m. at the town office.