

**TOWN OF STAMFORD
SELECTBOARD MEETING
November 16, 2017
(UNAPPROVED)**

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

Visitors: Angela Brothers, Harvey Carter, Donna Engel, Helen Fields, Susan Flash, Stephen Greene,
Peter Grudin, Bill Levine, Pat Sullivan and Ruth West.
Deborah Darling, Board of Listers.
Lori Shepard, Selectboard Secretary.

Nancy Bushika called the meeting to order at 6:20 p.m., opened with the pledge of allegiance, welcomed everyone and read a statement with procedural rules for the meeting.

HEARING OF VISITORS

1. Ruth West provided paperwork indicating that she tried to file her homestead declaration on March 21, 2017. Her taxes were done by a free AARP volunteer in Bennington who worked with her for over an hour and they both thought the paper was filed properly but it must not have gone through. It wasn't until she received her tax bill that she discovered it. She is requesting the Selectboard waive the \$67.23 penalty. It is a substantial amount for her and could pay for over a week's worth of groceries. The state retained \$15.00 as a late filing penalty and the actual increase on her tax bill was \$52.23. Dan Potvin felt the board should waive the amount and cautioned her to be more diligent in the future. Nancy Bushika noted that Ruth West was here a couple years ago asking for an abatement for a different reason and asked if the board abated the fee tonight, would she be back here again next year. Dave Tatro felt she is a town resident and it is obvious that she attempted to file the paperwork timely and felt it was a kind gesture to waive the late fee. MOTION by David Tatro to abate the late filing penalty of \$52.23. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. 3 in favor, 1 opposed (Nancy Bushika). Motion APPROVED.

2. Harvey Carter is a logger from Pownal. He has been in business for 27 years and has never damaged any town roads. He is logging property on Old County Road this winter. He wanted to discuss the bond requirements for plowing a Class 4 road in the winter. Dave Tatro said the bond requirement really should be an insurance requirement. Nancy Bushika asked Dave Tatro to take a picture of the road now. Dave Tatro felt if he provided a certificate of liability insurance with the town that would be fine. The Selectboard was in agreement.

3. Angela Brothers read her letter of resignation as a lister to the Selectboard. She stated the position can be both challenging and rewarding and appreciated the opportunity for growth the position provided. Although she gave a two week notice, she will do whatever is necessary to ensure a smooth transition to facilitate the passing of her responsibilities to the remaining lister, Debbie Darling.

4. Debbie Darling gave an overview of what is required as a lister. There is a steep learning curve and ongoing training is essential. She was able to receive a lot of hands-on training and experience this year and thanked Angela Brothers who is excellent at entering the pttrs (property transfer tax returns) and has been extremely helpful in teaching her the job. Debbie Darling believes a town-wide reappraisal is necessary and recommended that the Selectboard begin the process. There is so much to know and she has not been trained to evaluate and assess houses. She felt the listers pay of \$12.75 needs to increase because the state has heaped so much responsibility on the listers. The state also wants the listers to follow sales. Dan Potvin wondered if we could bring in the Pownal lister to help temporarily and try to get someone to fill the vacancies. Nancy Bushika would like to contact NEMRC who offers appraisal services and see what they charge. Nancy Bushika suggested if we went with NEMRC we could just have one lister as a clerk. Bill Levine agreed that the pay is not reasonable for what they are expected to do. The Selectboard will discuss this further at their next meeting.

5. MOTION by Dave Tatro to accept Angela Brothers' letter of resignation with regret. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. Anyone interested in serving as a lister until the next election should contact the town office or a Selectboard member.

MINUTES

Dave Tatro requested a change. Under "Mowing", he would like it clarified that he is willing to do the mowing and weed whacking with a third laborer, but not the grave digging.

MOTION by Dave Tatro to accept the regular meeting minutes of November 2, 2017 as revised. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #47 \$ 5,834.43 payroll
WARRANT #48 \$ 21,240.52 accounts payable
WARRANT #49 \$201,486.30 accounts payable

FINANCIALS

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

ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The Lane bridge is coming along. It should be reopened soon. Because of the weather the concrete was slow to reach full strength. The paving by the town for the entrance and exit ramps is complete. The grease painting will have to wait until next year and the Selectboard will have to encumber the funds to complete the project. The treasurer will see if some of the grant funds can be released early so the town won't have to front such a high bill and wait for reimbursement.
2. The highway department is ready for winter.
3. The third laborer is pretty much done for the season but could be called in occasionally during the winter if he was available and the situation arose. It is difficult being on call from November through April. As with the listers, the state continues to increase the codes and standards for highways. People's expectations of road conditions during winter are extremely high. All town jobs are overwhelming and the workload is 1 1/2 times what anyone should be expected to do.
4. Ruth West mentioned a grant offered by the state for the replacement of culverts to prevent run off going into roads and thought the town could benefit. Dave Tatro said it was the Better Back Roads Grant and said we just applied for it.
5. Another Klondike Road bill was received with a letter requesting payment within thirty days.

RECYCLING

1. Helen Fields asked about the temporary vacancy at the recycling center. The position pays \$15.00/hour. We have a backup at the moment but it would be nice to have another back up if someone can't do their shift.
2. Nancy Bushika acknowledged the quarterly report from the Bennington County Regional Commission. The Alliance is under budget. The Alliance is doing its best to comply with state regulations.
3. The consultant with New England Recycling has worked with Stamford School on composting and recycling.
4. Helen Fields said that New England Recycling feels Stamford meets the criteria they are looking for to pilot a town composting center. A significant grant is available and Helen Fields will keep the board up to date.

5. Helen Fields has given away 25 of the 30 composting buckets. They learned many people are already composting at home through a survey handed out at the transfer station. The survey results are available at www.stamfordvt.org.
6. Helen Fields has written for a Farm to School grant. The goal would be to use agriculture to teach children in and out of the classroom. It would help local food sources sell to the school and build a community around farming education. Studies have shown that kids learn more and learn better through agricultural learning, and it has a positive effect on children's behavior.
7. The TAM truck driver asked if the newspapers could be bagged before being thrown into the school dumpster. When they are loose they tend to blow around on a windy day and make a mess. There were also two parked cars blocking the dumpster. Dave Tatro needs to talk to Trevor Mance about downsizing the school dumpsters and will talk about repositioning the dumpsters. Helen Fields reminded Dave Tatro to keep access open to the garden when the dumpsters are moved.
8. Republic Services has not yet picked up the paper dumpster at the recycling center.

DINNER TO HONOR STAMFORD VETERANS

The dinner was an absolute success. There were probably 70 people there and everyone had a good time.

DOG UPDATE

1. Luke McKay, Dog Officer, spoke with Amanda Kurpiel again. She has not yet licensed her dog. A letter will be sent giving her one week to come in.
2. Luke McKay held the stray dog for more than ten days and released it to the Second Chance Animal Shelter on November 8, 2017. They are hopeful that she can be rehomed. Luke McKay submitted his bill for services rendered which the Selectboard agreed to pay.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The town has received the generator keys and the online link to the manual. The final bill has been paid to McLain Electric and the grant reimbursement forms have been sent in. The school has noticed when the generator runs for weekly maintenance on Monday afternoons that fumes are coming in the school building through a vent in the eaves. Bill Levine is looking into the problem.

HEALTH OFFICER REAPPOINTMENT

The Selectboard acknowledged a letter from the state reappointing Kurt Gamari as Health Officer for another three year term.

ELECTION PLACE SURVEY RESULTS

The town received the results of the inspection conducted by Disability Rights of Vermont. They indicated that the handicap parking spot in front of the school was not up to code. They also noted that the threshold at the entrance to the school is greater than the 1/4 inch height allowable. The report indicated that these recommendations do not have to be implemented immediately but should be rectified when these areas are renovated.

ERRORS AND OMISSIONS

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to sign the Certificate of Errors and Omissions. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The grand list was modified because there was a current use change and two contiguous parcels were combined.

EMPLOYEE POLICY HANDBOOK

Nancy Bushika asked to table discussion until there was a full board.

ALL BOARDS MEETING ON OPEN MEETING LAWS

Attorney Jim Barlow will be at the school for Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6 p.m. to give a presentation on the Open Meeting Laws. The Selectboard has invited all town boards to attend this important event and welcomes the public to come as well.

TAX APPEAL/EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to enter executive session to discuss the tax appeal/attorney matter.

SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. Nancy Bushika, Dave Tatro and Carol Fachini entered executive session at 8:20 p.m. Dan Potvin left the meeting.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Dave Tatro. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 8:30 p.m.

MOTION by Dave Tatro to give Nancy Bushika, Chair of the Selectboard, authority to sign the paperwork needed to settle the property tax appeal lawsuit for \$238,000.00. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Daniel J. Potvin
Clerk

DJP/las

REMINDERS

1. New recycling punch cards for use beginning November 1, 2017 are available at the Town Office.
2. Attorney James Barlow's presentation on Open Meeting Laws is scheduled for Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at the Stamford Elementary School.
3. Anyone interested in filling in at the recycling center on Saturday mornings from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. should contact the town office or a Selectboard member.
4. Anyone interested in serving as a lister until the next election should contact the town office or a Selectboard member.
5. The town office will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 23 and 24, 2017 for the Thanksgiving holiday.
6. 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.