

**TOWN OF STAMFORD**  
**SELECTBOARD MEETING**  
**July 12, 2018**  
**(UNAPPROVED)**

Present: Selectboard: Nancy L. Bushika, Christopher Warren, Daniel J. Potvin, Michael Denault and Carol Fachini.

Visitors: Deborah Darling, Helen Fields and Bill Levine.

Sally Bohl, Assessor Clerk.

Luke McKay, Dog Officer.

James Stimpson, Administrative Officer.

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 discussion of credit cards and the hiring of an Assistant Town Clerk/Treasurer was added per 1 V.S.A. 312(d)(3)(A). The order of the agenda was changed pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 312(d)(3)(B).

#### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

1. Bill Levine provided paperwork for the Emergency Management Director Certification Program and encouraged anyone who may be interested in the Emergency Management Director or Assistant Director positions to consider enrolling in the program. Copies of the information and application are available at the town office.
2. Bill Levine explained the importance of properly displaying your 9-1-1 house number in the event of an emergency and a copy of the regulations was given to the board. Green reflective house number signs can be purchased from the fire department for \$16.00. The board discussed how to bring residents into compliance. Bill Levine will consult the fire chief to see if the junior fire fighters can survey the town to see which houses are lacking a number. The town may offer to provide signs at no cost for a period of time, and thereafter the 9-1-1 number policy will be enforced at the property owner's cost.

#### FREE RANGE CHICKEN COMPLAINT

Neither party was able to attend tonight. Debra Johnson provided a written response to the Selectboard's letter. Jim Stimpson, the Administrative Officer, tried to visit the property on several occasions but no one was home. He observed a well-made chicken coop and did not see chickens wandering around when he was there. Jim Stimpson noted a row of pine trees where the pine needles have been piled up along the property line which he felt could be a fire hazard. He feels this is a neighborly dispute. Nancy Bushika noted that in Ms. Johnson's letter, she states that other neighbors like the chickens and feed them which seems to indicate that her chickens are free to roam. Mike Denault feels we have enough difficulty enforcing the ordinances we already have and the town doesn't have an ordinance concerning free range chickens so there is not much the board can do. This is a neighborly dispute that should be handled as a civil matter and is not a town issue. Letters will be sent to both parties.

#### DOG OFFICER/ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICER

Luke McKay informed the board that the state is mandating that each town have an Animal Control Officer. They also want the Health Officer to become an Animal Control Officer as backup if an issue arises. Luke McKay stated that any person claiming to have a farm and making at least \$2,500.00 is subject to inspection by the state. The state has also designated how many animals constitute the size of your farm. These mandates are difficult for small towns. Our Health Officer may not have the time or desire to attend training to inspect farms.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Jim Stimpson requested a meeting of the Selectboard, the Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment to begin revising the town's Zoning By-laws. He thought the Selectboard resolved this matter at a prior meeting, yet it continues to be a problem. He said the same people who hired him are the very same people who are making it difficult. The Zoning Board of Adjustment holds hearings to review permits he has denied and he is frustrated that he has not been invited to their meetings. The Selectboard agreed he should be notified. He feels he is doing a great job, has done his job correctly, and will continue to make the same decisions. Although he has contemplated resigning, he has chosen not to. He feels the By-laws are too vague and is frustrated that people are against tightening them up. Dan Potvin doesn't want the By-laws to be too restrictive as it will be impossible for anyone to start a business. Nancy Bushika agrees that the By-laws need updating. Jim Stimpson requested that a committee be formed to change the By-laws. Nancy Bushika and Dan Potvin said the Planning Commission updates the By-laws. Nancy Bushika would like to know if the Selectboard can create Interim By-laws until the Planning Commission has time to complete the By-law update process. She feels any change of use or a change of business should go before the ZBA. Under the Administrative Officer's interpretation of the By-laws, Billmont's Store could become a strip club if they wanted. Bill Levine disagreed saying that type of business would be a change of the present use and should go before the ZBA. Jim Stimpson is frustrated that the attorney was consulted and no one contacted him to discuss it. He is bothered that the ZBA was given permission to contact the attorney when he was told he could not contact the attorney himself. Helen Fields prefers a face-to-face meeting instead of sending letters, and the Selectboard should review the responsibilities expected of board members and if they are not willing to comply, then they can choose to resign.

MOTION by Mike Denault to invite the Planning Commission to the next Selectboard meeting to discuss updating the By-laws. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### COMMUNITY BUILDING GROUP

Bill Levine handed out paperwork on the Community Building Group's behalf for the Selectboard to review. They will be at the next Selectboard meeting on July 19, 2018 to present their goals and plans.

#### MINUTES

MOTION by Mike Denault to accept the regular meeting minutes of June 21, 2018 as written. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

#### SELECTBOARD ORDERS

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the following orders:

WARRANT #29 \$ 6,357.75 payroll

WARRANT #30 \$44,724.29 accounts payable

#### ROAD CONDITIONS

1. The school parking lot paving project has begun. Today was very hectic since the library had a presentation, the septic company came to pump the tanks, and the fence installer arrived for the school. When the final layer of pavement is applied, the school, library, and town office will have to be closed for the day. As soon as Dave Tatro has the date, he will let everyone know.
2. Dave Tatro had to stop the VELCO trucks from using our town roads last week. The temperature was so hot they were beginning to push through the chip seal coating. They were very cooperative. Dave Tatro is frustrated because they planned to make a loop, going up West Road in Clarksburg and down Mill Road in Stamford, but Clarksburg refused to allow them on their roads so now all the trucks are going up and down on our roads. There has been no damage to our roads, but if there is, we will have to talk to VELCO.
3. Helen Fields asked if the town would consider allowing houses to be built on County and/or Klondike Roads. The board said we would have to change the zoning and the road classification. Dave Tatro said the road would have to be brought up to code and standard first. She feels there is a shortage of housing in our town and more

houses could benefit the town, bring in more tax revenue and would be in keeping with the town plan. Mike Denault is willing to consider the idea. Dave Tatro said it would be easier to plow and maintain the back roads if they didn't have to drive seven miles through Clarksburg to get to Klondike Road. Dan Potvin noted that National Forest already owns thousands of acres in town which prevents expansion. Chris Warren suggested the board discuss this at the next meeting.

#### RECYCLING

The process to register with the Agency of Natural Resources concerning the acceptance of e-waste has not been completed. The town needs to have an Electronic Release Plan in effect and place a copy at the site so recycling monitors will know who to call and what to do if a device breaks or is damaged.

#### SEED SAVERS GROUP

1. Helen Fields asked if the mowing contractor could be asked to mow around the areas on the school lawn where the wild mountain thyme is blooming. The purple flowers are beautiful. They are low-growing, a good pollinator and will propagate better if not mowed. The Selectboard will ask the principal first and if he has no objections, will ask the mowing contractor to mow around the patches at his discretion.
2. Helen Fields stated that kids are enjoying picking blueberries from the blueberry bushes they planted.

#### WEBSITE

MOTION by Dan Potvin to accept the Website Policy prepared and revised by Chris Warren. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

The original will be signed at the next meeting. Chris Warren will meet with Lori Shepard, the Selectboard Secretary, to begin creating the website.

#### DELINQUENT DOGS

There are only two dog owners who have not yet licensed their dogs: Larry Arnold and Shawn Senecal. Luke McKay, the Dog Officer, will continue to push for compliance.

#### DOG KENNEL

Luke McKay provided the state regulations for a dog kennel. The board discussed joining with another town to share a kennel, or attempting to contract with a local animal shelter instead of building our own kennel. Luke McKay thought it would be less expensive in the long run to have our own. The closest shelter is Second Chance Animal Shelter in Arlington, VT and it would be a long trip to deliver a lost dog if a couple hours later the owners were located and now had to drive to Arlington to retrieve it. Luke McKay will obtain some price quotes.

#### CLASS ACTION SUIT

The town received an official notice to join a class action suit to recover funds under the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Act. Another state filed a complaint against the United States for underpaying PILT payments due to towns. Pros and cons were discussed. There is no cost to join the suit. Lori Shepard was asked to see what other towns are doing.

#### NEMRC CONTRACT

NEMRC agreed to provide an 18 month contract for assessor services beginning July 1, 2018 through December 31, 2019 for the same \$75.00/hour rate and the same \$37.50/hour travel time rate. The Selectboard discussed the travel cost and would like to propose a flat rate of \$75.00 round trip. It was noted that the last 6 month contract did not include a clause for travel pay. The contract hires NEMRC to assess all new homes/buildings and all improvements made using building permits issued. Sally Bohl, the Assessor Clerk, suggested the Selectboard consider a town-wide in-home inspection to update our records. It has not been done since 2004 and the town is losing tax money on the many residents that have made interior home improvements. She feels a town-wide reappraisal would involve the state, but we should be able to inspect properties to keep our

records current. The appraisal in 2004 cost \$85,000.00-\$90,000.00. The board will research whether we can use the funds set aside for reappraisal work and Nancy Bushika will speak to NEMRC about these proposals to the contract.

#### UNIFORM MUNICIPAL EXCESS WEIGHT PERMIT

MOTION by Chris Warren to approve the Uniform Municipal Excess Weight Permit application from JEB, Inc. SECONDED by Mike Denault. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The appropriate fee and insurance information was received from the applicant.

#### SCHOOL FENCE

The fence contractor is installing the fences. There will be an unlocked gate. Nancy Bushika noted a school policy stating no vehicles are allowed on school grounds. Helen Fields recalled that the Selectboard granted the Seed Savers permission to drive along the northerly property line to the tennis courts. These trips are necessary until the tool shed is built which will minimize the trips needed. Nancy Bushika suggested the Seed Savers park in the parking lot and walk down if they are not delivering tools. Helen Fields suggested a sign on the gate saying No Vehicles Allowed Without Permission. A sign saying No Dogs Allowed was also discussed.

#### LISTER EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT

The state has finally reimbursed the town the \$465.00 incurred for lister training in 2017.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS

The treasurer met with Gary O'Grady from Unibank concerning an electronic payment acceptance program. It is free to the town and the user pays the fees. It is cheaper than our current credit card company and since it is through a bank, should have more protection in place against fraud and hacking. Chris Warren asked for contact information and will look into the program further.

#### COWS ON MAIN ROAD

The cows have been getting loose on Main Road near the Robillard Road entrance. Mike Denault spoke with Luke McKay and the Bennington Sheriff who was driving by. Mike Denault was concerned with the safety issue of cows being in the road. A letter will be sent asking for the animal owner's assistance in keeping the cows out of the Main Road.

#### EDUCATION TAX RATES

The town received the new 2018 education tax rates from the VT Department of Taxes. The residential rate will be \$1.3031 per \$100. Last year's rate was \$1.1724. The non-residential rate is now \$1.4873 per \$100. Last year's rate was \$1.4059.

#### ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK/ASSISTANT TREASURER

Angela Brothers resigned in order to accept another position with greater flexibility and more time with her family. The town clerk has appointed Theresa Denault who has office skills and bookkeeping experience.

MOTION by Chris Warren to determine that premature public discussion of personnel salaries would place the town at a substantial disadvantage. SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Chris Warren to enter executive session to discuss personnel salaries pursuant to 1 V.S.A. 313(a)(3) . SECONDED by Dan Potvin. All in favor. Motion APPROVED.

Mike Denault left the room due to the conflict of interest. The board entered executive session at 9:05 p.m.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to exit executive session. SECONDED by Chris Warren. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The board exited executive session at 9:10 p.m.

MOTION by Nancy Bushika to set the Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant Treasurer salary at \$13.00/hour. SECONDED by Chris Warren. 4 in favor. Mike Denault abstained. Motion APPROVED.

MOTION by Mike Denault to adjourn. SECONDED by Carol Fachini. All in favor. Motion APPROVED. The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Christopher Warren  
Clerk

CW/las

#### REMINDERS

1. The primary election will be held on Tuesday, August 14, 2018 at the Stamford Elementary School Hall from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.
2. Applications for addition to the checklist will be accepted during regular town office hours and throughout election day.
3. Absentee ballots will be available until 11:30 a.m. on Friday, August 10, 2018. Please call the town office at 802-694-1361.
4. A free Home Hazardous Waste Collection Day will be held on Saturday, July 28, 2018 from 9 am to 11 a.m. in Stamford.
5. The town office will be **closed** on Thursday, July 26, 2018 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. for election training. The office will be open from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. on that day.
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.