

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of January 17, 2023
Unapproved

Board members present: John Painter, Koran Cousino, Carin McCarthy, Nancy Boss

Unable to attend: Eric Cota

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Julie Bessette, Robert Turner

Chair Koran Cousino called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the town clerk's office and via Zoom.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Budget FY23-24 discussion

- Discussion was focused on the latest updated information on the proposed budget worksheet. Various line items were updated with projections for increased costs and adjusted revenue.
- Josh reviewed the road budget and trimmed estimates for a reduction of \$23K. Some expenses, such as diesel fuel and salt, remain high compared to previous years. Estimates are based on current market and inflationary impacts.
- Staff compensation was discussed, and projections were reviewed.
- Maintenance and repairs were reviewed – Post office sidewalk repairs, PO parking lot paving
- Grader lease payments – first installment due in Sept. 2023; trade in offset the first payment – there are 5 total payments. This was an unanticipated expense and deferred payment.
- Impacts of inflation are being monitored – costs in current FY22-23 are higher than anticipated and projecting for costs for a year into the future is challenging and speculative.
- The group considered the impacts of all factors on the overall bottom line, impact on property taxes, etc. The tax impacts are 2/3 based on education taxes.

Review of draft warning

The board decided to postpone the final approval of the budget to allow for further consideration.

A special meeting will be held on Jan. 24 at 4pm to make the final decisions.

- Tax due date proposed change – edited language in article for clarity.
- \$490K was projected for the fire truck pumper replacement. Payments would start in FY24-25 (if purchased in 23-24)

Warrants

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to approve the warrants for A/P and payroll as presented. Carin McCarthy seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Town Administrator Update

- Julie, Rebecca, and Amy have been working on internal systems. Julie has reorganized the paper financial files and has begun scanning all regular financial activity and documentation to help move to a secure electronic filing system. All invoices and receipts are now scanned into NEMRC making research and auditing more efficient and accurate.
- Payroll – discussed possibility of moving to a bi-weekly payroll for efficiency. Rebecca and Julie will talk with staff. Road crew is currently paid weekly; all others on bi-weekly or monthly schedule. Discussion of streamlining and best use of staff time.
- RFP for audit – Rebecca and Julie will draft the RFP and send directly to firms and advertise in newspaper.
- Brief discussion about FY vs. CY – Starksboro has always used a fiscal year model. Julie suggests considering change to calendar year. This would require much advanced planning for budgeting and accounting. (add to annual work plan)

- Online bill payments – Julie asked if the board is comfortable with making online payments where possible. It reduces turn-around time for payments and allows for more efficiency. The board supports online payments when appropriate.

Driveway Accessibility Permit

Application received from Edward and Shelly Buckley for a driveway accessibility permit on Mason Hill North for two lots in a previously approved subdivision. Application was reviewed and approved by the Road Foreman. The size of required culvert was unclear.

Motion: John Painter moved to approve the driveway accessibility permit for the Buckleys on Mason Hill North conditioned on clarification of instructions from the road foreman. Nancy Boss seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Review of minutes

Motion: Carin McCarthy moved to approve the minutes of 1/3/23 and 1/9/23 as presented. John Painter seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.** (NB recused for 1/9)

Selectboard roundtable

Discussion of town report prep, reports needed and what will require selectboard review.

Motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.: John Painter moved, Nancy Boss seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder
Town Administrator