

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of January 3, 2023
Unapproved

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

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Robert Turner

Vice-Chair John Painter called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. at the town clerk's office and via Zoom.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Addition of discussion of fire department request

Visitor's Business

Dennis Casey attended to discuss the need for administrative support for the Planning Commission. He asked for permission for the PC to meet without Zoom as they do not have the technical expertise to operate Zoom unless certain members are present. Rebecca is not available to attend meetings in person regularly. Carin said it is helpful and preferred for the PC to use Zoom for several reasons including increased public access and the automatic recording that is available for minutes to be taken afterwards. Dennis asked for admin support to be provided as the PC had such support since 2010 from the zoning administrators. With the ZA position open Dennis stated there is no help, and the board needs to meet and do their work. Posting for a minute taker will be shared on FPF.

Tom Estey attended to follow up on the Fire Dept heat boiler replacement options. He presented information on an LP unit and a heat pump for the meeting room and a replacement boiler. Quotes are for 30 days. No decision made.

Road Foreman's Report

- Josh reported on clean up from the storm and issues that arose where the road crew could not pass through due to power lines.
- He requested the board consider hiring a fourth road crew member in the future.

Emergency preparedness – The board discussed the response and community efforts during the recent snowstorm when many town residents were without power. Some were cut off from access due to downed power lines. Town road crew cannot pass through where there are downed lines and must wait until the power company has safely addressed the situation. Residents on upper Ireland Road and Hillsboro Road were affected for several days.

Koran and Amy worked with Starksboro responders and Robinson Principal Edorah Frazer and Andy Young to open a warming shelter for the community. The info was shared on a tent sign in front of the town office, on a sign at posting locations, and on Facebook and FPF. The shelter wasn't used much though a few people came for water, restrooms, and charging batteries and devices. Carin stated a warming shelter is needed in South Starksboro too if that area is pinched off due to flooding or road damage. Some ideas for future are to post a quarterly reminder on FPF and other places about emergency resources. Bright colored, highly visible signs to post at locations in town will be ready to go.

Josh wants to approach the State of VT about emergency access through the WMA. He will contact the manager of the WMA with the inquiry. Rebecca suggested regional planning may be able to assist.

Budget FY23-24 planning discussion

Robert Turner, Amy McCormick, and Josh Martell were present for budget planning. All departments have reviewed their line items.

New Treasurer Julie Bessette is familiarizing herself with the chart of accounts and Starksboro's reporting for the town meeting and town report. She is working on closing out FY22 and reviewing the budget vs. actuals. Robert Turner will also review in advance of the special budget meeting on 1/9/23.

Board requested additional information on road crew overtime amounts for the current and previous year.

Discussion included review of the road equipment reserve, fire department reserve, and estimates that needed adjustment. The first payment for the new grader should be allocated to the reserve fund expenses. Interest rates are up to 4% for equipment loans.

Town Administrator Updates

A pay rate for minor repairs and maintenance at the town office is needed. Proposal is \$25/hr.

MOTION: Nancy Boss moved to approve the rate of \$25/hr for minor repairs and maintenance services for the town municipal buildings. Carin McCarthy second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Most time recently has been spent on budget preparation and town report planning. Rebecca and Amy are working closely with Julie for onboarding in the Treasurer's role. Julie has municipal experience in the New Haven town office and with the NEMRC software so she has been able to make the transition fairly easily.

Zoning updates:

- DRB site plan review of Fire Station #2 scheduled for 1/26/23
- Pavilion project – site plan review application needs review and approval by SB, then can go to DRB
- Seasonal camp permit applications submitted for land on Mason Hill North
- Minor subdivision proposal planned for land on Ireland Rd

Warrants

MOTION: Nancy Boss moved to approved the warrants for bills, orders, and payroll as presented. Eric Cota seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Minutes

MOTION: Eric Cota moved to approve the minutes of 12/6/22 as presented. Nancy Boss seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Selectboard Roundtable

Richmond Rescue appropriation request: There has been a long discussion with the Richmond Rescue about the process for requesting additional appropriation from the town to cover expenses. The other towns that Richmond Rescue serves do not require voter signatures when the amount requested increases. The Selectboard will hear from the Rescue director at the 2/7 meeting and consider a town policy related to rescue and similar services for 2024.

Town office generator: Amy reported the town office backup generator did not come on immediately during the storm. Don McCormick was able to get the generator to turn out and Jackman's will be contacted to ensure the unit is working properly.

Next meetings:

1/9 – Special budget meeting

1/17 – Regular meeting – finalize budget and warning

2/7 – Richmond Rescue, Kate Kelley/Lewis Creek Assoc. re: Cota rec area water mitigation grant work,
and Katie Antos-Ketcham on behalf of Starksboro Library board re: grant applications

Motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.: Nancy Boss, Eric Cota seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Selectboard Assistant

DRAFT