

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting  
Minutes of 11/10/20  
Approved

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**Board members present:** Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, John Painter, Carin McCarthy  
**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Katie Kuzio, Robert Turner, Tom Payeur,  
and Herb Olson

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The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

The board reviewed the agenda for any changes or additions:

1. Request from ACCT for letter of support

*The introductory statement regarding open meeting law and how public meetings are being conducted in the Town of Starksboro due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Scott as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20 and Act 92, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.*

*In accordance with Act 92, there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously, however the meeting was conducted with public access via internet or telephone with the ability to listen/interact contemporaneously.*

### Reserve Fund planning and Budget discussion

Robert Turner presented information on the Road and Fire Reserve funds. There is a 4% increase anticipated for the fire reserve. With only 4 pieces of equipment, it is easier to project and plan. The road reserve plan will continue to evolve as more information is gathered. The anticipated life cycle for the grader should be shortened by a year.

The board began planning for the overall budget planning for FY21-22. Carin asked for some context about how the board assesses what decisions need to be made, what is urgent vs. aspirational vs. maintenance. Koran gave a summary of how the budget has been developed, advice passed on by former Board Chair Susan Jefferies (who is a CPA), and improvements/challenges with the recent change to fund-based accounting in NEMRC. Koran said new, fresh perspectives on use of funds and investments are welcome, especially with John and Carin as first-year board members—the town needs to spend to avoid emergencies (major maintenance, IT infrastructure, roads) while ensuring a tax rate that is reasonable for the voters. Anticipated cost of living increases and health insurance costs will be entered for planning.

Robert and Koran will prepare a budget worksheet to circulate before the next meeting. Time to be reserved for budget planning in December.

### ***Special budget meeting to be held on 12/8/20.***

#### **Road Report:**

- Two massive beaver dams were found on the south side of Cota field along State's Prison Hollow Road. There is concern about the dam breaking and flooding potential for State's Prison Hollow. The State stream specialist and reps from ANR/VTFW are involved and advising on a plan.
- Tony wants to apply for another Better Back Roads grant. It is a small grant for wash out/slide on Ireland Road. The application requires board approval. The work is associated with Act 46 regarding erosion control.

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the application for the Better Back Roads grant. Nancy Boss second.

**Discussion:** Carin asked about any required town match. The match is usually 20%.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

- **Municipal Roads Grant Program:** Eric will follow up with Tony re: MRGP fee.
- Road crew is working some OT for crushing. One employee needs a recalculation on payroll to reflect OT rate.

### Selectboard Concerns:

- The board needs to appoint a new e911 Coordinator
- ACCT requested a letter of support for a grant application – discuss at future meeting
- Snow removal for pottery studio and food shelf: Pete Antos-Ketcham offered to include this in his services for snow removal at the town clerk's office and library. The board agreed to include in the contract agreement.
- Town meeting and COVID: Towns and VLCT are beginning to discuss options for virtual town meetings or other alternatives if in-person town meetings cannot be held in March due to the pandemic conditions. Bristol discussed using a webinar or a webinar option with limited in-person participation and all voting to be done by Australian ballot. The Sec. of State's office will provide additional guidance to town clerk's as the conditions change. Rebecca will collect information on conducting a meeting via webinar, including costs for additional Zoom features.

### MAUSD discussion and community input

John Painter and Carin McCarthy met with Sup. Patrick Reen. Nancy Cornell also participated in the meeting. The meeting was requested by Reen's office and the goal was to get input from the town about the role the school plays in the community and potential uses of the building if the school were to be closed.

- Discussion included affordability, access to education and early education, growth of programs to bring more families to Starksboro.
- Programs that connect the school and children to the community include the Mentoring Program and the 4 Winds science education program.
- If the school were to close, the town would have the option to purchase the building affordably.
- There is a \$6M shortfall projected for 2023.
- Conversations are being had with all the 5 towns. At this time with population numbers projected, all the students in the district could fit into the Bristol Elementary building and the Mt. Abe campus.

Members of the community, Katie Kuzio and Herb Olson, asked questions about the process and what other conversations are happening across the towns. The towns of Lincoln and New Haven are sending letters to the MAUSD school board. Parents and community members have been mobilizing to send input. Sup. Reen will make a recommendation to the MAUSD board in December.

Carin expressed concern about the timeline for getting input given the December deadline. There will be a community survey distributed by MAUSD after the recommendation has been made and before any action proceeds in any town. Towns must vote to approve the closing of any school.

### Action Items:

#### Bills and Orders

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to approve the warrants for bills and payroll as presented by the Treasurer. Eric Cota second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

## Minutes of 10/6

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/16/20 as presented. John Painter second. **Motion approved** (JP, NB, EC) (CM abstained)

## Minutes of 10/20

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/20/20 as presented with “five” inserted for the term of the post office lease. Nancy Boss second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

11/2 - To be reviewed at the next meeting

## Executive Session

**Motion:** Nancy Boss proposed entertaining a motion to confer with counsel regarding attorney-client communications concerning an employment matter that may cause difficulty for the town or the employee(s) involved to go into Executive Session. John Painter second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing attorney-client communications concerning an employment matter per 1 VSA 313(a) 7f. Jim Carroll was invited into the session that began at 7:20 p.m. Carin McCarthy second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**Motion:** John Painter moved to come out of Executive Session at 8:03 p.m. Carin McCarthy second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.**

## Current Business:

### Driveway permits:

Two driveway permit applications were received from David and Mabel Brown for Mason Hill North. The driveways will access land for an approved subdivision. Tony Porter approved both. The board received the site plans.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the two driveway permits for David and Mabel Brown. Eric Cota second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

### Website update:

Carin and Rebecca participated in a conference call with the website team at VC3 and received a demo of their proposed municipal website system. The focus for the redesign and selection of platform includes:

- Community needs and accessibility
- Reduced time required for maintenance for admin team
- Better access point for information
- Integrations for calendar and meetings, online payment system, and automated forms.
- Secure and stable platform

John asked if the town can submit an insurance claim. Rebecca and Carin will contact PACIF to see what our coverage is available for cyber events. The website is town “property” and may be covered.

**Motion to adjourn:** Nancy Boss moved to adjourn at 8:39 p.m. Eric Cota second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Elder  
Selectboard Assistant