

Starksboro Selectboard meeting  
December 15, 2020  
Unapproved

---

Present: Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, John Painter, Carin McCarthy

Unable to attend: Eric Cota

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Cheryl Estey, Robert Turner

---

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

*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.*

#### Additions to the agenda:

1. Report from Nancy Cornell re: Broadband initiative
2. Health officer resignation
3. Moderator resignation
4. Cota field trails

#### Cota field

Robert Turner noted that Cheryl received a call from a neighbor to Cota field about trail users walking onto private property adjacent to the land. Trail signage will be added to ensure boundaries are clear. Conservation Commission will post the signs.

#### Maple lease

The lease has been signed and Robert will drop off a copy for Eric Cota to sign on behalf of the board (approved at previous meeting).

#### Road Foreman's Report – Tony Porter

1. FEMA projects – Tony is still waiting for a 3<sup>rd</sup> hydraulic study bid so that 3 can be submitted to FEMA for review. After that, a contractor can be selected and the projects can proceed.
2. Landfill – Tony noted the landfill area under the GLS solar trackers was not mowed this summer. The town needs to contact Green Lantern to ensure this happens each year.
3. RPC grant for mulcher – information was sent re: reimbursement
4. Mutual Aid agreement – RPC has sent information; Tony would prefer not to enter the agreement. The board discussed and agreed not to sign on. Tony will ensure coverage in the event of illnesses/emergencies with the agreements as they have been in past years with neighboring towns.
5. Beaver damage – The crew dug out the beaver damaged area along State's Prison Hollow twice. Game warden has been consulted. Lewis Creek Association is aware of the ongoing issue.
6. Driveway accessibility permit application – Maurice Trayah: Tony approved the application and submitted for the board's review and approval. Location is off Sam Stokes Rd (Class 4 section). Board will consider under action items.

## Current Business

**Digitization Grant:** Grant paperwork has been completed to date. The majority of the land records have been scanned and the indexing process is underway. There is still some scanning work that remains (i.e. mylars, etc.) Once the process is complete and the town website is available, the town land records will be searchable via an online portal.

**Administrative Updates:** Rebecca described the demo and presentation from Civics Plus. The proposal is similar to the one received from VC3 and uses the same Drupal-based platform. The financing options are slightly different, with the VC3 proposal designed around a site redesign every 4 years.

- The board will consider the proposals and make a decision at the next meeting.

**IT review and Microsoft licenses** – Rebecca provided a memo to the board with a summary of the current IT infrastructure and hardware for the municipal office. The Microsoft licenses for staff and board email addresses must be renewed this fiscal year. It is an ideal time to change providers and authorize VC3 to take over administration of the accounts. Rebecca has been filling this role and recommends moving to VC3 management.

- Koran asked board members to review the information and to be prepared to make a decision at the next meeting. Licensing costs for the FY21-22 budget were provided for planning purposes.

MAUSD and school reconfiguration proposal

## Budget planning

- The board continued budget discussion. Everything that is outside the highway dept. budget has been reviewed in detail at previous meetings. The roads budget will need to be looked at again as the board homes in on the final budget proposal numbers to present to voters.
- Carin said she hopes to see the board considering forward thinking planning in addition to reactive budgeting. The process is reflective so far and perhaps the board can think about what can be thought about for the future of Starksboro. Consider the wish list for not only the highway budget but also to look at achieving beyond what has been looked at in the past and meeting new goals. Strategic investments in the community help anchor people in the town and to the town spaces.
- The board hopes to be hearing from the community – there will likely be information coming from the MAUSD conversations and feedback about the heart and soul of the community. The board might be thinking about other assets and resources that the town can invest in so they can be best utilized in our community center (i.e. sports fields, old town office building, potential for Robinson if the school were closed, etc.)
- John agrees and the SB should turn to elected boards and community groups for feedback. Input from the PC, the sport program, the Jerusalem schoolhouse committee, the Conservation Commission, etc. would be valuable and creating a method to get that information on a regular basis is needed. Nancy suggested the Planning Commission could be charged with gathering information and community input. A survey and/or community conversation process to inform next year's budget planning would be valuable.
- Is there room to set aside some money for future planning in this year? This year, it may be difficult because of external circumstances including the pandemic and concerns about education taxes, etc.
- Build a solid process to do this next year. What is the process for prioritizing and selecting community projects? Be strategic and develop a system to aid the Selectboard in making decisions. A "rubric" for review may be helpful.

- The PC has already been discussing the 14 acres of land on Parsonage Road behind the school. They were considering options and possible uses for which grant funds could be applied for.
- The school has had a role in bringing people together in town. The town needs to anticipate changes that could affect the community spaces, especially the shared community room in Robinson.

Robert said as a long-time community volunteer on the Conservation Commission and other groups there have been many cycles of efforts along these lines in the town (i.e. Art and Soul project, regional planning grants, other community building opportunities, etc.). Realistically it may be difficult to get volunteers under the current conditions. It is also key to have new energy coming into the community conversations. Koran recognized that Starksboro has many volunteers who have seen repeated efforts for community engagement and that new board members and active volunteers can help re-energize some of these plans and visions.

Conversations will continue at future meetings as the school reconfiguration proposal is discussed further across the five towns.

### Voting and Town Meeting

Cheryl and Amy have provided information about what the ballot and warning might look like if all decisions will be voted on as an Australian ballot.

Town meeting will be conducted virtually. There will not be an in-person town meeting. All votes will be on Australian ballot. The virtual town meeting will be an opportunity for residents and taxpayers to ask questions and clarify information on the warning.

### Social service requests for allocation requests:

The Selectboard has the authority to decide whether signatures need to be gathered and also to decide whether increases to the allocation can be authorized.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to waive the requirement for signatures to be gathered in support of a petition for support from the Town. John Painter second.

**Discussion:** Cheryl stated there are a couple new requests. The board will review them in advance of writing the warning. Cheryl will post on FPF the deadlines and key information. Anyone wishing to run for office must sign a consent form to be added to the ballot but signatures are not required for this year only.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Koran will bring a draft warning to the next meeting so the group can discuss.

### Action Items:

#### Bills/Orders

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the warrants for bills/orders and payroll as presented. John Painter second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

#### Minutes of 12/1 and 12/8

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/1/20 and 12/8/20 as presented. Nancy Boss second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### Mail Review

1. Info from Nancy Cornell regarding the Broadband initiative
2. Resignation of Peter Ryersbach as Town Health Officer
3. Resignation of Dan Dubenetsky as Town Meeting Moderator
4. Driveway accessibility permit – Trayah

### Accessibility permit

**Motion:** John Painter moved and Carin McCarthy seconded the motion to approve the driveway accessibility permit for Maurice Trayah as presented.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

John and Carin noted it would be helpful to see more information from the Road Foreman regarding approval. There is a revised accessibility permit application form that should be used; old form should be eliminated. Rebecca will follow up with Cheryl and Tony with the new form.

Executive Session was not needed. The board briefly discussed staff annual reviews and developing clear procedures and documentation for these meetings going forward.

**Motion to adjourn:** John Painter, Nancy Boss second. 8:00 p.m.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
SB Assistant