

Starksboro Selectboard meeting
December 5, 2023
Unapproved

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Eric Cota, Carin McCarthy, John Painter
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Robert Turner, Dennis Casey, Dan Hale

Meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Vice Chair John Painter.

Review of agenda:

Koran will arrive by 6:30. Items on the agenda were moved to allow for review of current business items prior to the conversation about Baldwin Pond dam.

Current Business

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

Town Clerk office will be closed 12/20 through 12/26 and will reopen on 12/27.

Update on discussion about emergency services appropriation requests: any increase in amount will require signatures unless the appropriation policy is changed.

Motion: Carin McCarthy moved to approve the minutes of 11/28 as presented. Eric Cota seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

The Community Holiday gathering will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 10 am to 12 pm at the Robinson School. Details are being distributed on the website, posters, flyers via Robinson School, and on social media.

Big Hollow Road- Baldwin Pond dam – Dan Hale

Dan Hale purchased property at 132 Big Hollow Road and is the owner responsible for the dam for the pond. He was approached by a contractor working with the VT Dept of Environmental Conservation and the Vermont Dam Safety program. A rapid inspection was conducted after the July 11 flooding event across the State. Dam owners are responsible for the structure and future costs such as engineering studies and rehabilitation. Mr. Hale does not want to see the pond drained but also cannot afford the work that will be required. Owners are responsible for any damage downstream should the dam fail. Mr. Hale wants to be proactive and has approached the Town and Selectboard to discuss potential solutions. He offered to sell an easement to the town and is looking for ideas. The dam was repaired in the last couple of years by the previous owner. The Selectboard will research what options might be available to the town and suggested Mr. Hale speak directly with DEC about choices too. One possibility is to form a private pond association to help financially support the work needed for dam ownership.

Planning Commission discussion

Kevin “Dan” Kuzio has submitted a letter of interest to serve as a planning commissioner to fill the vacant seat until the March 2024 election. Dan currently serves on the regional emergency management committee and on the town’s review committee for the All Hazards Mitigation Plan (FEMA).

Motion: Carin McCarthy moved to appoint Kevin Daniel Kuzio to fill the vacant seat on the Planning Commission until March 2024 election. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

PC composition: The planning commissioners discussed and recommend a change in the number of members from 7 to 5.

Motion: Eric Cota moved to bring the proposed change of the planning commission members from 7 to 5 to the voters at Town Meeting 2024. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Dan Nugent and Dennis Casey will attend the Selectboard meeting on 12/20 to discuss the topic of proposed zoning changes to allowed uses on Class 3 roads.

Public Comment

Dennis Casey stated he thinks public access to the pond would be beneficial to the town. From a planning perspective, creating public access and future path would be a positive outcome.

Budget Discussion

There was general discussion about the current year budget and year-to-date actual spending. Expense categories were reviewed and information about the reserve funds was shared.

Eric noted that some repair expenses from FY23 were not paid from the emergency reserve fund as the Selectboard intended. Rebecca will research.

There will be a new grand list for 2025 based on the current townwide reappraisal.

Selectboard Roundtable

The Town Services Officer position was discussed at previous meetings. The Selectboard agrees this position should be created for Starksboro. There is no specific statutory language required for the position description. The draft under consideration was based on the past statute that has since been repealed. The description will be edited and reviewed at the next meeting for formal approval. Once the position is formalized, an appointment will be made and compensation determined.

Motion: Carin McCarthy moved to enter executive session per 1 VSA §313(a)(3) regarding personnel with Rebecca Elder invited into the session. Eric Cota seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Eric Cota moved to exit executive session at 8:13 p.m. with no action taken. Carin McCarthy seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.: Koran Cousino moved, Carin McCarthy seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Town Administrator

Next meeting: Wed., December 20 at 5:30 p.m.