

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of December 6, 2022
Unapproved

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Eric Cota, John Painter, Carin McCarthy, Nancy Boss
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Josh Martell, Tom Estey

Vice-chair John Painter called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. at the town clerk's office and via Zoom.

Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Fire Dept request re: replacement fire truck purchase:

Visitor's business - None

Fire Dept. Replacement Truck Purchase

Tom Estey attended to present research on three options for purchasing the replacement fire truck. There are price increases occurring now and slated for the immediate future with all the options available. Tom recommends the Alexis option. The pumpers we have now are E1s with a 5-person cab. The Selectboard supports the Fire Dept. proceeding with a deposit on the truck recommended by the Chief Estey. He will place the order next week.

Road foreman report

- **FEMA/Ben Roberts Road:** Project has been completed with the work done by ECI. Otter Creek Engineering will help close out the project with a final inspection. Rebecca is communicating with the State FEMA manager regarding close out and reimbursements.
- **Truck purchase update:** Josh has researched different options for the tandem truck purchase since cancelling the previous order. He recommends going ahead with the Charlesbois Western Star (\$165K for cab and chassis); better built and heavier duty, 13L. They will give the Town \$43K for the trade in. The total price is \$121K with the trade in. He thinks this is a good deal since the existing truck of 2012 needs quite a bit of work. The new truck can be built in July 2023. The comparable International was \$153K for same specs but can't be built until Sept or later. Josh provided specs on the trucks for board member review.

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to proceed with the Charlesbois Western Star purchase truck tandem 4700 series as presented. Koran Cousino seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Rebecca to provide Josh with job review questions and form for staff 6-month review. Foreman to report back to the Selectboard and Town Administrator in January.

TA and Treasurer positions

Rebecca Elder has accepted the position of Town Administrator with a start date of 12/5/2022.

Julie Bessette has accepted the position of Town Treasurer with a start date of 12/5/2022.

Discussion included changes to supervisory structure and how to make an easy transition to the Town Administrator model. The Selectboard will outline and describe the changes to the affected staff members. Rebecca will work with the board on this transition and ways to facilitate weekly check-ins with staff and regular communication with town committees and boards.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to authorize Julie Bessette as a signer on the Town's checking account and loan accounts with Community Bank N.A. Nancy Boss second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

The Selectboard will draft an announcement of the new TA position to post on the website, FPF, and to share with town committees. Koran will send email to committee and board chairs to share.

Town Clerk and Administrative Updates

- **Discussion of moving tax due date for 2024** – Amy introduced the idea of changing from Nov. 1 to either 2 weeks earlier or 2 weeks later. The taxes are collected very close to the general election date in November. Changing the date would allow for better flow in the office and create less stress for staff. This proposed change would need to be warned for this town meeting.
- **Text My Gov** – This service is offered only thru cell phones. It allows towns to communicate with residents about notices, road closures, emergencies, etc. Cost \$3750. Since only mobile phones can be used for this, it is not the best fit for us at this time (limited cell coverage areas). Idea can be raised at town meeting to gauge interest from residents.
- **Budget check in:** Amy and Rebecca reviewed the town clerk's office budget and have completed their projections.
- **Town Report plan:** Rebecca, Amy, and Robert will assemble the report again this year. Robert will continue to manage the financial reporting, Rebecca will manage the budget draft for the board. Robert is working on the reserve fund projections.
- **Town Meeting 2023:** The town meeting will resume in person this year. There will be no remote option because voting is done from the floor and voters must be present in person.

Town Green Pavilion plan

Carin reported that the ad-hoc community group that has helped with the initial stages of the town green pavilion is ready to request review for use of the structure for small town related events and activities. The next step is for a formal application to be submitted to the DRB on behalf of the town to request review and approval.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to proceed with a site plan review application for the town pavilion. Eric Cota second.
Motion approved unanimously.

Warrants

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the warrants for bills, orders, and payroll as presented. Koran Cousino second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Minutes

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the minutes of 11/15 and 11/29 with one correction (addition of Nancy Boss under attendees). Nancy Boss second.

Motion approved unanimously.

Selectboard Roundtable

- **Energy Audits of town buildings:** The Energy committee is hoping to have energy audits done of the town buildings to see where additional savings and improvements can be made. Rebecca will attend any audit meetings and the Selectboard requested a written report from the energy auditor(s) to be sent directly to the Selectboard for review.

Executive Session

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to go into executive session at 8:20 p.m. per 1 VSA S.313(a)1 regarding confidential attorney-client communication made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body. John Painter second. Rebecca Elder was invited into the session.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to exit executive session at 8:30 p.m. Carin McCarthy second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

Motion to adjourn: Nancy Boss made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Eric Cota seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder