

## Starksboro Selectboard Special Meeting

Minutes of 12/8/20

Approved

---

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

**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Robert Turner, Amy McCormick, Herb Olson, Celine Coon, Tony Porter

---

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 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.*

### Visitors' business

Herb Olson attended to update the board on the MAUSD plans as described by Sup. Patrick Reen in a presentation to the MAUSD board on 12/7/2020. For those who didn't hear the presentation, it will be available on NEAT-TV and links sent out by the MAUSD. Additional community presentations will be held next week.

- The proposal includes a 2-phased consolidation of elementary education to Bristol and Monkton, with admin/early to New Haven, and "innovation centers" at Starksboro and Lincoln. Phase 2 would include a merge with Addison NW district and incorporating Vergennes and other Addison County communities.
- Herb asked if the town would be bringing this to the town for a vote in March. He and a group of community members are looking for guidance on how to proceed. He thinks the town deserves a vote and democratic participation in determining the fate of Robinson School.
- The board said they will wait for MAUSD process to unfold, with the community forums and the community survey. The Town will finalize its warning to the voters of Starksboro by the end of January. Therefore, there is some time to allow conversations to be held and to hear more from citizens.

### Budget discussion

The board reviewed the highway budget with Tony, line by line. Tony made recommendations and provided information including:

- Grease/oil – increasing costs
- Plow blades ~\$1700
- Culverts – increasing costs
- Signage – difficult to budget; affected by random vandalism and theft and accidents.
- Follow up information needed on answering service/fire alarm at the garage – does this need service? Is it automated for billing and service?

Dog license fee income is down due to COVID-19, delayed registrations, challenges to following up with residents during the pandemic, etc.

Interest income: Celine is having conversations with the bank. Rates are at an all-time low. .01%

IT expenses: Rebecca provided a summary of the license costs needed in this fiscal year and budgeting for next.

- Proposal includes moving all accounts to the VC3 servers and increased security for government accounts.
- Website redesign quotes have been requested.
- Rebecca will present more info at the next meeting.
- NEMRC license fees increased this year and will be at this rate going forward.
- Consider computer replacement for Treasurer's laptop.

Staff and elected official salaries. Considerations include retirement of long-time employees, changes in staffing and levels of experience, expected hours needed as roles shift after town meeting, etc. With new hiring anticipated in the spring as officials and assistants change post-election, health insurance expenses will shift along with other payroll related expenses.

### [Town Meeting Petition requirements](#)

Discussion regarding the need for collection of signatures to petition for appropriations on the town meeting warning. This falls under the Selectboard's purview within the guidelines and legal requirements from the Sec. of State.

The board is considering whether to limit requests for new and/or increases to requests for this year only due the pandemic conditions and challenges associated with safely collecting signatures. Cheryl and Amy will gathering more information from VLCT and the clerk's forum and keep the board informed before any decisions are made. Discussion to continue at next meeting.

### **Action Items:**

#### [Appointment of Zoning Administrator](#)

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to appoint Kris Perlee as the Zoning Administrator for the Town of Starksboro effective 12/8/2020. Nancy Boss second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion to adjourn:** Nancy Boss made a motion to adjourn at 8:24 p.m. John Painter second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Elder  
Selectboard Assistant