

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting  
Minutes of February 8, 2023  
Unapproved

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

**Unable to attend:** Nancy Boss

**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Mike Chicarella, Kate Kelley, Louis DuPont, Chris Runcie, Katie Antos-Ketcham, Susan Thompson

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Chair Koran Cousino called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. at the town clerk's office and via Zoom.

### Additions/Changes to the Agenda

Acknowledge receipt of committee member resignation.

### Review of Minutes

**Motion:** Carin McCarthy moved to approve the minutes of 1/24/23 as presented and 2/1/23 with correction to attendees. Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### Warrants

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

### Town Administrator Update

- Town Meeting – All four local legislators have accepted the invitation to attend Town Meeting. Ensure Edorah Frazier is able to attend.
- BCA meeting will be scheduled for week before the election.
- Zoning Administrator opening to be posted again in the Addison Indep., VLCT employment listings, and outreach to surrounding towns to try to fill the position. Staff capacity is maxed, and support is needed for processing permits, assisting the DRB with applications and hearings, and supporting the Planning Commission with review and edits of the zoning bylaws.
- Julie continues to work on developing clear systems for routine accounting operations and trouble-shooting accounting questions that arose during the budgeting process.

### Town Report items:

- Discussion about the written commentary to support the budget summary. The proposed budget is only covering the basics of operations. The main drivers are staff costs, insurance, and materials and fuel. The budget is the minimum that could be presented to maintain the level of services being provided to the town. Salary increases in FY21-22 were 5%. IT and technology costs continue to increase.
- Selectboard report for town report was reviewed. It summarizes the highlights of work over the year. Bullets to be added about town administrator position and road crew additions.

### Review of Mail

1. American Legion requesting nominations of any services or public employees that have gone above and beyond normal duties. Applications are due 2/20.
2. Received notice of rate increase of the Addison Co. Sheriff
3. Request for support for the new Addison Co. visitor's center

### Liquor license application

Amy described the new process for review and approval of liquor license applications. There is an online portal through which the town clerk submits the Selectboard's approval. The board only needs to provide verbal approval via a motion during a warned meeting. No signatures are required.

**Motion:** Eric Cota moved to approve the liquor license application for “Distant Thunder LLC “ (dba Jerusalem Corners Country Store”. Carin McCarthy seconded.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### Selectboard roundtable

1. Resignation of Jeff Keeney from the ARPA Advisory Committee accepted with regret. He was chair so the vice chair will step in and work with Rebecca to organize for remaining meetings.
2. Inclusion statement: John stated he is glad there are people in the community who are bringing the idea of an inclusion statement forward. The board discussed the idea at the work plan retreat in 2022 but had not developed a statement. The group agreed it would be better to wait for proposed language from people of the town and then review.

### Richmond Rescue and appropriations request process

Mike Chiarella, Assistant Director of Richmond Rescue (RR), attended to talk with the board about the process for requesting funds from the town in the future. This year, because RR was asking for an increase, a voter petition was required as that has been the town's process. Mike stated that Starksboro is the only town that required this step for an increase. RR serves several other local towns and has a mechanism in place for making the annual request that has been in the 2-3% range. For a small increase, he said the petition process is burdensome. If there were a large increase then they would go to the voters.

Koran said the board is considering a policy change for next year with regard to service organizations and what is required for “high level” services such as the sheriff and other similar providers for the town. This policy change will be considered at a future meeting. Policy info from other towns will be used for a guide and reference.

### Starksboro Library projects discussion

Katie Antos-Ketcham and Susan Thompson attended to review the work the library board would like to engage in and begin steps toward some major projects. The priorities are: access to the second floor, improving accessibility to both floors (safe ingress/egress), and a quick emergency exit on the first floor. There is some unknown information that's need to proceed with plans for a lift/elevator including the location of the boundary lines and the septic plan details (site location, drywell, etc.) Library requested the town pay for a boundary survey however the board declined due to cost and process. The board advised the library should present the request to the voters with a specific appropriation appeal like the Jerusalem Community Center process. That project received \$25K in funds for design and feasibility.

The board was supportive of the library trustees pursuing grants that are specific opportunities for municipal libraries. A list of potential grants was provided. The library board will keep in touch with Rebecca about applications and next steps.

### Cota field water quality project

Kate Kelley, Lewis Creek Assoc. Director, along with Chris Runcie and Louis DuPont (LCA board members) attended to answer questions about the next step in the Cota field water quality project. A preliminary study has been conducted with prioritized recommendations related to the Lewis Creek and town goals for maintaining usability of the recreational fields and trails. Discussion included the areas where the town was interested in more planning and what next steps mean. Parking lot improvements (addressing flooding, standing water, etc) and creating a no-mow area near the portolets were both acceptable. Additional no-mow areas are not feasible behind the dugouts (tick control, area for spectators and walking, etc). Discussion about repair of the berm and that river specialists do not support berms. Drainage planning for the infields may be possible depending on pitch. The town ultimately agreed to

proceed with the next steps for final concept designs assuming there is funding available to support the work. ACRPC has \$1M in funds for clean water projects becoming available.

**Motion:** Carin McCarthy moved to support the Town continuing forward to final concept design stage for Cota field projects. Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Rebecca will send the final letter of support to Kate for the grant reporting process. Kate will be back in touch in the spring when funding opportunity details are released.

**Motion:** Carin McCarthy moved to enter Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. per per 1 V.S.A. §313(a)(1) confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body and 1 VSA § 313(a)(3) personnel matters. Eric Cota seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion: John Painter moved to exit Executive Session at 8:00 p.m. Eric Cota seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

No action was taken as a result of Executive Session.

**Motion to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.:** John Painter moved, Carin McCarthy seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Elder  
Town Administrator