

Starksboro Selectboard
Minutes of 3/23/21
Approved

Board members: Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Carin McCarthy, John Painter
Others present: Robert Turner, Amy McCormick, Rebecca Elder

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

Changes or Additions:

- MAUSD School board opening
- Signage update re: Cota field – Robert Turner
- Email from Erin Bent re: recycling

Visitor's Business

Robert Turner reported that the Conservation Commission (CC) is installing signage to instruct trail users to avoid Thompson land adjacent to the Cota fields owned by the Town.

Two community members, Margi Gregory and Robin LaRue, have been attending CC meetings and the committee requests they be considered for formal appointment

Road Foreman's Report

- FEMA notified us for the need to apply for an extension. The grant permission runs out in mid-July and our work on the final projects will not be completed by this time. Rebecca will draft the letter to the FEMA coordinators.
- Tony described work to date on the hydraulically connected segments in town. He hopes to be able to screen share segments in the future.
- Mud season is pretty good this year without too many serious road issues. Added stone to various areas including Ruby Brace Rd.

Foreman's evaluation:

- Nancy summarized the process and stated that employees should be paid for what they do. The foreman's job is unique because of the varying conditions and hours required. Most other towns are paying foremen hourly or have a compensation bonus to acknowledge hours worked especially during winter season.
- Generally, the board will reassess at end of FY to offer bonus based on average hours worked. John reminded Tony to tracking plowing hours. The board will figure out OT pay over 40 at a rate appropriate to the supervisor vs crew member. Tony thanked the board for the review and follow up.

Warrants

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the warra moved to pay, Nancy 2nd

Motion approved unanimously.

KC asked Amy about the work sorting out the vacation and sick time issues. Amy said they are still working on it with NEMRC. Through these discussions, Koran became aware there is a discrepancy in the Personnel policy regarding the number of vacation time hours that needs to be corrected. To be added to the policy editing schedule during planning retreat.

Minutes review

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the minutes of 2/16/21. Carin McCarthy second.
Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Carin McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/10/21. John Painter second.
Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the minutes of Town Meeting 2021 as presented. John Painter second.
Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer Job posting:

The Town Treasurer position will be advertised in the Addison Independent, on FPF, Linked In, Indeed, and other free job boards in the local area. Applications are preferred by April 9, 2021. Interviews will be on a rolling basis depending on number of applications received.

Town Appointments and annual tasks:

- LEMP was already submitted by Charlene Phelps. Eric Cota needs to sign as he is trained and has completed the required course via the Fire Dept. Charlene is willing to continue serving as the Emergency Coordinator.
- ACRPC reps – Rich Warren is interested in continuing.
- ACSWD – Rebecca will follow up with Erin Bent about her interest and post again on FPF.
- AC Transportation – no interested candidates so far

Community Green space discussion

Carin and Rebecca participated in a group planning conversation with a group of Starksboro residents interested in the idea of creating a town community space or “Town Green”. Rebecca facilitated the conversation with participation from Michele Gilbert of RISEVT, Catherine Goldsmith, Jan McCleery, Chris Runcie, Pete Antos-Ketcham, Susan Pare, Dennis Casey, and Peg Casey. Primary objectives include walkability in the village, access to paths, green sharing, interest groups, using the space. There is a lot of excitement about bringing people together and focusing on a plan to better utilize this town-owned land behind the clerk’s office.

Balancing “Let’s just do it” vs. careful planning and studying needs/impacts:

- John asked if anyone had talked with immediate neighbors. Neighbors will be invited into the process to contribute ideas and offer needed input. Planning should include consideration of any potential impacts on folks who live in the village, on the viewshed from 116, and more.
- Permit questions will need to be addressed as plans are created. Ensure the ZA is in the loop.
- Noise guidelines and uses for public gatherings are outlined in the Town’s Bylaws.
- There is no plan to spend any town dollars at this time. The ad hoc group is planning to seek donations of goods, services, and labor.
- Perhaps VT Frames would consider a donation as they have in the past for local projects.
- A formal committee structure is not necessary at this point. Carin and Rebecca will be participating in the conversations and meetings and will keep the SB updated.
- Nancy emphasized that since we have access to someone with experience and knowledge through Rise VT, the town should maximize that resource to help guide the process.
- John agreed; keep the ZA and PC involved in the process.

IT update

Rebecca summarized the IT migration work completed to date and what work remains. The email system has been migrated to the VC3 servers. All licenses are now Microsoft E3 government accounts with additional security and back up protection. Town employees will be using a SharePoint environment to enable easy access to municipal files.

The website design phase is nearly done, and the site engineer will be building the back-end structure beginning in mid-April. Rebecca is mapping out the menus and organizing content to be uploaded once the site design is completed. Additional features such online payment system will be implemented in phase two, after the main aspects of the site are live by late spring.

Mowing bids

Cota field is still under contract with Dan Gebo. Eric will follow up to ensure Dan is still interested and ask for proof of insurance.

The board discussed soliciting bids. Each year one or two are received. The total costs for mowing for the year is likely under the purchasing policy threshold. The amounts to be confirmed and Rebecca will compare the current quote to the previous year for any changes. Bids will be reviewed, and decision made at the next meeting.

Erin Bent emailed Koran and Rebecca about the special recycling day and special pick up she would like to offer. She discussed with Wade Acker, who is willing to do a special pick up. Erin and the group are seeking permission to proceed and know of any special instructions from the fire and road crew for logistics. John said all should be cleared with Tony and that all materials must be removed that day. There should be parameters of what can be brought (what is/is not acceptable; what size limitations there are). Carin said the announcement should be clear about the timeline; no dropping and leaving ahead of time. No debris to be left. Nancy asked if this could be coordinated with Green Up Day. A lot of tire dumping along roads is occurring. Koran will communicate the board's support and parameters to Erin. There might need to be an expanded area and to prevent too much encroachment on the road crew area.

School board vacancy

Koran has been communicating with MAUSD Board Chair Dawn Griswold and Superintendent Patrick Reen. She learned that under Act 46, the MAUSD board makes the appointment with input from the local Selectboard. as the statute states "in consultation with the Selectboard."

Letters of interest should be sent to dawn.griswold@mausd.org by 4/3 with the board's goal of appointing on 4/13. The appointment must be made no later than April 15 per statute. The Starksboro Selectboard is asking to participate in the interview process. The town residents voted for the representatives and the Selectboard will represent the voters in the discussion regarding appointment of a replacement.

Carin will post the information on FPF.

Mail review:

Homeward Bound proposed contract – The board reviewed the request from HB and what the contract would and would not cover. Unfortunately, HB can only take strays from the public and cannot accept dogs at large from the town. The town is already giving a \$500 annual appropriation. The board declines to engage in the Homeward Bound contract for this year. They should be encouraged to request a larger amount of support next year instead.

SB concerns

Salt usage follow up – Eric spoke with Pete, who wants to buy a salt spreader. He stated that would reduce amount used by 50%. The proposed spreader is stainless steel and costs \$500. The board will revisit this item in October.

Pottery studio – Nancy will talk with legal counsel for an official communication regarding end date of 5/31/21 and requirements for vacating property.

Nancy requested the board scheduled regular quarterly check-ins with committees. Need to identify contact person to schedule for each committee or board (PC, DRB, JCCC, CC, EC) and follow up for scheduling. Add to retreat planning list.

Motion to adjourn:

Eric Cota moved and John Painter seconded the motion at 8:10 p.m.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder
SB Assistant