

Starksboro Selectboard  
Annual Planning Retreat  
Minutes of 5/11/21  
Approved

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**Board members:** Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Carin McCarthy, John Painter  
**Others present:** Kris Perlee, Rebecca Elder, Susan Klaiber

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*Site visits in advance of meeting:*

Land behind town clerk's office  
Land behind Robinson school  
Cota field

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

Changes or Additions: none

### Executive Session

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to go into Executive Session at 6:04 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter per 1 VSA 313 (a)(1)(A) and (a)(3). Carin McCarthy second. Kris Perlee was invited into the session. **Motion approved unanimously.**

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to end the Executive Session at 6:35 p.m. John Painter second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

**No action was taken as a result of the Executive Session.**

### Discussion of Town Owned Land and Buildings:

#### Jerusalem Schoolhouse and Fire Station

The Jerusalem Community Center Committee is looking for direction on how to move forward. Some funds have been raised but the project is stalled. Fire station is out of code – whether the station will be co-located or relocated, the existing site needs attention. The new fire truck often sits in water. The board agrees that the site—both firehouse and schoolhouse—are key resources for the town and are underutilized. The obstacles are zoning (conflicting uses, set back issues, etc.) and a high price tag for renovation. Collaboration is needed between the Fire Dept. and the JCCC re: timeline and whether co-location is not possible. The Selectboard will need to make the decision about whether to separate the uses. Nothing can be done to the schoolhouse currently due the fire station being out of code. The committee will meet with ZA Kris Perlee on Thursday to discuss zoning issues. Susan Klaiber mentioned that there is a possibility of buying a small strip of land from the store to help meet the setback requirements. JCCC will meet on 5/24, the Fire Dept will meet on 6/7. After those conversations, Susan will come back to the Selectboard at the June 15 meeting to determine what is next.

The board then moved to discussion about the various land and buildings owned by the town. The idea of a capital fund was raised again. The board needs to assess the benefits of creating funds for some of these projects vs. a broad capital fund.

A related conversation that will be needed soon will focus on the anticipated funds from the COVID19 recovery that is being dispersed to towns. Carin and Rebecca plan to attend a webinar next week regarding plans and potential allowed uses for funds. Board members have received a couple of inquiries about how the town plans to use the money if received.

### Cota field update

Koran and Rebecca attended a meeting with representatives from the Vermont Land Trust, the Lewis Creek Association, and Denny Barnard representing the Planning Commission. The purpose of the meeting was to review the list of needs the town has expressed with regard to the ongoing flooding and wet fields that have made recreational use of the Cota fields difficult in recent years. The town is seeking options for improving drainage for the fields while also protecting the Lewis Creek. The conservation easement on the property dictates guidelines regarding approved practices. The LCA was named as a partner to manage the Lewis Creek corridor. The town would like to see the footbridge repaired so that resident can enjoy the entire property again and use the trail. Improving communication among the 3 partners is a mutual goal and will help the process for approvals and future requests. Caitlin Cusack will be taking over the stewardship management of all the conserved properties in Starksboro. The board will invite Caitlin to a future meeting to help ensure the board is fully aware of the management agreements for the land and the process for requests.

### Finance position

Board members discussed the finance job posting and upcoming interviews. The questions for candidates will cover communication, technical fluency, reporting, and payroll management. Board members will each send 1-2 questions to Rebecca to compile for the next meeting. Interviews will be 20 minutes in length. Rebecca to confirm interview times with candidates.

### Other topics for future discussion:

Equity and Inclusion – Develop a policy statement that is educational and informative; a community engagement opportunity.

Vision plan – Put on the annual calendar and reserve time for a quarterly check in to ensure the board is maintaining focus on “transformational” work as well as transactional work (e.g. regular business, bills, payroll, policy, etc.) The Selectboard would like to invite a rep from each committee or board to attend a SB meeting on a quarterly basis to keep open communication, to stay informed about the work, and ensure the goals and values of the town are aligned. Nancy suggested the need for a report summary as a guideline. The Selectboard needs to set the tone.

Policy reviews and updates will be scheduled throughout the year. Updated work plan and list will be sent to the board members for ongoing input.

**Motion to adjourn:** John Painter made the motion at 9:02 p.m. Nancy Boss second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Elder  
SB Assistant