

Starksboro Selectboard
Minutes of 5/2/23
Unapproved

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

Koran Cousino called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Visitor's Business- none

Road Foreman's Report

- Josh updated on the Brown Hill project; will need to ask the Audys to get around for a few days
- Josh asked about a 4th crew member. KC – would a seasonal person help for summer?
Ask Julie to look at the budget closely and see what we can do for this summer – discuss further at the retreat
- AOT is taking over the road inventory that the RPC was doing. In the next 5 years, the Town must do a new road inventory with the State. Josh will take training with Eric in Bristol with RPC. Need to get the app working on the iPad.
- Grant for the two bridges – A hydraulic study needed. In discussion with Jim Cota at AOT.
- Bridge on SPH ext – Eye beams are deteriorating about 3 yrs left.
- There are some State fund sources for bridges. However Koran noted it is hard for the Town to plan for these large infrastructure repairs because we can't afford them in the annual budget and need large grants to cover them.

Jerusalem Community Center Committee

- Discussion about the wastewater permit changes – Jason Barnard (Barnard & Gervais) is working on it in May. May be done by end of May. They are waiting for info on the amendment to the permit per State requirements.
- Committee composition and recruitment of new members:
 - Susan, Alan, Jeff, Tom, Luke are interested in continuing to serve.
 - Megan and Greg are maybes (Greg Orvis is no longer a town resident)
 - Discussion of the size of committee but all agree that too large is not effective.
 - Susan would prefer not to be chair; Luke may be interested.
- The committee members collectively do not want to spend more time on this if there is no possibility of funding in the next few years. There needs to be a plan for funding or requesting a bond vote. The Selectboard needs to decide how to proceed.
- Schoolhouse is standing but needs attention as it is only further deteriorating. If the snow keeps falling onto the shed roof, it will collapse and crush the truck that is housed there.

Charge discussion: What are the stages of construction and project management? What are the prices for the stages? Does the board want to put a bond request out for the next town meeting in March 2024? The board will discuss at the retreat and propose a logical progression for what comes next.

Current Business

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to approve the warrants for A/P and payroll with one exception for library expenses as noted. Eric Cota seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Nancy Boss moved to approve the proposal for an external audit for FY23-24 as quoted. Carin McCarthy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion: Eric Cota moved to approve the mowing contract for Cota rec field by Dan Gebo for \$3695 for 2023. John Painter seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Pollinator garden proposal from Robinson School and the MAUSD ELP program: Rebecca received the proposal from Eborah Frazer and Polly Heminway to implement a “Bee the Change” pollinator garden in the solay array area behind the school. It is based on a program and design that has been replicated at other solar sites and prevents the need to mow regularly and generates an perennial garden of plants that attracts pollinators. The board supports the proposal. Rebecca will follow up with a letter of agreement for use the area and defining access needs for regular maintenance of panels, etc.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the draft winter parking ban ordinance with edits as noted. Nancy Boss seconded. Motion approved unanimously. Rebecca will make the final edits as discussed and then post the warning to the public as required for town ordinances. Voters have the right to petition.

Motion: John Painter made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/18/23 with edits as noted. Eric Cota seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Town Administrator Update

BRIC grant and emergency plan updating – Next step is RFP. ACRPC is one of the contractors but they may not have capacity for more projects.

JCCC –attended the last committee meeting. Discussed current status, what is charge for next stage, how to recruit some new members. On the agenda for next meeting.

Grant funding strategy – continued work on process to share with committees and groups; systems needed both in the prospecting stage and after a grant is awarded to ensure the TA and Treasurer have the appropriate information to track and report on the grant. Ongoing discussion.

Building maintenance plans

- a. Post office – Met with PO contact; Need to give them 30 days warning for the work schedule and for them to be able to close for a day if needed. Floor in front rooms needs to be covered due to asbestos. Asked Tom Estey if he was interested in the window project. Work unlikely to be done before end of the FY. Consider purchasing windows and materials with this FY funds.
- b. Municipal office reorganization – furniture donations from J. Bouvier/NBM; appreciation to the road crew who helped pick up and deliver items to the garage, fire station, and town office.

Rental space follow up – Met with Ann Bove; met with Pete and Barbara; ongoing discussion

- a. Repairs needed to the building and general maintenance – to discuss

Reimbursement policy – Time limit needed; Rebecca and Julie propose 90 days max. Board discussion needed.

Zoning

Gregory Subdivision approved (DRB)

Town site plan application pavilion - scheduled for 5/11, warnings will be sent; responses drafted

Nugent site plan application farm stand - On hold

Fire Station #2 – Plat needs to be recorded within 180 days of decision

Complaint received – S. Starksboro

Cannabis tier one business permitted and associated structure

Potential question about structure in progress – permitted as residential but likely business use

Executive Sessions

Motion: Based on the advice of counsel, the Selectboard hereby finds that premature general public knowledge involving confidential attorney-client communications including professional legal advice concerning a complaint of unpermitted land development, would clearly place the public body at a disadvantage in probable litigation to which the Town of Starksboro may be involved.

John Painter moved, Eric Cota seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion: John Painter moved to enter executive session with Rebecca Elder to consider professional legal advice and confidential attorney-client communications from counsel involving a complaint of unpermitted land development. Eric Cota seconded. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion: Eric Cota moved to exit Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. John Painter seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

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

Motion: Eric Cota moved to enter executive session per 1 VSA S313a3 personnel and/or contract negotiations with Rebecca Elder present. Carin McCarthy second. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to exit executive session at 8:40 p.m.: Carin McCarthy moved, John Painter second.

Motion approved unanimously.

Action taken: Determined rate of pay for zoning administrator.

Motion to adjourn at 8:41 p.m.: Nancy Boss moved, John Painter seconded.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
Town Administrator