

Starksboro Selectboard
Minutes of 7/11/23
Unapproved

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

Unable to attend: John Painter

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Josh Martell, Amy McCormick, Robert Turner, Keegan Tierney, Susan Pare, Rick Davis, Jennifer Lovett, Bill Norland, Alexsys Thompson, Robert Turner

Koran Cousino called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Visitor's Business- none

Road Foreman's Report

- Starksboro had little damage to the roads as a result of the heavy rains and storms in the last two weeks.
- The State's Prison Hollow Ext. bridge repairs are needed in the next couple of months to address the letter received from the State of Vermont. One quote has been received from Parent Construction. The purchasing policy requires additional quotes before a decision is made. Josh will request quotes.
- Brown Hill project/FEMA
Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to authorize the chair to sign the contract for work from J.Hutchins as quoted in the bid process already completed. Carin McCarthy seconded.
Motion approved unanimously.
- Seasonal road crew position – one candidate has expressed interest and can work two days a week. He has experience on municipal roads and in neighboring towns. To be discussed further in executive session.

Beaver Dam and culvert update

The board discussed the recent communications, emails, and inquiries regarding the beaver dam that was built in and around a culvert on Robert Young Road. Bill Norland, a resident and owner of land on the road affected by the dam, was present and said he supports use of a "beaver baffle" or other means of protecting the culvert and allowing the beaver(s) to continue living in that immediate area.

Koran Cousino stated that the board has fielded several calls and emails on this subject. The board has received information, considered impacts on both the roads/infrastructure and on wildlife habitat, and has worked with the Road Foreman to address the problem and protect the culvert. The board supports the staff decisions made to date. Carin McCarthy reiterated the board's commitment to conservation, protection of habitat and of wildlife in balance with the necessary work of keeping roads and culverts passable and safe.

ARPA Funding discussion

Starksboro Meetinghouse & Cooperative Preschool application – Keegan Tierney and Susan Pare

Discussion included updates on funding received to date; considerations about staging the various work and what steps are priorities. The requested amount of \$222,067 includes funds for preschool program expansion and for restoration work of the building. The building is not a town-owned property so funds would be disbursed to a nonprofit entity if awarded. The wastewater permit and water supply needed to be updated and has been completed. Water comes from the village water co-op, which has been limited

on expansion. Because another resident relinquished a water hook up north of the village, the capacity for the pre-school to add a bathroom was permitted by the State.

Village Water Co-op application – Rick Davis

Rick answered questions from the board and gave some history of the establishment of the co-op, the limitations for expansion, and the need for improvements to support the existing system. The co-op is its own entity with a governing board. Village residents who receive water through this system pay an annual fee. The town buildings and Robinson School are also on the village water supply.

For next meeting: Invitations to Katie Antos-Ketcham and Susan Thompson for the library proposals. Invitation to Richard Faesy for the HVAC and pavilion solar projects.

CURRENT BUSINESS

1. Police service contract
MOTION: Carin McCarthy made a motion to approve the 2023-24 contract with the Addison County. Nancy Boss seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
2. External audit update
none – waiting to be scheduled for next stage of work
3. Municipal tax rate
Amy presented information for discussion of the tax rate. Robert Turner will review the calculations and the financials before the next meeting. Final tax rate proposal will be considered on July 25.
4. MOTION: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the payment of monthly anticipated, budgeted expenses for FY23-24 (e.g. insurance, contracts, lease payments, etc.) Carin McCarthy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
5. Mail Review
Resignations received from Jeff Keeney (PC), Alexsya Thompson (PC), and Susan Klaiber (JCCC Chair).
MOTION: Eric Cota made a motion to accept the resignations with regret. Carin McCarthy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
6. Reimbursement Policy review: Rebecca presented a draft for the board's consideration. Discussion included timing of submissions, approvals needed, etc. Additional changes needed to include volunteers (i.e. food shelf), committees, and others. Draft will be updated and circulated for review.
7. Warrants for A/P and payroll
MOTION: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the warrants for A/P and payroll as presented. Eric Cota seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
8. Finance FY23 close out
 - a. FY23 final budget detail was distributed for review. Robert Turner noted some lines that he will research before the next meeting.
 - b. Corrections, liabilities, and payroll fringe benefit corrections:
MOTION: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the roll over of vacation time for Paul Porter. Eric Cota seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
MOTION: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the fringe benefit corrections to vacation, holiday, and retirement for Rebecca Elder as presented. Carin McCarthy seconded. Motion approved unanimously.
 - c. Work distribution: Julie is no longer working for the Town. Amy and Rebecca will work together to cover the financial tasks including payroll, accounts payable, and other accounting and reporting as needed until a new financial staff member has been hired.
 - d. Finance interviews: Two candidates have applied. Interviews will be held at the next meeting on 7/25 prior to the start of the regular meeting. To begin at 5 p.m.
9. Town Administrator Update
Office and admin – Office space has been rearranged to allow for a larger public meeting room in the front area of the town clerk's office. Staff desks and work area is now in the area that was the

conference room. This layout allows more efficiency for staff and better open space for meetings, researchers, and public uses. Furniture donations have been received from Nat'l Bank of Middlebury.

10. Review minutes – delay to future meeting

11. Selectboard roundtable

Fire Dept. Furnace – Tom Estey presented quotes at a previous meeting for replacement of the furnace at the Starksboro Fire Dept. It was long past its usable life. The board approved the purchase and the invoice has been received.

MOTION: Nancy Boss made a motion to pay for the fire department furnace replacement from the emergency reserve fund. Carin McCarthy seconded. Eric Cota recused. Vote: Approved NB, CM, KC

Executive Session

MOTION: Carin McCarthy made a motion to go into Executive Session per 1 VSA §313(a)(1) and (3) with Rebecca Elder present. Eric Cota seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

MOTION: Carin McCarthy made a motion to exit Executive Session at 9:00 p.m. Nancy Boss seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Action from Exec. Session: The selectboard approved offering of a seasonal road crew position to the candidate with a pay rate of \$25/hour and no fringe benefits.

Motion to adjourn: Eric Cota made the motion at 9:02 p.m. Nancy Boss seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, Town Administrator