

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting  
July 25, 2023  
Unapproved

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**Members present:** Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, John Painter, Carin McCarthy

**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Susan Thompson, Katie Antos-Ketcham, Alex Davis, Margi Gregory, Robert Turner, Richard Faesy

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Called to order at 5:55

### Road Foreman's Report

**Equipment trailer** – Existing trailer is no longer functional and dangerous to use. It cannot be inspected. Josh is borrowing trailer from Town of Bristol. This is a piece of equipment that is used almost daily. Josh is searching for a used model but has not found one locally. He will collect quotes for consideration.

Carin read an email from Herb Olson with thanks for hard work from the road crew that keeps our local roads passable and safe.

**Driveway permit process** – The Selectboard requested adding a layer of compliance so that Road Foreman upon completion and it is recorded with the town. Other towns use this process and it helps ensure the recommendations are followed through on. Rebecca and Josh will update the form and will aim to implement this fall.

### Driveway accessibility permit application from Heather Jefferies on Robert Young Road

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the H. Jefferies driveway accessibility permit application with the recommendations of the road foreman as described and to be signed at the next meeting.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### ARPA Funding

#### Starksboro Library/Town Hall renovations

Susan, Katie, and Alex attended to review questions from the board and provide update on plans. Carin asked about how the project could be phased to support continued progress and eventual success if full funding is not available. Susan noted that their plan shifted for the vertical lift to make the easiest path inside the building for accessibility. Instead of building an addition to accommodate it, the lift would be placed inside the front of the building with the plan to have accessible parking in front of the library on 116. This option would be less costly. Discussion about whether this parking accommodation would be possible and permitted by AOT. A preliminary inquiry has been made.

Susan asked about ACRPC Transportation committee and whether they could help with the assessment and determine what is possible. Additional conversation about the funds the library has received so far and applications that are still awaiting a decision. One grant for \$30K with a 1:1 match is outstanding. At the 4/18/23 meeting, the board approved CFG grant application for library renovation with withdrawal if a matching fund source is not secured one week prior to the application date of 8/31/23. An update will be provided by the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting in August.

#### Starksboro Library HVAC

Richard Faesy – The library does not have a fresh air circulation source, nor an efficient heating and cooling for the building. The HVAC system would be a combined system for heating and cooling for the first floor. Duct work

would allow for expansion to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor if and when it is renovated. It would be more efficient to have a 2<sup>nd</sup> system for the upstairs as it would be used for different hours and events. There are energy related grants available, including the newly released MERP grant that can be applied for in 2024. Estimated costs are going to be higher than the original proposal, likely closer to \$50,000 with current costs. The building is well-weatherized, and the basement has been foam sealed. The system would augment the existing oil furnace. Katie mentioned that they also aim to have the library be a future cooling center where people can come for free when needed. Dept. of Libraries has a grant they applied for

Koran asked about the solar gain on the pavilion proposal. Richard said they would lose only 10% of the gain due to location. The DRB asked if there would be any glare issues from the solar that might affect immediate neighbors. Richard does not think so. The type of roofing has been discussed – many car ports are being built with solar panel roofs, but they do not have a proposal that is adequate. Standing seam is the longest lasting with easiest installation while a shingled or tin roof would have a shorter life and slightly more complex installation.

Eric asked whether the heat pumps would provide all heating. Richard stated they now operate at lower temperatures but there would be a back up system as well.

### 1. FEMA Buyout Opportunity

Andrew L'Roe from Addison Co. Regional Planning to describe the opportunities for a FEMA buyout for a property that is up for sale on State's Prison Hollow Extension. Provides 100% funding for project. There is one more round of flood resilience funding. The property is adjacent to a parcel of town-owned land. The State is offering full market value based on current appraisal. The town, as holder of the land, would need to agree with the amount. Projects require an interested owner, a willing receiver for the land (the Town), and a plan for potentially moving the mobile home to a different location to avoid removing a residential unit from the market. It is a long shot but it is worth attempting to protect. The Starksboro Conservation Commission supports the efforts. The ACRPC has the capacity to do the administrative work for the grant (5% fee) – or the town can choose to administer itself. No conservation easement is required; only a commitment to not develop the property in the future.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve proceeding with the application for FEMA buyout funding for the identified property on State's Prison Hollow Extension and authorized signature of commitment letter. John Painter second. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### 2. Set the Tax Rate FY23-24 Property Taxes

**Education Tax Rates** = Homestead \$1.9466; non-homestead \$1.8063/per \$100 assessed value

#### **Municipal and Local Rates:**

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to set the municipal tax at \$0.6514. Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion to set the veterans exemption at \$0.0012. Nancy Boss seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss penalty is 8% and homestead and late filing; Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### 3. Request from Hayes re: burial plot in Norton Cemetery

The board reviewed the request for permission to bury ashes of a relative in the now-closed Norton Cemetery. After discussion about the condition of the cemetery, head stones, and lack of certainty of exact burial locations, the board decided no burial of the ashes would be permitted. However, permission to spread the ashes in the cemetery was granted. Rebecca to send confirmation to the Hayes family.

#### 4. Vacation roll-over request from Town Clerk

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the one-time request from Amy McCormick to roll-over 52 days of vacation and 50 days of sick leave to use in this fiscal year (FY24) due to unforeseen circumstances. John Painter seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

#### 5. Mail Review

Update on status of projects from Maple Broadband re: high-speed internet installation.

#### 6. Review of warrants

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the warrants for A/P and payroll as presented with a notation about date ranges. Nancy Boss seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

#### 7. Town Administrator Updates

- a. Office reorganization continues. Additional furniture donations have been received including a new-to-us conference table and some desks. Thank you to National Bank of Middlebury for the donations. Thank you to our road crew for transporting and moving services.
- b. Application for MERP assessment – ACRPC sent information about applying for energy assessments of all town buildings through this program. In order to apply for the \$500,000 grant in 2024, these in-depth assessment are needed. Rebecca is working with the Energy Committee to gather information needed and move forward.
- c. External audit – The auditing firm is working on our audit remotely. They have reserved two days at the end of August to gather any final follow information needed. We hope to have a final audit by end of September.
- d. Zoning/DRB updates – DRB hearings on 8/10 and 8/24. Zoning applications are steady. Nancy is working mornings M-Th through August until her work schedule shifts.

#### 8. Review minutes

Motion: Carin McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes of 6/6, 6/20, and 7/11 as presented. Eric Cota seconded. Vote: 6/6 and 6/20 approved unanimously; 7/11 JP recused

#### 9. Selectboard Roundtable

Discussion of pavilion roof quotes. One has been received for standing seam vs. sheet metal. Two additional quotes are required before a decision. Carin will work with Peg Casey on quotes. The pavilion group hopes to have a roof in place soon to protect the structure.

#### Executive Session

**Motion:** Carin McCarthy made a motion to enter executive session at 7:18 per 1 VSA S.313a regarding personnel contracts and negotiations with Amy McCormick and Rebecca Elder present. Nancy Boss seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to conclude executive session at 8:16 p.m. Nancy Boss seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

No decisions were made as a result of executive session.

#### Motion to adjourn:

Eric Cota made a motion to adjourn at 8:20 p.m. Carin McCarthy seconded. Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, Town Administrator