

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting  
Minutes of 7/5/22  
Approved

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**Board members present:** Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, John Painter, Carin McCarthy  
**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Amy McCormick, Josh Martell, Julie Bessette, Dwyer Haney, Evelyn Boardman, Richard Warren, Danielle Hubbell, Robert Turner, Alexsys Thompson

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The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Koran Cousino at Town Clerk's office and via Zoom.

### Addition

Road Foreman report

### Treasurer position

Julie Bessette attended to discuss her interest in the treasurer position. She currently works for the Town of New Haven as the assistant treasurer and is training with the treasurer, Danielle Hubbell. She lives in New Haven, grew up in the Bristol area, and has been working in accounting for years. She is completing her B.A. degree in accounting next month. She has served as the treasurer of the school PTO as well. Koran Cousino thanked Julie for attending. The board is seeking a candidate with municipal accounting experience. The town has not yet begun advertising but expects the position will be between 10-20 hours, depending on the time of year and the experience with municipal accounting software. Julie stated she works an estimated 8 hours for New Haven per week and has a bookkeeping business with a flexible schedule. The town will notify Julie when the position is ready for posting and interviews.

### Road Foreman Updates

- Brown Hill East – concerns about the road. Josh said there is much work that is needed and the crew does not have the time to do it.
- Dan Sargent Rd project – Set and ready to go for ditching and culverts
- Contractor who gave a bid doesn't have time right now so Josh will find someone else or do himself (may need to rent equipment.)
- 2 bridges on Jerusalem Rd need replacement. These have been on the radar. Josh will connect with Ashely Atkins at DOT about grants and permits.
- Unifirst – Nancy will call them about the contract that was extended for an additional 5 years.

### Finance Updates

- Danielle Hubbell met with NEMRC on Starksboro's behalf to assess work needed. The outside audit was conducted 2 years ago. She advises sending out RFP for this year.
- Fund balance issue – The balance hasn't been carried forward correctly. Work is needed to go through line by line to figure out exactly how much correction is required. NEMRC will send a proposal for up to 2 days of work, might be done remotely.
- Moving forward to close the books on FY21-22. There is a discrepancy in the general ledger account that she is still working to understand.
- Once this work is complete, going forward have an external audit every year.
- RHR Smith (Maine) does the New Haven audit and the school district.
- Selectboard to refine the RFP for distribution.
- Robert asked about reconciling checking account. The entries need to be reconciled with general ledger so the account balances are aligned.
- Town auditors provide independent oversight over the bank statements. Robert asked to discuss the process with Danielle and Laurie Webber when things have settled down.

- Notes on payroll processing and benefits offered: The Selectboard clarified that all benefits start on the date of hire. This includes health insurance at 100% and a retirement match. Vacation and sick time accrual as described in policy unless otherwise noted. Questions should be directed to the selectboard.
- Danielle has made progress on the payroll tax issue – was being paid through the bank but the payments weren't received as expected. New process streamlines this.
- Carin suggested inviting the auditors to the next SB meetings.

### Tax Rate – Robert Turner

The tax grievances are done. Danielle can prepare the tax rate for the next meeting. All information has been received.

### DRB appointments

4 candidates expressed interest in serving on the DRB: Richard Warren, Arnell Paquette, Dwyer Haney, and Evelyn Boardman. The Selectboard invited all to either attend the meeting or send a statement about why they would like to serve in this role.

- Rich Warren – He is a current DRB member. He is interested in continuing. Look out for a broad spectrum of issues; also how it affects the applicants and the hoops they must go through for a successful application; tries to apply a total perspective. Serves on the ACRPC as a delegate.
- Evelyn Boardman – Lives in South Starksboro. She works in environmental consulting; she has worked on design plans; experience in river restoration; excited to serve the community.
- Dwyer Haney – Lives in South Starksboro. Purchased land and is building a home and homestead with fruit and nut trees, gardens. Interested in land use and serving the community.
- Arnell Paquette submitted a written statement. She is a current DRB member. She offers a depth of experience having been on the board for many years and heard a lot of testimony about land use and development in Starksboro. Hopes to continue to serve the town in this way.

The board thanked all the candidates for their interest and desire to serve the town. The board will discuss in Executive Session and notify all of the appointments.

### Personnel policy review

Discussion of changes to the personnel policy continued.

- Check Bristol personnel policy – does road crew receive vacation after a plowing season?
- Make annual schedule of reviews – New employees, annual reviews, and informal check ins.
- The Selectboard must do reviews of ZA, Road Foreman, SBA/Town Admin, and Treasurer. The Town Clerk is elected and appoints the Asst. Town Clerk.
- Board discussed the need for periodic thank you events or employee appreciation – holiday gathering, BBQ at Cota field, etc. Recognition for ongoing good work to support morale.
- HR systems: Personnel files; establish clear system and filing location. Use a standard form for the evaluations. Have employees do a self-evaluation using the same questions. Friendly discussion and no surprises – an opportunity for a dialog about the job and conditions.
- Once Town Administrator (TA) position is filled, evaluations can be shift from the board to the TA.

### Warrants

**Motion:** Nancy Boss moved to approve the warrants for bills, orders, and payroll as presented. John Painter second.

**Vote:** Motion passed unanimously. (EC not present for vote)

### Annual Increases

**Motion:** Carin McCarthy made a motion for raises for employees as stated. Eric Cota second.

- Road foreman \$70K salary – sign on bonus of \$1500, 1<sup>st</sup> half at start, 2<sup>nd</sup> at completion of plowing season

- Road crew 1 (new hire) - \$24/hr with 2<sup>nd</sup> paid week of vacation in first year
- Road crew 2 – Rate of \$26/hr
- Town Clerk, Asst Town Clerk, SBA – 5% increases
- Elected officials – Auditors and Listers and Health officer to be raised to \$15/hr

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### SB roundtable

KC provided a summary of the recent communications about the responsibility for the ballot, who was responsible for informational meeting, ratification details, etc. MAUSD frustrated that the info came from the SOS committee instead of from the town. Spec mtg tonight to review the warning and the ballot. Lincoln is not allowed to vote – so they are no longer part of the district. (May)  
Each town must pass it separately – not a comingled vote. Ballot – MAUSD meeting tonight to decide on the ballots; KC spoke with Rep. Reen

### Review of Minutes

**Motion:** John Painter moved to approve the minutes of June 21, 2022 as written. Nancy Boss second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### Snowmobile Access Request Decision

A draft of the findings of fact and conclusions with decision was circulated and reviewed by the group. The links to information will be changed to exhibits attached to the decision.

1. Eric and Koran to review and send comments to Rebecca.
2. Rebecca will work with legal counsel for a final content review of the facts and conclusion and will report back to finalize the document for approval.

**Motion:** John Painter moved to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters per 1 VSA 313 (a) Nancy Boss second. Rebecca Elder was invited into the session.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

**Motion:** Eric Cota moved to exit executive session at 9:13 p.m. Nancy Boss second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

### Actions taken:

**Motion:** Nancy Boss moved to appoint Rich Warren and Arnell Paquette for 3-year terms on the Development Review Board (DRB) and to appoint Evelyn Boardman and Dwyer Haney as alternate DRB members with the hope they will consider future involvement in town.

**Vote:** Motion approved (CM, JP, NB). KC and EC recused.

**Motion:** John Painter moved that upon discussion, the board decided to deliver a pre-termination letter/notice to an employee. Nancy Boss second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

**Motion:** Eric Cota moved to adjourn at 9:15 p.m. Carin McCarthy second.

**Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
SB Assistant

Next regular meeting: July 19, 2022 at 6 p.m.