

Starksboro Selectboard meeting

August 22, 2023

Unapproved

Present: Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Carin McCarthy, John Painter
Others: Rebecca Elder, Gary Kessler (GMSR), Josh Martell, Amy McCormick

Koran Cousino called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel and employee contracts: John Painter moved, Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to exit Executive Session at 5:29 p.m.: Carin moved, Eric seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Public meeting portion opened at 5:30 p.m. Rebecca Elder, Josh Martell, and Amy McCormick joined the meeting.

Review of agenda: no changes

Road Foreman

Add D&F paving proposal for consideration at the next meeting.

State's Prison Hollow Ext. bridge emergency repairs – 3 bids were requested. Only one proposal was received from Parent Construction

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the proposal from Parent Construction as presented. The amount of \$36,500 to be paid out of the Emergency Reserve Fund. Nancy Boss seconded.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Current Business

1. Green Mountain State Race request for route adjustment for Sunday 9/3

Gary Kessler from GMSR joined to request consideration of a necessary route change due to flooding events in towns to the south affecting Routes 125 and 116S. Therefore, the GMSR asks to travel south on Route 116 through Starksboro village to Route 17. Riders will take a left onto 17 and travel up to Gore Road intersection. Those doing a loop will turn left on Gore, those going to the finish will travel up the App Gap which will be closed for a portion of Sunday morning as it is each year. AC Sheriffs will be at road intersections, there will be a rolling enclosure for riders in groups, and extensive rules have been communicated by GMSR to riders in advance. More information can be found at

2. Review revised financing for town truck purchase and sign agreement

3. Town property: Check in on wastewater system replacement proposals for library and Jerusalem Schoolhouse projects – Dennis Casey estimated a one-day job and is looking to schedule the work in October.

4. Pavilion roof: review quotes received

5. **Motion:** John Painter made a motion to approve the warrants for A/P and payroll as presented. Eric Cota seconded. **Vote:** Approved unanimously

6. **Motion:** Carin McCarthy moved to approve the minutes of 8/8/23. John Painter seconded.

Vote: Approved unanimously

7. Mail review

- a. Resignation of Selectboard member

Nancy Boss submitted her resignation from the Selectboard effective immediately.

Motion: Eric Cota moved to accept the resignation with regret. Carin McCarthy seconded.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

- b. Proposal received for BRIC grant consultant – All-Hazards Mitigation update

One proposal has been received. RFP is posted and due next week. Update work group members who have responded: Cheryl Estey, Dan Kuzio, Tracey Orvis, Charlene Phelps, Nancy Boss (ZA), Amy McCormick, Rebecca Elder. Once consultant is chosen, a meeting poll will be distributed.

8. Staffing update: Finance/treasurer position

The Selectboard interviewed 3 candidates—2 external, 1 internal—for the finance position and appointed treasurer. An employment offer was made to, and accepted by, Nancy Boss to fulfill the role and be appointed Town Treasurer. Combined with the Zoning Administrator position, she will work a full-time schedule of 32-hours per week in the office and report to the Town Administrator. Her start date was 9/21.

- a. Training schedule: Rebecca has created a training schedule for the first few weeks. Additional training from NEMRC and other outside resources will be scheduled as needed after orientation. Rebecca and Amy will help to orient to office procedures and resources.
- b. Office will be open for limited hours for the last week of August
- c. Training with another local treasurer for a big picture view. Technical training with NEMRC representatives

9. Town Administration Update

a. Office and admin updates: Subrecipient grant report was submitted. Taxes are being paid steadily. A reminder postcard about due date and time will be sent and posted on the website. Amy clarified Sheriff bills only include mileage in town.

b. Zoning & DRB update: zoning permit applications have slowed down. There are no DRB hearings scheduled. Time will be focused on supporting the planning commission with bylaw revisions and research.

c. MERP grant energy assessments – Discussion about which town buildings are the priority for Level II assessments that will provide the town with key information to inform the investments we make in the buildings for long-term use and energy consumption goals. Rebecca and Nancy will attend the next Energy Comm. meeting to discuss this as well as management of the town's solar credit allocations and use of the Energy Star Portfolio Manager. Koran asked why we need the ESPM, what is the value vs. investment of time. Brief discussion of the proposed solar on the pavilion. Priority buildings: Jerusalem Schoolhouse, Library, Food Shelf, Town Clerk's office, and Garage vs. Fire Station. Limited to 5 buildings on the application. Discussion to continue at the next meeting.

10. Selectboard roundtable

1. Community Event – 10/14 VINS Raptor event and another local conflict. Amy is out of town 10/21. Consider 10/28? Bring a carved pumpkin, cider donuts. Carin will talk with the Auxiliary and

coordinate with Peg and Chris Runcie. Event planning information to come. The SFD wants to contribute as well.

ARPA Discussion

The board roundtable continued. Board members shared their own priorities based on the information provided and discussions by the selectboard. The group agrees on funding 5 projects, declining to fund 1 of the projects recommended by the committee, and will continue to discuss the remaining projects over the next few months.

Projects to be fully funded:

- Fire Dept. Equipment
- Jerusalem Schoolhouse projects – 3 projects, lead remediation, DRB site plan,
- Digitizing Land Records
- Town Administrator position

Projects still under consideration for partial funding:

- Water Coop – Privately owned but a critical piece of infrastructure for the village and provides water to public buildings including town offices and the school. A business plan is needed for a viable future. The school is a heavy user and doesn't pay a fair share. Support from regional planning is needed – our ability to grow in the village high density district is severely limited because of the lack of space for private wells. The community needs the village water source to be sustainable.
- Project READ
- Meetinghouse/Pre-school – Largest request. Building is important but privately owned. Support investments in the pre-school program and expansion of services and capacity.
- Library renovation – Prioritize essential upgrades to electrical to support future work; prioritize front entry accessibility solution(s); matching funds for grants for lift and 2nd floor renovation under consideration.
- Library HVAC – Partial funding anticipated with priority on improving air quality and combined with electrical upgrades to the building to support future upgrades.
- Pavilion solar – Wait for decision on Walter Cerf Foundation grant application and quotes on various roofing options and expenses.

The board recognized the significant amount of time the committee dedicated to reviewing proposals and making recommendations to the Selectboard. All expressed appreciation and agreed the committee report has been valuable to distill a large volume of information submitted. The allocations are now being considered in the context of other items that were earmarked for funds and to consider larger community impact projects that may need further review. We have identified town needs that the Selectboard needs to consider too. These funds are intended to benefit the community long term to support sustainable growth and navigate changes affecting Starksboro residents.

For next meeting: Board members will bring their own rankings and suggestions for allocations for a roundtable discussion. Jerusalem Schoolhouse committee will be asked to provide additional information about the renovation and Fire Station projects with updated estimates and proposals for staging of work.

Motion to adjourn at 7:35 pm: John Painter, Eric Cota second. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder
Town Administrator

Meetings will return to a 6 p.m. start on 9/26 and future meetings unless otherwise noted.