

Starksboro Selectboard  
Minutes of 9/15/20  
Approved

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**Board members present:** Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, John Painter

**Unable to attend:** Greg Hahr

**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Tony Porter, Celine Coon

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The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

*The introductory statement regarding open meeting law and how public meetings are being conducted in the Town of Starksboro due to the State of Emergency declared by Governor Scott as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20 and Act 92, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.*

*In accordance with Act 92, there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously, however the meeting was conducted with public access via internet or telephone with the ability to listen/interact contemporaneously.*

**Additions to the agenda:**

1. State digitization grant
2. Energy Committee request from Richard Faesy
3. Update from Robert Turner

**Road Foreman's Report**

**USDA/NRCS grant** work is complete at the Lewis Creek area between Hillsboro and Ireland roads. Tony conducted a site visit with Mike LaPointe from NRCS. There is additional administrative paperwork to complete, which Tony and Rebecca are working on. There will be an estimated \$12-14K reimbursed for the Hillsboro section only. The Stokes Hill work will be done in the spring and an extension has been requested.

**Furniture dumping** – There have been a series of complaints on FPF about the dumping of furniture in South Starksboro. Tony is considering “No dumping” signs and other measures to deter this behavior.

**Signage for dead-end roads:** More signage may be needed on some town roads. Tony installed a new sign on Ruby Brace Road stating “No Outlet” to inform travelers.

**Speeding issues:** No further complaints have been received. The road crew posted additional speed limit signs on Big Hollow Road.

**Brown Hill East/West:** Currently no passage possible. With the temporary bridge up on the East side, Tony recommends installing a “Road Closed” sign because the culvert needs repair and trucks are too long to pass over the temp. bridge. Road needs to be closed until the permanent repairs are done. The culvert alone will cost \$2000. There is a current logging project just before the Lathrop's land. Large log trucks are traveling up and back

**FEMA grant updates:** Tony and Rebecca had another conference call with the grant admin team. They are seeking clarification about the bidding process for the hydraulic studies. If 3 bids are required, FEMA will reimburse for a portion of the expense.

**Driveway access on Class 4 roads:** There are some pre-existing lots on the Class 4 section of Mason Hill North at the Thomas property. Prior DRB approval provided for a ROW driveway to access these lots for future development.

**Gravel complaint received** about damage to a tire. The road crew continues to use the same materials (gravel and stone).

**Equipment reserve discussion:** Robert Turner, Eric Cota, and Tony met to review the equipment reserve fund and what adjustments are needed for the upcoming budget. More will be reported at the next meeting.

### Jerusalem Community Center Committee requests

Susan Klaiber, chair of the JCCC, attended to update the board and make some requests of the board.

1. Seeking permission to approach the owners of the Jerusalem Store regarding the possibility of acquiring a strip of land to provide more space for the proposed structure(s).
2. Committee plans to proceed with a conversation with the zoning administrator about zoning issues and co-locating the firehouse on the land.
3. Some structural issues need to be addressed soon, including immediate attention to the leaking roof.

John Painter asked about the fire department's recommendation for a separate location. Susan described and stated that Tom Estey will be part of zoning conversations so the FD can determine what will be best for their needs.

The selectboard gave its approval to proceed with a conversation with the Jerusalem Store owners. Susan will update the committee and they will follow up with the ZA for a meeting.

### Job Description Review

The board continued its discussion and review of current job descriptions.

**Delinquent Tax Collector** – John spoke with Amy McCormick. The current JD is good and no changes are needed.

**Health Officer** – John received feedback from current HO Peter Ryersbach. Peter offered suggestions based on some recent incidents that he dealt with and what may be helpful for the next HO. These suggestions included:

1. need for a Deputy HO (coverage when HO is on vacation or cannot get to a site immediately)
2. availability requirements for inspections or investigations
3. training/experience requirements – depending on the nature of the complaint, other State agencies may wish to take over; knowledge of system required

The board discussed whether the HO should have a town email address/contact phone where notifications would be directed—i.e. during the dog bite incident last year, notifications went to the HO's home phone when he was on vacation. Need to address communication gaps.

**Treasurer** – Nancy will follow up with Celine about the description for Treasurer and Asst. Treasurer. Greg Hahr had produced a revised draft with statutory references.

**Animal Control Officer** – Rebecca will send to Nancy. She will follow up with Chuck and bring feedback to the board as needed.

Next steps: Rebecca will compile all the suggested edits, put job descriptions in similar format, and send back to the board for review at a future meeting.

### Purchasing Policy

The board continued the review of the draft policy as edited at the last meeting. The members received the draft copy to read in advance of the meeting. The last items to be resolved was the clause regarding professional service. Discussion involved what services might be considered by the Town and costs associated. The most expensive item is insurance, health policies and town liability coverage. The group agreed to amend the draft for clarification to exclude insurance services from "professional services" and insert \$15,000 as the upper limit amount for said services.

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the Starksboro Purchasing Policy as drafted and revised as discussed at this meeting. Nancy Boss second.

**Vote:** Motion was approved unanimously.

Rebecca will make the final copy and send to the Town Clerk for recording in the town policies.

***Purchasing Policy adopted Sept. 15, 2020***

**IT/Social Media Policy** – The board decided to delay the discussion and drafting of this new policy until they can meet in person. Work plan to be updated based on the current health conditions and meeting protocols per State executive order.

**Animal control policy updates** – Koran will call Jim Carroll to discuss next steps. Rebecca can then follow up with Jim and/or Kevin Kite to continue the discussion and bring draft revisions back to the board for discussion at a future meeting.

**Board meeting schedule changes:**

- Election Day is Tuesday, 11/3 – Meeting will not be held.
- Selectboard regular meeting – rescheduled to 11/10
- Selectboard regular meeting – 11/17
- The board to set special budget meeting dates for November/December – TBC.

**Municipal Grant Updates**

**Digitization Grant:** Koran received information from Cheryl about the grant applied for on behalf of the town. There were two proposals received: one from Recordsforce that uses NEMRC and another from COTS. Both NEMRC and COTS have land records modules that can be used for access to digitized records. Cheryl and Amy determined that the NEMRC based tool would be best for Starksboro. The grant covers costs associated with archiving and indexing digital land records to enable research to be done online. The grant focuses on the most recent 5 years of records being digitized by Nov. 2020. The grant comes from COVID-19 related funding in response to pandemic conditions that have limited in-person access to land records.

Zoning records were not included in this scope of work but could be added later with an additional NEMRC module and scanning of files. John Painter asked if the goal is to continue with the digitizing of records older than 5 years. He also asked if there is capacity to digitize going forward, financial or capacity wise. Celine stated that scanning would be included in the process going forward.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the application for a grant for land records digitization as presented. Eric Cota second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

**LEGR Grant:** Celine reported that she did apply for the grant for unexpected COVID-19 related expenses that fell under the FEMA threshold but are eligible for State reimbursement. She will learn more about what was approved this Friday and will report at the next meeting.

**Recycling container grants:** Koran will follow up with the ACSWD about the grant reimbursement for the recycling container repairs.

**Warrants for Bills/Order**

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made the motion to approve the warrants for bills and orders as presented by the Treasurer. John Painter second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes of 9/1/20

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the minutes of 9/1/20. Nancy Boss second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

### Energy Committee requests

Richard Fasey contacted Koran regarding some request from the EC. They are looking at the information from the town buildings and assessing to make a recommendation for additional solar capacity for the town. They have spoken with Celine about gaining access to the dashboards of information and for a benchmarking app that will allow access to the accounts. The board supports this work and Celine will follow up with the EC as needed.

### Selectboard concerns: none

### Current Business

**Pottery Studio lease update:** The last lease ended and no new lease has been signed. Rent is owed from June to September at least. The full lease amount owed for the remained of the lease term is \$2000 or \$250/mo. A letter written by the board to the leasee will be sent via certified mail tomorrow with notice for action within 10 days. Follow up with legal counsel as needed from Koran and Rebecca.

**Post Office lease:** Koran has continued to have communication with the legal counsel representing the USPS. The town has received initial legal review with some questions from Attorney Jim Runcie. There are a few issues he highlighted for further consideration and negotiation—some are minor. Of major importance is a commission agreement of \$1700 that is attached to the lease. Koran has consulted the Association of Postal Lessors site for information. The board needs to decide whether to pay this commission or request it be paid back to the town over the course of the lease. There is a small proposed increase in rent. The SB will continue conversation and seek further legal review as needed and updates will be provided at a later meeting in the fall. No decisions at this time.

### Executive Session

**Motion:** John Painter made a motion per 1 VSA 313(a)(1) to go into executive session at 8:07 p.m. regarding contracts and/or labor relations agreements with employees. Eric Cota second. Rebecca Elder was invited into the session.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. John Painter second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**Action as a result of ES:** The Selectboard accepted the resignation of Rebecca Elder as zoning administrator as of 9/30/20 with regret. The board will ask the Planning Commission for recommendations about hiring and discussion will be held at the next meeting on 10/6/20.

**Motion to adjourn:** Eric Cota made the motion at 8:42 p.m. John Painter second.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder  
Selectboard Assistant