

Starksboro Selectboard Meeting
Minutes of 9/7/21
Unapproved

Board members present: Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, John Painter, remote participation: Carin McCarthy

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Mark Kinsley, Tony Porter, Jeff Keeney, Brad Boss

The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Koran Cousino.

Changes or Additions

move road report to 7pm prior to interview.

Visitor's Business: none

Financial Updates:

- Mark sent a summary of vacation accrual information and highlighted the issues that need to be resolved. The board continues to consider how to ensure the road foreman can use earned vacation time, which is challenging on a 3-person crew. Carin suggested a reminder be sent to employees a couple months prior to the end of the fiscal year to confirm amount of vacation time left and when it must be used by.
- FY reports to be provided at the next meeting.
- Mark has spent a lot of time sorting through grant information and resolving outstanding questions related to financial reports. He has reorganized the grant tracking in NEMRC and is working with the auditors and Rebecca on systems.

Action Items:

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the warrants for bills, orders, and payroll as presented. Nancy Boss second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion: Carin McCarthy made a motion to approve the minutes of 8/3, 8/10, and 8/17 as presented. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Town Green Pavilion Update

Three picnic tables were purchased via private donation.

\$6000 has been raised so far, with \$3295 donated by individuals and a grant of \$2000 was coordinated by the New Community Project in support of the pavilion construction. The Selectboard briefly discussed whether a formal committee was needed at this stage of the project. Consensus: Committee is not needed. Group meetings will be open to all and Carin will continue to bring any decisions back to the SB for review.

Planning commission Update

Jeff Keeney and Brad Boss attended representing the Planning Commission. The SB invited the PC to discuss the current work of the PC and the connection to the town's planning for use of the ARPA funding.

- Town Green project – Jeff supports some ARPA funds being used to support this project. The PC and others have done lots of planning and want to see this come to fruition.
- MAUSD and school discussions – Nancy Cornell and Herb Olson attending the last PC meeting. The PC is drafting a follow up letter to the MAUSD board. Much time has been spent discussion

and inquiring about different options for the town. The potential closing or repurposing of Robinson school is a major concern for the future viability of Starksboro.

- Zoning and planning – The PC is trying to attract businesses to come to Starksboro. If the school were to close, the town has no anchor for future activity or growth in the village. The town needs to re-evaluate conservation goals in balance with the need for growth. There has been much conservation of open space and forestland in town. Zoning needs to also be open to smart growth in the village and high density areas to support a thriving future for the town.
- Aging population – There is a large population of residents over 50. If younger folks and families are no longer drawn to Starksboro for the school, how will the town reposition itself to ensure land is marketable and there are growth opportunities? Well planned development is key. Affordable long-term housing options for all ages is needed.
- Population growth – What growth is needed to support the school remaining open? What does town zoning look like to accommodate that planning? (i.e. smaller parcel sizes? More PUDs?) The school issue offers the town an opportunity to help shift thinking about the long term plan for growth and a thriving village center.
- Community water system – the village community water system is maxed out. What options can be considered for improvement and expansion? If there is no community water, the parcels must be able to accommodate a well and protection zone.
- Energy goals – The Energy Committee has been focused on substantial deference designation. They argue that the town should have a seat at the table if a major energy project is being considered by the PUC. The PC has tabled this discussion until the school issues have been resolved.
- Input from PC for ARPA planning – Carin will send the PC the proposed rubric for considering use of ARPA funds as well as the outline of potential approved uses. PC input is welcome and needed.

Road Foreman's Report

- Job update – There have been many inquiries but no applications. The feedback is that the pay is too low. The board is considering how to proceed.
- Project updates – A few planning projects probably will not happen given that the crew is reduced to 2 and winter is approaching soon. Some culverts needed have not been available. Steel has a 4-6 week delay. Storms have been affecting the supply chain.
- FEMA projects – Town needs OCE to get the Ben Roberts project out to bid in order to stay on timeline. A Selectboard member will reach out to OCE to help move things forward.
- Tatro Road – Improvements completed; John noted the work improved visibility and helped with traffic on the road.

Road Crew Interview

Motion: Carin McCarthy made a motion to enter Executive Session at 7:20 for personnel matters and to conduct an interview. Nancy Boss second. **Motion approved unanimously.** Tony Porter and Rebecca Elder were invited into the session.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:10. Eric Cota second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

No action was taken as a result of the ES. The board will accept applications for one more week. A special meeting will be scheduled for interview(s) as needed. Koran will follow up with candidate by Wednesday of next week.

COVID19 Update: No new information that alters the town's current plan for operation.

Admin Updates: none

EV Charging station rates: GMP has increased their rates as of 10/1/21. Eric asked for information about the rates being charged for the EVSE and that the town consider increasing the rate to cover any future repairs and needs. The Energy Committee is looking into this.

MAUSD and future of Robinson

John read aloud the letter that the board drafted to send to the MAUSD board. It outlines the requests from the Town of Starksboro regarding a town wide vote should the repurposing of Robinson school move forward. The letter can be found on the town's website and will be published in the Addison Independent.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the letter to the MAUSD board for distribution. Carin McCarthy second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve payment to Tony Porter for a one-time 80% payout of 60 hours of vacation that he was unable to take prior to end of fiscal year. John Painter second. **Motion approved unanimously.**

Motion to adjourn:

Motion: John Painter moved to adjourn at 8:45 p.m. Eric Cota second.

Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
SB Assistant