

Starksboro Selectboard
Emergency Meeting
Minutes of March 16, 2020
Unapproved

Board members present: Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, Nancy Boss, John Painter
Unable to attend: Greg Hahr
Others present: Charlene Phelps, Rebecca Elder, Tony Porter, Amy McCormick

The meeting was called to order by Chair Koran Cousino at 5:00 p.m.

Changes/additions to agenda:

1. Animal control situation in re: K.Bell/Trombley

Emergency Business and Preparedness

Charlene Phelps, Emergency Management Director, attended to update the Selectboard on the current status of COVID-19 response in Vermont. The schools have been closed. Most towns are closing municipal offices and are determining how to handle essential services without bringing people into the office.

The board discussed town committee meeting schedules and will limit meetings to those that are timely and essential to continuing municipal business during the pandemic.

Koran has participated in several conference calls with the VT League of Cities and Towns regarding guidance for municipal government and compliance with open meeting law standards.

For public open meetings, as State statute requires, there must be one person in the office or public meeting place to conduct the meeting and ensure the platform used will allow for 2-way communication with board members and members of the public being able to hear each other and be heard.

Rebecca and Amy are researching and will determine the best platforms to use for public meetings. Information will be distributed with the meeting agenda so that members of the public will know how they can participate in any essential meetings that will be held.

- Charlene advises closing the office to the public. The towns of Bristol and Hinesburg are closing and handling requests via phone and email.
- There are currently 12 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Vermont.
- Staff will create a system for managing bills to be paid, payroll, and other time-sensitive tasks so that the work can be done remotely as much as possible and limit time needed in the office. Amy and Rebecca propose scanning the incoming bills and the payroll hours, which will be emailed to the Treasurer for processing. Warrants will be produced for Selectboard meetings as usual.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to close the Starksboro municipal office to the public as of 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2020 until further notice due to the current health crisis. Nancy Boss second.

Motion carried.

The Selectboard and Emergency Management Director will be continually monitoring the recommendations from the Vermont Health Department and will make decisions regarding town operations accordingly. Information will be posted to the public via the town website, the town's Facebook page, Front Porch Forum, and physical posting at the 3 posting locations in town. Residents can call the town office for information as well. At least one staff member will be in the office to respond to phone calls, emails, and requests.

Town Committees and Board Meetings:

The Selectboard will convey to all town boards and committees, including the Planning Commission, Development Review Board, Energy Committee, Conservation Committee, and Jerusalem Community Center committee, that **all non-essential meetings should be postponed or cancelled** for the foreseeable future. The Selectboard will continue to meet to ensure town operations flow smoothly and will conduct meetings in a format that will allow for public participate in a safe manner.

Road Foreman Update

The town garage will be closed to the public for now. Road crew will still be working and limiting contact per recommendations of the VT Dept of Health.

FEMA assistance for October 2019 storm update: The initial conference call with the town's assigned FEMA representative will be scheduled for next week. Rebecca and Tony will participate in the call.

Tony will meet with Eric Kallio regarding the proposed site for a mobile telecommunications tower on the former town landfill area. This is exploratory work as the proposal is being developed.

Animal Control update

Koran summarized the current situation regarding at-large dogs at the Bell/Trombley property. The sheriff and State police were called to the location on Monday, March 15, 2020.

Animal Control Officer Chuck Webber has authority in this situation and will issue a warrant for the impoundment of the dogs.

All questions about the legal process will be directed to the town's attorney for response.

Rebecca will prepare the warrant and other documents for Chuck's signature.

Motion to adjourn: Nancy Boss made a motion to adjourn at 6:20 p.m. John Painter second.

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, SB Assistant

Upcoming Selectboard regularly scheduled meetings:

3/24, 4/7, 4/21, 5/5, 5/19

Please watch the town website and posting locations for information about how the public can participate in meetings during this precautionary time related to the COVID-19 pandemic. If you have questions, please call the town office at 453-2639.