

Starksboro Selectboard meeting
May 19, 2020 Minutes
Held via video conference call
Unapproved

Board members present: Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, John Painter
Unable to attend: Greg Hahr
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Celine Coon, Tony Porter, Jennifer Turner

The meeting was opened by Chair Koran Cousino at 5:30 p.m. The meeting was conducted via audio conference call with information provided to the public for the ability to participate. She began by reading the following statement about why the meetings are being held this way:

As Chair of the Starksboro Selectboard, I find that, 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 to this meeting. However, in accordance with the temporary amendments to the Open Meeting Law, I confirm that we are:

- 1. Providing public access to the meeting by telephone conference call, with additional access offered through video conference means for future meetings. We are using GoToMeeting for this remote meeting with ability to access via phone or computer. All members of the Selectboard have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if desired, participate in this meeting by speaking up during the call and being recognized by the Chair;*
- 2. Providing public notice of instructions for accessing the meeting. We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing this meeting, including how to access the meeting using telephone means in our posted meeting agenda. Instructions have also been provided on the town website at: www.starksborovt.org.*
- 3. Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access. If anybody has a problem, please contact Rebecca Elder via phone or text at (802) 917-4425; and*
- 4. Continuing the meeting if necessary. In the event the public is unable to access this meeting, it will be continued to a time and place certain.*

Please note that all votes taken during this meeting that are not unanimous will be done by roll call vote, in accordance with the law.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance of all members participating in the meeting.

Four members of the board were present. Attendees are listed above.

[Review of agenda for additions or adjustments:](#) Animal Control update (Koran)

Road Foreman report

- Tony updated the board on the progress on the FEMA grant reporting for the Halloween storm 2019. He and Rebecca had another call with FEMA during which they asked about the foot bridge damage at Cota field. FEMA may consider funds for this repair and Rebecca will be working on

adding this to the application. Tony said someone repaired the hole in the parking lot at Cota field but he doesn't know who – it was not the road crew.

- Road crew finished the Hillsboro Rd debris removal from the town right-of-way yesterday. The remaining projects are incomplete: Ireland Rd, Shaker Hill, Ben Roberts, and Brown Hill East.
- Otter Creek Engineering is still working on the hydraulic study.
- FEMA asked if we wanted to submit for reimbursement for the time the road crew put in on the Halloween project work. The board discussed the administrative time that would be required to complete the reporting and whether it was worth the time. Based on an estimate of \$3000-5000 in labor during the period, it is worth submitting. Rebecca will confirm with FEMA project rep. the specifics for labor and time reporting.
- The road crew has started the work for the RPC grant to repair Conway Road. An extension was promised and more information is coming in the next day or so.

The **AOT Structures grant** needs a signature. Tony submitted the application to AOT. There were a few changes and the Town will only apply for one bridge repair now. The focus is on the one that is needed most immediately.

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to authorize the Town to pursue a structures grant from the Vermont Agency of Transportation and to allow Eric Cota to sign on behalf of the Selectboard. Nancy Boss second. **Motion carried unanimously.**

NRCS grant: Rebecca noted that a call for bids needs to be written and posted in the local paper. Eric and Tony will help with drafting the bid request language and send to Rebecca.

Community Garden request

Pete Antos-Ketchen and Celina Aiguier presented a graphic of the proposed garden expansion. Celine is the garden manager. Pete's organization, the New Community Project, has 6 of the existing plots. They would use more. There are also additional people **interested** in gardening and asking for more space. They are requesting an additional 23 feet. The expenses would include straw, woodchips, compost and the \$20 site fees cover this. The group would also like to be able to offer a couple of plots at no cost for to reduce the barrier to access. NCP has received some funding related to the pandemic. They are trying to bring in some new people who could benefit from having garden space.

Koran asked about the agreement the town has with the folks who hay the field. Celine stated there is no formal agreement – the Hill Brothers farm does the haying.

Pete said that NCP grew 1000 lbs. of food and donated it last year. John asked how soon the new plots would go in. Pete hopes to get volunteer help from a local farmer with a mounted tiller to prep the field right away. The board suggested Pete stake off the area they plan to till up and have clear markers for the haying time.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the expansion of the community garden as proposed. John Painter second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Emergency Management Updates

The board discussed how to continue town operations given the current State and CDC guidelines.

All selectboard and town commission, board, and committee meetings:

The town shall operate in a socially responsible way and will continue meetings via video/teleconference as they have been doing for the foreseeable future. It is the safest way to proceed and we have the capability. The town office conference is too small to allow for meetings and ensure adequate distancing

and safety precautions in the current situation. ACCD and VLCT have provided guidelines to municipalities to ensure open meeting law requirements are observed.

Driveway Permit request

Tony Porter presented a driveway access permit application from Dwyer Haney who recently purchased land at the intersection of Dan Sargent and Robert Young Roads in South Starksboro (former Hoffman farmland). Applicant proposes single family home that requires a new driveway access and e911 number. Tony has visited the site and requires a culvert to be installed. Specifications for the driveway construction have been provided.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the driveway access permit application from Dwyer Haney for access on Dan Sargent Road and to authorize Eric Cota to sign on behalf of the Selectboard. John Painter second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Eric will sign copy at Tony's desk at the garage tomorrow. A copy will be sent to the town office and to Rebecca for follow up and recording.

Jerusalem Schoolhouse Community Center

Koran briefly described the last conversation and request from the JCCC. A short summary of the project's trajectory was given to bring new board member John Painter up to the current conversation. The committee brought a proposal including architectural plans to the board in the fall of 2019; it was reviewed it at a few meetings, the Planning Commission made the board aware of some zoning issues. These problems were not solved before town meeting and therefore the proposal was not presented to the town for a vote. The Selectboard is struggling with what to do with the proposal and how to move forward. The board recognizes the hard work of the JCCC and thanks the committee members—they did extensive work, research, polling of the community, as well as a updated survey and various historical and structural assessments. This is all information the Town needed regardless of what the final plan is.

Given the state of our economy and what has happened due to the COVID-19 pandemic there are rippling effects on town finances that affect all aspects of town operations. At this time, a \$1M bond would be beyond what we the town can handle. The board will ask the JCCC to think about their next steps. \$25,000 has been spent thus far. The committee requested \$15,000 in additional funds to support a revised architectural plan that would address zoning issues.

Rebecca and Koran will draft a letter to the JCC committee and circulate to the board members for review.

Waste Management provider

Jennifer Turner summarized the information from Moose Rubbish, the current provider. Generally, he has been losing money most of the time. The owner grew up here and was helping out. He is happy to have another business take over.

Jennifer offered to help prepare the application for a grant from the ACSWD for the repairs to the second recycling bin. She will follow up on this for the next meeting if possible. Wade Acker will be taking over and the town will need a contract in place. The Town prefers a one-year contract. Koran will contact Wade and make this proposal to him. The board will make final decision at the next meeting.

School budget vote

Celine updated the board on a recent State Senate proposal that every school district would be required to revote the budget. She spoke with Rep. Caleb Elder and she attended the video committee meeting. The conversation has toned down. There are 19 town that did not get an approved school budget and

there are 5 weeks left to have those voted on. There is a \$174M shortfall projected for the 20-21 fiscal year.

Celine also reported that the Town received a refund check from the school district for \$44,000. The calculations made per pupil and it was wrong for our district.

Telecommunications tower

Rebecca consulted with attorney Jim Carroll regarding the proposal for a telecommunications tower on town-owned land where the former landfill was and is currently leased by Green Lantern Solar for a solar farm. Due to the agreements in place with GLS and the permits required for both solar and the monitoring of the former landfill, the town does not have the resources to pursue this proposal now. Rebecca will contact Eric Kallio with the decision.

Buildings and Maintenance

Town office

- Back-up generator – Eric Cota will follow up tomorrow with Jackmans. He will send an email and let everyone know the schedule.
- Library – There is hot water available only in the kitchen and none in the bathroom for hand-washing. Catherine called Rublee Plumbing for a quote to install a hot water heater. Celine asked if the town get FEMA COVID-19 recovery funds to do this work. Rebecca will ask the FEMA grant coordinator.
- Nancy and John both stated the library should have hot water available for hand washing. The costs should be paid from the library budget. Chris Runcie noted there is a possibility of applying for a Neat Repeats grant as well.

Post office roof quotes

Rebecca presented the board with three quotes for the replacement of the post office roof. The quotes from three local contractors ranged in price from \$5250 to \$7250. Follow-up questions were asked of each contractor to ensure the same work and equivalent quality shingles were quoted. There was consensus among the board members to accept the most competitive price.

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to accept the bid from McElwain Contracting LLC at the quoted price of \$5250. John Painter second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Pottery Studio lease renewal

Celine asked what the status of the lease is for the pottery studio in the old town clerk's building. She stated the new insurance policy binder arrive 3/29/20 but yesterday a notice of cancellation arrived at town office. Koran will contact Judith Bryant and find out what her plans are for the studio. At the least, the last lease ended in February 2020 so a new lease needs to be drafted and signed, and the insurance needs to be reinstated. Update will be provided at the next meeting.

Animal Control update

- Koran updated the board regarding contact she received from Nate Perry regarding the dogs owned by Kenneth Bell. Nancy Boss called Mr. Perry and stated explicitly that all complaints must go through the ACO Chuck Webber.
- The board will consult legal counsel and the sheriff about next steps. There are two separate issues to be addressed. Notice of violation to be updated and kennel contacted.

Selectboard concerns - none

Warrants/Bills

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

Motion carried unanimously.

Minutes of 5/5/20

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to approve the minutes of May 5, 2020 as presented. Nancy Boss second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Motion to adjourn: Eric Cota made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. John Painter second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder
SB Assistant

Next meeting: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 via GoToMeeting