

Starksboro Selectboard meeting
May 5, 2020 Minutes
Held via video conference call
Unapproved

Board members present: Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, Greg Hahr, John Painter
Others present: Rebecca Elder, Cheryl Estey, Celine Coon, Tony Porter, Robert Turner, Aiden DeBaise, Wade Acker

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:

- a) *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. 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;*
- b) *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.*
- c) *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*
- d) *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.

The meeting started with a roll call – all board members were present.

Review of agenda for additions or adjustments:

Conversation about community garden postponed to May 21 meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

Road Foreman's Report

- Grant approved for ACRPC – 14,760 grant with our 20%, can be in cash or in kind
- AOT Structures grant – Delayed due to pandemic; Figures received from Parent Construction for the bridges on Jerusalem Road. They recommend that one bridge can be refurbished (the 2nd one from Route 17); recommend that the 3rd one from Route 17 be replaced with large box culvert. The quoted work is over \$500K. The town must provide 20% matching funds. The bridges are from 1928 with no work in the last 30 years.

- FEMA update – Tony and Rebecca had another call with FEMA last week. This is a possibility the town will qualify for some funds for repairs on Brown Hill East. FEMA wants to process administrative work for projects that are 100% complete. Reporting on the temporary bridge will be submitted first followed by Hinesburg Hollow and States Prison Hollow Extension work projects. Tony will get more information to Rebecca this week re: yardage and GPS coordinates.
- Koran Cousino noted that she was contacted by resident Sheila Knight with questions about the USDA-NRCS grant discussed and approved at the last meeting. Koran responded and noted that the scope of work for the NRCS grant is limited.
- Tony spoke with the board about ongoing rental expenses for an excavator. The town currently contracts out much of the excavating work. The rental would cost \$3500/month (35 hrs/\$100 ea). Nortrax has a lease to purchase opportunity with the first 3 months of payments going 100% toward the cost, then 80% per year. The total lease is just under 15K annually. If we continue renting for the year, the cost is more than half. This is not a brand-new machine (has 900 hrs; originally \$90K machine). Tony asked the board to consider a 7-year lease in their larger fiscal planning. For now, he asked for approval to rent at least for one month at \$3500. The board agreed.

Wade Acker – Trash and recycling proposal

Wade Acker presented a proposal to the Selectboard regarding the trash and recycling services offered in Starksboro. He spoke with Jennifer Turner previously as well. He proposes to use the containers we own, run the truck for \$90/hr, with base of 60 min/trip. He would charge \$135 per pick up per container. Jennifer asked if he would do the garage trash as well. Garage is only 1 pick up per month. Acker has one employee who helps with the trucks. Work would be done by Wade for the roll offs, and might be his employee on Saturdays to sit there for pickup. The Board would like to consider the information and needs to review numbers at the next meeting. The board thanked Wade for his proposal.

Authorization of transfer from “Emergency Fund”

Motion: Eric Cota made a motion to authorize the Treasurer to transfer funds in the amount of \$5712.27 from the Emergency Fund to the General Fund to replace culverts on Big Hollow Road. Greg Hahr second. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Legislative Report, Rep. Caleb Elder

S344 was passed last Friday. Rep. Elder described the legislation and what options are available to towns. Regarding property taxes towns may find it best to make an arrangement, with the possibility of waiving penalties – fees incurred at the town level – and also to adjust the tax rate. The latter has a different implication and depends on the town. Some towns have collected all their taxes, others have final payments in May, etc. Caleb asked if this sounds like a helpful bill for the town. Koran said Amy McCormick and Celine Coon had already been thinking of waiving interest on delinquent taxes and this gives us an avenue to do that. Caleb asked about the current status. Starksboro is in good shape since taxes were paid in November. Staff is planning for bills to be sent by September to ensure most homestead declarations are in.

Emergency Management Updates:

Koran continues to listen to the statewide emergency planning calls each week. The town should continue considering what might be eligible for reimbursement from FEMA and other sources. Celine mentioned that the work done by Emergency Management Director Charlene Phelps is not compensated. She puts in hundreds of hours. Koran said this type of cost was discussed on the VEMS call and any COVID-19 response and essential work done to help prepare the town (i.e. emergency responders to those who are sick, food shelf funding, also anything for sanitizing, PPE, etc.) Cheryl said First Response is paying for PPE currently. That should be looked into for FEMA reimbursement.

VOSHA training is mandatory for employees. All employees have done the online training (except Listers) and certificates are with Cheryl. The Listers would like to come in on Friday to work. Cheryl told Norm they could make it work and will review safety protocols and sanitizing.

Community support: Over 200 handmade masks have been made in town and been distributed. Food shelf donations have been steady. The funds for the food shelf are good for now. The Share-on program has continued to function on Sunday as well.

Cheryl stated the staff has discussed rearranging the front office area, especially for tax time to ensure proper distancing can be maintained. Perhaps plexiglass barrier could be installed over the half-wall area with a sliding mechanism for accepting cash payments and talking with the public. Staff will consider best options for the front area when the office can reopen.

Boy Scout proposal – Town entrance sign restoration

Aiden deBaise of Boy Scout Troop 543 in Bristol was in search of an Eagle project. The troop has offered to refurbish the entrance signs at the north and south of the town on Route 116. Cynthia Kling and Ann Brush have been contacted for potential help with the project. Aiden is seeking approval from the board to proceed with a plan. Koran has been in conversation with Aiden about this. She spoke with landowners and with Cynthia Kling about use of artwork. The scouts plan to replace the signs, add new wood, plant new flowers including perennials. They will work on it in spring. Aiden will get some materials himself and will fundraise to help offset costs. He will come up with a design and come back to show the board before finalizing.

Motion: Greg, John moved to approve the project with the final design being brought back to the board before implementing.

Motion carried unanimously.

Board members encouraged Aiden to engage the community in fundraising to support the project. He will announce it on FPF. John Painter also suggested a small GoFundMe could be an effective tool.

Email addresses and Office 365 licenses for Auditors and DRB members

Motion: Greg Hahr made a motion to approve the purchase of Starksboro email addresses for 9 basic email accounts and 1 premium account for the 3 Auditor positions and the 7 Development Review Board member positions. Eric Cota second.

Motion carried unanimously.

Financial updates

Robert Turner and Celine want to keep up a monthly reporting process for the Board to ensure board members remain up to date on the current budget status and potential areas for concern. A slow start to the fiscal year is anticipated. Celine stated the Roads department is over budget in every category.

Approval of Bills/orders

Motion: John Painter made a motion to approve the warrants for bills/order as presented by the Treasurer. Greg Hahr second. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Minutes of 4/21/20

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the minutes of April 21, 2020 as presented. Eric Cota second. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Motion to adjourn: Eric Cota made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m. John Painter second. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder, SB Assistant