

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

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**Board members present:** Nancy Boss, Eric Cota, Koran Cousino, John Painter, Greg Hahr  
**Others present:** Rebecca Elder, Celine Coon, Tony Porter, Jennifer Turner, Robert Turner, Amy McCormick

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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](http://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.*

All members of the board were present. Other attendees are listed above.

Review of agenda for additions or adjustments: none

### Road Foreman report

Eric and Tony will meet with State stream alteration specialist this week to review the project, select the access points, and discuss work to be done. They will report back to the board after that meeting regarding what work we can do and then the request for bids will be distributed.

- Debris removal at the Hillsboro Road bridge area has been completed. Tony sent photos to Rebecca for documentation in the FEMA portal.

- Shaker Mountain and Ireland Roads – Tony will do this work after July 1.
- Conway Road work will be finished (covered by the ACRPC grant). Only tasks left are to seed and mulch. There will be a site visit next Monday to review the work completed. This grant is \$14,760 to be reimbursed. Tony will submit the request.
- FEMA Halloween storm 2019 update – Cota field footbridge repairs: Rebecca needs a cost estimate from Robert Turner. The entire Cota field area including parking lot and berm damages were included.
- Lewis Creek/Ireland Rd area clean up – On Green Up day, a group of volunteers gathered more than 500 tires from the Lewis Creek clean up. The tires were taken to the town garage. Tony will get price on taking them to the transfer station. The town did not have any extra money budgeted that can cover this clean up. Louis DuPont said the landowner would help cover costs of disposal. Koran will follow up.
- Normal road maintenance is on schedule. The crew will be replacing some culverts as there are some are safety issues that need addressing.
- Tony said the excavator that he rented for a month worked well for the work needed on Conway. He used 40 hours so far, 32 hours was spent on the grant project work.

### Financial Updates

Celine and Robert provided financial updates and reviewed the budget report sent to the board. The group discussed use of “emergency funds” and Greg Hahr asked what these funds are intended for. Koran stated this is an important conversation for the board to have again. The purchasing policy needs to be updated and reconciled with the Article passed by the voters authorizing the emergency fund creation and use. In the past, the fund has been used for a range of things from disaster related road work to unexpected work needed on the town clerk’s building.

Greg asked if the board needs to plan for disasters in a more systematic way? and if so, how? Ben Roberts Road is a good example. The board is thinking about a longer-term view of the roads and considering setting aside an amount each year for the unexpected work, not just emergencies but necessary and not included in the budget for standard maintenance. This conversation is related to the larger board conversation about capital budgeting.

The board briefly discussed administrative work related to the FEMA grant. Eric mentioned that in Bristol, they made a separate account for all things FEMA related, set up similar to a reserve fund. Celine said something similar could be set up in our accounting and items can be recoded. If accounting is coded for events, then there is data to draw on later, allowing the board to look back over the years and see the use of the funds to help determine a more effective strategy for budgeting going forward.

Robert Turner said it would be helpful to have some specific questions from the board about financial priorities and how the auditors can help. What would the board want to see on the regular list of priorities? What are longer term projects to be worked on in advance of active budget planning? How and when will the board discuss the payroll needs of transitioning staff in several roles in the next year? Is the board going to look at the various groups on health insurance and assess the plan(s) offered?

### Waste Management Update

Wade Acker will be taking over the service for Starksboro. He is willing to sign a year contract. Jennifer Turner has researched and drafted an application for a grant to support repairs to the existing recycling roll-off container. If the repairs are done, she estimates it will last another 10 years.

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to submit an ACSWD grant application for repairs to the recycling container in the amount of \$1900 and to authorize Koran Cousino to sign the application on behalf of the board. Greg Hahr second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

- Koran will sign the application and send to Jennifer and Rebecca.
- Koran will talk to Wade Acker about starting in July and will notify Randy about his last day.

### Administrative Updates:

Rebecca provided administrative updates on a few grants and final distributions requests:

- EV charging station – remaining \$2000+/- to be covered by Vermont AOT – request sent.
- PACIF grant – distribution request submitted.
- FEMA – completed roads from the Halloween storm are the next expenses to be submitted. Rebecca and Tony are working on this section now.

A few budget lines may have some remaining funds available for year-end expenses. Pay for boards and commissions will be down since fewer meetings were held during the past 3+ months.

### Selectboard Concerns:

**Online payment system for the town** – John Painter asked the status of research for online and credit card payment processing for town fees. Celine said she has researched options and she is focusing on two to determine the best rates for both the town and the user. The fees will be charged to the user.

### Animal control update

Koran spoke further with Attorney Jim Carroll regarding how the Town can proceed on the complaint from March. The sheriff will deliver the warrant and notice of violation when needed. Jim Carroll and Sheriff Peter Newton will participate in the next meeting to discuss further. Board members agreed a long-term plan and path to resolution is needed. ACO Chuck Webber confirmed that the 3 pit bulls are back in Starksboro and are in the kennel enclosure.

**Motion:** Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the bills and warrants as presented by the Treasurer. Greg Hahr second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

### Minutes of 5/19/20

**Motion:** Eric Cota made a motion to approve the minutes of May 19, 2020 with one correction. Nancy Boss second.

**Motion carried** – E. Cota, N. Boss, J. Painter approved. Greg Hahr abstained. Chair did not vote.

**Motion to adjourn:** Greg Hahr made the motion at 7:55 p.m. Eric Cota second.

**Motion approved unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Elder, SB Assistant

**Next meeting:** June 16, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.