

Starksboro Selectboard meeting
August 4, 2020 Minutes
Held via video conference call
Unapproved

Board members present: Nancy Boss, Koran Cousino, John Painter, Greg Hahr

Unable to attend: Eric Cota

Others present: Rebecca Elder, Celine Coon, Tony Porter, Robert Turner, Amy McCormick, Dennis Casey, Elise Shanbacker, Amy Wright

The meeting was called to order at 5:32 p.m. by Chair Koran Cousino.

The introductory statement regarding open meeting law and how public meetings are being conducted in the Town of Starksboro 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, however the meeting was conducted with public access via internet or telephone with the ability to listen/interact contemporaneously.

Additions to the agenda: none

Road Foreman's Report – Tony Porter

Grant updates

- Conway Road/Hillsboro complete. \$14K should be reimbursed in the next month.
- NRCS-USDA – Tony did walk through with RPC and State official; he is still waiting for the permit from Jaron Borg in order to begin work.
- FEMA – The road crew has completed everything they can complete. The only remaining work is Ben Roberts Road and Brown Hill East bridge replacement. Both will be put out to bid sometime in the early winter. Hydraulic study on Ben Roberts has been sent to FEMA and needs board review. Otter Creek should be sending the other study this week. The board needs to consider if the engineering firm will handle the bidding process as has been done in the past--it makes life easier for staff and then the firm puts it out to bid, comes back with a recommendation for board approval.
- Cota field and bridge - The berm repair work need at Cota rec field could be done in last than half a day. The selectboard needs more information from Louis/LCA. Robert Turner stated that the goal of the southern riparian area was to provide a meander belt and letting the stream go where it needs to go. The easement was written with that in mind. The revised proposed bridge would be longer to avoid adding rip-rap. Koran will follow up with Louis before the next meeting.
- **Excavator rental vs. purchase** – The board discussed the rental lease and option to purchase contract Tony provided. Celine ran some calculations and consulted the band about their current rates. The offer for the lease-to-own is a good deal and the board will consider a motion to purchase.

ACCT/VCHP community grant application proposal

ACCT Exec. Dir. Elise and ACCT consultant Amy Wright participated in the zoom meeting. The board thanked ACCT for revising the proposal and taking into consideration the suggestions and requests from the Town at the last meeting discussion.

John Painter said the revised memo addresses several points and he is hopeful the lines of communication are opening, both between the Town and ACCT and with ACCT MHP residents. Koran expressed the same and noted the need to continue to address resident back taxes and zoning issues.

Koran shared that she spoke with a park resident after the last meeting and heard frustration and complaints about several issues including consistency in ACCT application of rules; and the potential conflict of interest for a resident to serve as a park manager. The town zoning rules apply to everyone and ACCT leases do as well. There are some challenging situations with issues for grandfathered homes that would not be approved in the parks today. This speaks to the quality of life concerns and that everything in the parks impacts neighbors due to close proximity. Elise acknowledged the double bind that ACCT is in, asking tenants to follow rules while there are existing grandfathered violations. ACCT is working on a revised tenant handbook to help with communication and to be clear about tenant responsibilities.

Amy Wright stated ACCT will be surveying park residents to get input. They think having a paid staff person from ACCT visiting the parks regularly, who is being on site and providing direct communication is helping.

Next steps: Town approval to proceed with grant. The Town will see the complete application and have the opportunity for input. The resolution will need to be signed after the public hearing on 9/1/20. The policies were reviewed and Rebecca will discuss further with Amy Wright. Policy approval will be placed on the 9/1/20 agenda. The board did not have concerns with the policy drafts as presented.

The board briefly discussed management of the grant. That doesn't need to be decided tonight, but there is an allowance to pay for grant admin, whether done by Starksboro staff or ACRPC. Elise offered to arrange a call with ACRPC to discuss what they can offer. Amy W. said it is generally easier for Town's to have a separate entity to do it unless in-house capacity exists for grant admin. There are no additional funds available for overhead. Koran and Greg stated it will be a big commitment of time and it should be managed by RPC. Elise said ACCT has a very strong relationship with RPC and it would go well.

Motion: Greg Hahr made the motion to authorize the Addison County Community Trust to proceed with preparation of a VCDP Community Planning Grant for an infrastructural assessment in the mobile home parks in Starksboro. John Painter second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously

Dennis Casey expressed concerns about the grant being managed by an entity other than the Town. It is an opportunity for the Town to have input in an important process that affects a large number of town residents. Amy W. said all the reports can come to the Town just as they would go to the VCDP, so the Town will be involved. They will prepare the grant and leave the administration decision open for now.

Tax Due date extension discussion

Celine reviewed what is permissible by law. The voters approved the due date at Town Meeting and therefore it cannot be extended. However, the delinquent policy date can be adjusted. The town could extend for up to 30 days after the State of Emergency is lifted, whenever that date is announced in the future. The board will make a decision close to the deadline or when the Governor rescinds SOE.

Year-end budget report – Robert Turner and Celine

Celine said that no money has come out of the emergency reserve for FY19-20. Koran stated that Selectboard intended for the emergency funds to be used and the transfer was authorized at a board meeting in a formal motion. The paving of Hinesburg Hollow was a true emergency. Celine will transfer the amount needed to cover the additional paving now. The town also had other expenditures in FY19-20 that will not be reimbursed in the same fiscal year (i.e. FEMA storm event, etc.). She has some receipts that were coded to the emergency fund.

Job descriptions: The board discussed how to review and discuss the JDs together and share edits. John proposed assigning 1-2 policies to each board member and have edits shared with the group prior to the meeting. The board can work on 1-3 JDs per meeting, then circulate a final draft to review and approve as they are completed.

Purchasing policy: The board has a model policy template from VLCT to review and compare to the existing Town policy. Each board member will review and bring comments to the next meeting so they can be compiled in one draft to be circulated for the next discussion.

Post Office lease review

Koran has reviewed the information received by the Town regarding a new lease. It is an 11-year lease and needs legal review. Koran will email the information to the board so all can review. There are likely many changes in the language given the age of the lease. Susan Jefferies may know who reviewed the current lease. Koran will follow up.

Pottery studio lease

Nancy said she has continued to try to reach Judith Bryant without connecting directly. Koran will attempt to speak with Judith in person before the board contacts further via mail.

SB concerns:

The Fire Dept will be hosting their annual family picnic on Sept. 12 and part of the day will be open to the public for a recognition of Jennifer Turner and the newly named Recycling Center in her honor. More information to be shared soon.

Excavator Lease to purchase

Motion: Nancy Boss made a motion to approve the lease to purchase from Nortrax of a Hitachi excavator per the terms presented over 84 months for a total of \$15,890. Greg Hahr second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Warrants for Orders/Bills

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

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes of 7/21/20 – Hold for review at next meeting.

NRCS/USDA EWP 5038 Grant

The updated documents were received for the NRCS/USDA grant allowing town to do the work and signature is needed on final agreement. Grant previously approved by the Selectboard in May 2020.

Motion: Greg Hahr made a motion to authorize Eric Cota to sign the EWP 5038 grant documents as approved. John Painter second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Executive Session

Motion: Greg Hahr made a motion to enter Executive Session per 1 VSA Sec 313(a)(1) re contracts and/or labor relations agreements with employees. Nancy Boss second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Tony Porter and Rebecca Elder were invited into the session.

Motion: John Painter made a motion to exit Executive Session at 8:38 p.m. Nancy Boss second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

No action was taken as a result of the executive session.

Motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.: Greg Hahr, John Painter second.

Vote: Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Elder, SBA