

**Town of Starksboro
Selectboard Meeting minutes
January 23, 2018
UNAPPROVED**

Board members present: Koran Cousino, Susan Jefferies, Keegan Tierney
Rebecca Elder (SB Assistant)

Visitors present: John Miller, John Flanagan, Amy Wild, Robert Turner, Dan Dubenetsky

Meeting called to order at 5:40 by Susan Jefferies.

Adjustment to agenda: Discussion of water/road issues on Mason Hill North.

Residents John Miller, John Flanagan and Amy Wild, who live on the Class 4 portion of Mason Hill N, attended to discuss the recent flooding on the road after the rain/ice/snow of the previous week.

John Miller has lived there for nearly 30 years and long before zoning regulations. Flanagan/Wild moved there 3 years ago (built in 2009).

- The recent storm produced a combined effect and produced a large volume of run off from the field. The water overwhelmed the culverts (one is older metal that is bent and the other is a 1-foot culvert).
- The Town is not responsible for maintenance of Class 4 roads. The Selectboard wanted to hear about the issues on the road and will convey to Road Foreman Tom Estey for further input. For immediate assistance, the Town road crew brought 14 loads of gravel to help repair the road. The neighbors worked together with help from others to spread the gravel and fill the 2-foot-wide, 2-foot-deep trench down the center of the road.
- John, John, and Amy asked if there anything they could preemptively do to improve a Class 4 road to avoid more problems in the future? Should they do something differently?
- They are also thinking about the future and possible impacts to the current Class 4 road. If other people were to begin using that road for seasonal camp use, new construction, etc. there could be more damage to anticipate.
- Questions about fire truck access – John thought the FD had a small truck that could get up there in the winter. No, the truck he was thinking of is a utility vehicle (not full size pumper). Peter noted it is hard to nearly impossible to get up there; don't expect emergency response.
- John: will an association be needed for road? The SB advised talking with other residents who live on Class 4 roads to what solutions they have come up with.
- The SB was asked if a Class 4 road would ever be reclassified to Class 3. While there is a process to request such reclassification (via petition), it is unlikely the Town would do so as it would result in much more class 3 road area to maintain.
- Though there is little possibility for development because the Flanagans and Millers live in the Forest Conservation district, **if** there is access to class 3 road, then you can build in FC district. The only construction that could happen is if there is a parcel that is grandfathered *and* has direct access to a Class 3 road.
- The discussion included various troubleshooting ideas including establishing a homeowners' association for road maintenance, installing more water bars to help divert water in emergencies, etc.

- Unusual weather is more frequent in recent years and homeowners should be prepared to for more dramatic weather.
- Bring this up with Tom and Tony so they are up to speed.

Town Meeting and Town Report

School warning will be included on separate page.

The moderator will inform school board and other parties that each person may speak for 10 minutes. The purpose of the discussion time is to allow for brief summaries and, most importantly, to allow residents to ask questions of the representatives from the school board and school district. Since the school budget will no longer be voted from the floor, the school discussion portion may be held at a different time in the future.

There are still several town positions open and for which there are no candidates running at this time including: Auditor, Planning Commission, Selectboard (2-year term), Cemetary

Article 15 – Fire Department exemption from taxes: Must be voted every 5 years.

Final Budget Updates

- Increase to health insurance – new employee
- Increase to town buildings - \$5K to allow for new cleaning service (to be hired)
- Auditor Robert Turner discussed the rate of pay for the Selectboard members. He researched what other towns pay: some pay by the meeting, some by stipend. Auditors feel the Town should pay at least minimum wage of \$10.50/hr for regular meetings; \$900 for all other duties plus mileage (\$.53/mi)
- Equipment reserve fund notes – Susan noted that equipment is getting much more expensive and the SB needs to anticipate this for future years. (e.g. the one-ton truck cost is now more than the tandem bought recently; there will be tough decisions in the next 5-6 yrs)

Questions/concerns:

The board discussed the gravel pit's life span and how to project future needs for gravel and sand. The Town will need to prepare for the time when the pit's resources have been depleted and new sources are needed for road maintenance. Information needed from Tom Estey to confirm projected life of pit and where additional gravel can be found. Susan said the original plan upon purchase in 1998 was for 37 acres that would produce material for ±37 years. It may be wise for the Town to begin exploring other land to buy for gravel in the future. Robert Turner also pointed out that the Town widened the roads for safety, but this produced more surface area, which increases run off and some culverts are not wide enough. Rule of thumb: lose ¼ inch of gravel per year.

Towns need to have a plan for road improvements by 2018 – Act 64.

- Susan: there is no surplus to carry over; emergency fund nearly depleted for Ben Roberts Rd repairs.
- Garage expenses were going to have be written off to the general fund
- Susan is working through some discrepancies in the garage loan fund and the general fund to ensure expenses have been charges to the appropriate accounts.
- Koran Cousino asked what the average annual increase has been over the last 10 years. The average has been 1-2%, apart from the town garage construction reflected over the last 3 years.
- 1% of the budget is ±\$7000

- The increase of 2% this year reflects expenditures that are needed.
- Town has been fortunate that it has never had to get a short-term loan to cover expenses, even in years with catastrophic events. This is due to the reserve fund, which has been a source for short term capital needs when there is a shortfall.
- Health insurance line item: \$95,000 to cover changes in employees and coverage
- Koran requested clarification about food shelf: Town supports the food shelf by providing physical space, paying utilities, plowing parking lot, and maintaining the building. The appropriation would be on top of this support.

Motion: Peter Marsh moved and Keegan Tierney seconded the **motion to approve the final budget of \$705,735 for the 2018-19 fiscal year.**

Vote: All in favor.

Motion: Keegan Tierney moved and Koran Cousino seconded the **motion to accept and approve the Town Meeting warning as drafted.**

Vote: All in favor

Motion to adjourn: Keegan Tierney moved, Susan Jefferies seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca T. Elder
Selectboard Assistant

Approved X/X/18