TOWN OF STANFORD TOWN BOARD  
TOWN BOARD MINUTES

May 8th, 2025

The Town of Stanford Town Board met for their monthly meeting on Thursday, May 8th, 2025, at the Town Hall at 7:00 PM. Supervisor Wendy Burton called the meeting to order with the Pledge of Allegiance led by William Bray.

Roll call: Wendy Burton – present

Julia Descoteaux – present

Eric Haims - absent

Nathan Lavertue – present

Theodore Secor - present

Also in attendance was Town Attorney Robert Butts.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Supervisor Burton asked to observe a moment of silence in memory of Frank “Buddy” Weber. She hopes to dedicate the meeting to him that will be held in the month of June.

DEDICATIONS: Ed Cerul, Chief of the Stanford Fire Company, was present to give the dedications. Ed thanked the Town Board for inviting him there to speak and stated that he is proud of all the Stanford Fire Company’s members. Ed spoke of Dennis Smith who has actively volunteered for 55 years of service with the Company. Dennis joined in 1970 and held many positions during that time; he is still currently participating in all Fire Company activities today. The second was William (Bill) Bray, he recently returned from an Honor Flight to Washington DC, and he was the first fire company member to participate in the flight; he was a Veteran and former Fire Company member. Bill served in the military from 1958 – 1961. He joined the Fire Company in 1965, and then several years later became an associate member. Last but not least, Dennis Buchal was being recognized for being the “2024 Firefighter of the Year”, with 41 years of active service, and during that time, he was an officer for 26 of those years. Dennis has also held many positions and responded to 57 out of 131 fire calls and 21 of 28 motor vehicle accidents in 2024. These men are all fine examples of public servants, congratulations to you all and we thank them for their service to our country and to our town.

MOTION TO APPROVE AGENDA: Wendy Burton made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Teddy Secor. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

LIAISON REPORTS: (Out of order due to Public Hearing)

Before beginning, Supervisor Burton explained that the Town Board will be changing the way they introduce new local laws. Rather than continuing the current format, they will introduce them to the public and get feedback. Then they can go back and rework them with the Zoning Commission and introduce the Local Law at a Public Hearing. The Supervisor also said that she had been asked questions as to why we need this local law if there is already a State and a County law? A County audit was carried out several years ago with the current Right to Farm Law, and Supervisor Burton stated that we were found not be in compliance with New York State; she then said that there is no way for the State to enforce our law. The new law sets up a local dispute resolution committee that could be available prior to going to Ag & Markets. The law would provide information about Real Estate contracts and the ZBA and Planning Board will have clear guidance as to what is allowed when property is adjacent to a farm. Wendy said unfortunately Tom Angell was unable to be in attendance due to another commitment, but we will consider comments and concerns and then come back to the public with a new and revised iteration of the law next month. The BAR will be holding Grievance Day on May 27 from 1-3 P.M. and 7-9 P.M. Applications can be brought in right up until that day and you can speak to Steve Gotovich by contacting Bobbi in the Assessor’s office to schedule an appointment beforehand with your concerns. The Supervisor put forth a plea to anyone interested in the health of our aquifer and water supply. Julia presented the Water Quality Initiative at last month’s meeting regarding the health of our aquifer and if anyone else is interested, please contact the Town Clerk and let us know of your interest so that we may start moving forward with the project. Lastly, the New York Associations of Towns is seriously working on a workforce development, setting up through B.O.C.E.S and S.U.N.Y, where they would teach courses, micro courses, and help with some retirement reform as well.

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Councilman Teddy Secor reported that the ZBA meeting will be held next month due to the way the calendar fell: the Haunted Fortress met last night and was he unable to attend. They are finalizing scenes, and he will get back to more on that next month. The Climate Smart Community Task Force met, and they still have composting bins available. They are free to town residents if you fill out a form and participate in the program, either live or online. They will be passing them out at the Garden Club’s plant sale which will be held on May 17th. We are still working on submitting our Climate Smart Communities task sheet done by 2026.

Councilman Lavertue stated that he had no report from the Recreation Commission.

Councilwoman Descoteaux spoke of the last CAC meeting on April 16th, where they discussed the composting program on April 29th; there will be another meeting July 29th at the Cornell Cooperative Extension. There was discussion around the County NRI and Janet was able to attend with lots of helpful insights available, this was presented by the Dutchess County Environmental Director himself. The NRI review for Town Board will be held in July with a public update presentation and the community is invited to attend.

Councilman Eric Haims was absent; Wendy covered items at the recent Planning Board meeting: There was a Public Hearing on April 30th regarding the site plan and special use permit appraisal for Ben Rathjen located at 6102 Route 82, for two pole barns for office space and a storage unit for outdoor retail space. The Planning Board will be keeping the public hearing open through May 28th. There is an application for a minor three lot subdivision with the Sisters of Charity located at 177 Sister’s Hill Road, presented by Shawn Morgan. They’ve got to come back before the Board due to an issue with the driveway that will require a variance from the ZBA. Also discussed was a minor subdivision for Winnikee Land Trust to split one lot and add a driveway at 6322 Route 82, with a public hearing also scheduled for May 28th. There was a special use permit and site plan approval for Millbrook School for a 10,372 square foot boys’ dormitory. Lastly, a special use permit for Ryan Dalton for a Physical Therapy office in the lower level of the new old laundromat building office; Jacob Angell will be coming back to the Planning Board on May 28th to continue discussion.

Supervisor Burton stated that as far as her financial report goes, all is well.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR: No one addressed the Board at this time.

Supervisor Burton made a motion to open the Right To Farm Local Law #4 and it was seconded by Julia Descoteaux, a motion carried with all present voting in favor.

PUBLIC HEARING ON RIGHT TO FARM LOCAL LAW #4:

Curtis DeVito – 43 Bowen Road, speaking on behalf of the CAC, we are fully in support of farms and the farmers and how important they are. I have to say the law is pretty dense in researching, that a power point would be helpful. In reviewing, it brings the Town Code into compliance with State Law, which can be overly restrictive on farming operations. It is the view of the CAC that the changes go too far, eliminating special use permits, because it gives Planning and the Community an opportunity to keep abreast and understand the activities and the impacts of natural resources. State law allows and suggests expedited site plan reviews before the Planning Board, farmers may have to hire professionals to assist with putting together the materials needed, bringing information before the Planning Board for a dialogue. The State blesses this process and so does the County. The CAC would like to add expedited site plan reviews to be added to the proposed changes of the zoning code. Mr. DeVito said he does not recall the State having a carve out for buildings of any size. Wendy Burton added that we are looking at site plan approvals for structures in excess of 10,000 square feet and we feel 10,000 square feet is too large of a building and that a site plan review would be needed. We need guidance on what that size should be. Also, the buffer zones that were originally 100 feet, seemed to be a huge burden on the property owner. The Commission has settled on a 50-foot set back, not a buffer zone. A written copy of the CAC’s comments was presented to the Deputy Clerk by Curtis DeVito and will be kept on file.

Jennifer Gardiner – 27 Hunns Lake Road - Had a question, stating that Stanford has rules and regulations before the State. With the given history, has anyone looked at the other towns for solutions as a model. Attorney Butts replied that yes, we have and each seem to have their own solutions.

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Kathy Zehyer – 158 Shelley Hill Road – I am not a farmer, but I come from a long line of farmers since 1940 when my parents bought the property. The law is full of concern and contradictions, ambiguity and errors with the Use Table, and stated it needs total revision. She also mentioned the 50-foot buffer zone will impact the value of property due to restrictions. Ms. Zeyher listed specific examples of problems that would pertain to her land and said provisions were added without valid research and need to be removed. A copy of Kathy Zehyer’s comments was presented to the Deputy Clerk and will be kept on file.

Sten Wilson – 41 Ludlow Woods Road – he asked about the reason for the removal of certain definitions on page 16, why are those being amended or removed? His concern was that when changing rules, regulations and laws, it can cause a ripple effect and chase farmers away due to misinterpretation of the law. Mr. Wilson stated that all farming needs to be supported equally, and that you have to do what’s best for the land and the animals on a case-by-case basis; this could be triggered by the number of animals and the amount of acreage. Julia asked if water was in question where he previously lived and he replied that the water was always a primary concern for farmers.

Mark Burdick – 19 Burdick Way – he stated that there are two different subjects being addressed in this one proposed law: The Right to Farm and Zoning issues. He believes it is too confusing and there should be two separate laws, one for the right to farm and the other for zoning. Mr. Burdick stated that the Right to Farm law should be a very simple document, not 17 pages mixed in with proposed zoning regulations. It is his opinion that the Zoning issues should be covered with a separate law. The Comprehensive Plan lists the recommended actions regarding agriculture. He then proceeds to list numerous comments, along with details and concerns in a lengthy discussion. A copy of Mark Burdick’s comments was presented to the Board, Town Attorney and Deputy Town Clerk, and will be kept on file.

Dennis Wedlick – 43 Bowen Road – Questioned the order/future order of the public hearing meetings. He agrees with Mark Burdick that farming and zoning should be kept separate. Mr. Wedlick asks why the rush to pass these separate zoning changes when you have a Comprehensive Plan? Most importantly, it would be for you to optimize your Planning Board; presenting that the size has nothing to do with the use; that the land use should be separate from the setbacks and the Town should not try to accomplish zoning under the right to farm. Mr. Wedlick suggested that all these quick zoning law changes may be happening too quickly. Supervisor Burton replied that nothing is done quickly at the Zoning Commission meetings.

Curtis DeVito – 43 Bowen Road – It does make sense to keep the two of these things separate. Dutchess County does have a model Right to Farm Law that should have been a starting point. About the buffer zone, I really do not understand that. Should the purchaser/landowner be responsible for paying for that? Is it only for a sub-division or developer?

Mark Burdick – 19 Burdick Way – Asked the Board if the Public Hearing will be kept open. After discussion, Supervisor Burton said that the Public Hearing will be kept open until next month. She then made a motion to close the Public Hearing for now and to go back into the regular meeting. Nathan Laurtue seconded the motion, with all present voting in favor.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. APPOINT AND ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF DCO JUSTIN REILLY: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor to appoint and accept the resignation of DCO Justin Reilly. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

1. APPOINT NEW DCO CINTHIA HAWKS: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor, to appoint a new DCO, Cynthia Hawks. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
2. APPROVE LION’S CLUB FOR USE OF TOWN HALL HILL FOR FLEA MARKET ON JUNE 7th: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor, to approve the Lion’s Club use of Town Hall hill for Flea Market on June 7th. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

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1. APPROVE GARDE CLUB FOR USE OF THE LOWER LOT FOR PLANT SALE ON MAY 17th: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux, to approve the Garden Club use of the Town Hall lower parking lot for their plant sale on May 17th. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
2. ACCEPT STEVE GOTOVICH’S RESIGNATION FROM THE ZONING COMMISSION: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor to accept Steve Gotovich’s resignation from the Zoning Commission. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
3. BID FOR A NEW GATE AT THE TRANSFER STATION: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux to accept the bid from Adams Fencing in the amount of $8,541.00 for the installation of a new gate at the Transfer Station. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
4. RFP FOR MINI SPLIT FOR COMMUNITY ROOM AT TOWN HALL: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, for the installation of a mini split for the Senior Room at Town Hall in the amount of $5,845.00 from Bottini Fuel. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
5. BUDGET RESOLUTIONS 5A, 5B, 5C & 5D:
6. BUDGET RESOLUTION 5D – The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, (out of order) as follows:

**Budget Modification Resolution #5D 2025**

**Whereas** the Town of Stanford has a New York Class Building Reserve Fund dedicated to funding projects for our physical plant, and

**Whereas**, the General Fund will be used to purchase and install a mini-split to replace the one in the Community Room, from Bottini Fuel at of cost of $5,845.00

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Town of Stanford Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to transfer $5,845.00 from the NY Class Building Reserve #NY-01-0010-0006 to. Millbrook General Fund Account #3900018.

Roll call vote as follows: Wendy Burton – Yes, Julia Descoteaux - Yes, Eric Haims – Absent, Nathan Lavertue – Yes, Teddy Secor – Yes. Budget Resolution # 5D adopted and certified this 8th day of May, 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members. *Doreen Brown, Deputy Town Clerk*

BUDGET RESOLUTION 5A – The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, as follows:

**Budget Modification Resolution #5A 2025**

**Whereas** the Town of Stanford has a New York Class Reserve Account dedicated solely to the maintenance of Whitlock Preserve (00-01-001-00070), and

**Whereas** the General Fund will be used to purchase a new picnic table for Whitlock Preserve in the amount of $1073.76,

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Town of Stanford Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to transfer $1073.76 from the Whitlock Preserve Account to the Millbrook General Fund Account #3900018

Roll call vote as follows: Wendy Burton – Yes, Julia Descoteaux - Yes, Eric Haims – Absent, Nathan Lavertue – Yes, Teddy Secor – Yes. Budget Resolution # 5A adopted and certified this 8th day of May, 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members. *Doreen Brown, Deputy Town Clerk*

RESOLUTION 5B – The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, as follows:

**Budget Modification Resolution #5B 2025**

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**Whereas** the Town of Stanford has a New York Class Building Reserve Fund dedicated to funding projects for our physical plant, and

**Whereas** the General Fund will be used to purchase a new fence for the Transfer Station from Adams Fences for the amount of $8,541 including installation,

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Town of Stanford Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to transfer $8,541.00 from the NY Class Building Reserve #NY-01-0010-0006 to Millbrook General Fund Account #3900018.

Roll call vote as follows: Wendy Burton – Yes, Julia Descoteaux - Yes, Eric Haims – Absent, Nathan Lavertue – Yes, Teddy Secor – Yes. Budget Resolution # 5B adopted and certified on this 8th day of May, 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members. *Doreen Brown, Deputy Town Clerk*

BUDGET RESOLUTION 5C – The following resolution was offered by Wendy Burton, seconded by Nathan Lavertue, as follows:

**Budget Modification Resolution #5C 2025**

**Whereas** the Town of Stanford has a New York Class Building Reserve Fund dedicated to funding projects for our physical plant, and

**Whereas** the General Fund will be used to install a heating/cooling split in the new basement from Fox Electronics in the amount of $7,475.00

**Now therefore be it resolved** that the Town of Stanford Town Board authorizes the Town Supervisor to transfer $7,475.00 from the NY Class Building Reserve #NY-01-0010-0006 to Millbrook General Fund Account #3900018.

Roll call vote as follows: Wendy Burton – Yes, Julia Descoteaux - Yes, Eric Haims – Absent, Nathan Lavertue – Yes, Teddy Secor – Yes. Budget Resolution # 5C adopted and certified on this 8th day of May, 2025 by the affirmative votes of the Town of Stanford Town Board members. *Doreen Brown, Deputy Town Clerk*

1. Approval of Minutes: 4/10/25: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor to accept the Minutes of 4/10/25. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.
2. Approval of Abstract #5 for May 2025: A motion was made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Julia Descoteaux to approve Abstract #5 for May. Motion carried with all present voting in favor. General Fund: $ 70,198.87 Check #’s 8405-8471

Highway Fund: $ 24,504.41 Check #’s 4763-4776

Bangall Lights: $ 1,989.50 Check #’s 3084, 3085

Ambulance: $ 62,500.00 Check # 8449

Escrow: $ 4,457.00 Check #’s 1061-1064

1. Other: None
2. Privilege of the Floor: Jane Cottrell – 5951 Route 82, Stating for the record, but wishing she was speaking to those who participated in tonight’s hearing, I found this to be impressive, saying that this is how government is supposed to work, and wished that she was able to say it directly to those people who previously left before the end of the meeting.
3. Executive Session: Motion made by Wendy Burton, seconded by Teddy Secor, to close the meeting and go into Executive Session regarding litigation at 8:45 P.M. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

A motion was made to come out of the Executive Session and return to the monthly meeting at 9:01 P.M. by Wendy Burton and seconded by Nathan Lavertue. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

With no action taken, a motion was made by Wendy Burton and seconded by Nathan Lavertue to adjourn the monthly meeting at 9:02 P.M. Motion carried with all present voting in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Doreen Brown, Deputy Town Clerk