

**Board of Selectmen  
January 18, 2022  
Town Hall  
Veterans Memorial Hall, Sturbridge Town Hall  
308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566**

**Present:**

Mary Blanchard, Chair  
Mary Dowling, Vice Chair  
Selectman Chase Kaitbenski, Clerk  
Selectman Ian Dunnigan  
Selectman Jamie Goodwin

**Staff:**

Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator  
Michelle Garman, Executive Assistant

**Chair Blanchard called meeting to order at 6:30p.m.  
The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.  
Chair Blanchard read the agenda.**

**Public Service Announcements**

Election Monday, January 24, 2022 at the Town Hall from 6:30a.m.-8:00p.m. to vote on the Senior Center.

Every American Citizen can get four (4) free at home COVID tests by going to  
[www.covidtests.gov](http://www.covidtests.gov)

Nomination papers for the Annual Town Election are available and there are several seats open

- One (1) seat for Board of Selectmen for three (3) year term
- One (1) seat for Board of Assessor's for three (3) year term
- Two (2) seats for Sturbridge School Committee for three (3) year term
- One (1) seat for Sturbridge School Committee for one (1) year term
- Two (2) seats for Tantasqua School Committee for three (3) year term
- One (1) seat for Constable for three (3) year term
- One (1) seat for Board of Health for three (3) year term
- Two (2) seats for Zoning Board of Appeals for three (3) year term
- Three (3) seats for Library Trustees for three (3) year term
- One (1) seat for Town Clerk

Important Dates:      January 7, 2022 at 5:00p.m. Nomination papers available  
February 16, 2022 at 5:00p.m. Last day to obtain Nomination papers

February 18, 2022 at 5:00p.m. Last day to submit Nomination papers (for certification)

March 9, 2022 at 5:00p.m. Last day to withdraw or object

April 4, 2022 Last day to post warrant

April 11, 2022 Town Election

### **Public Hearing**

#### **Pole Hearing National Grid**

Connor Reynolds, National Grid Representative, Installation of four (4) JO Poles on South Road and four (4) mid span poles to reduce sag along South Road and meet National Electric Code.

Russ Berry, 3 South Road, Sturbridge, Mr. Berry wants to negotiate with National Grid as to the placement of the poles. Mr. Berry said he does not want a pole in the middle of his driveway.

Connor Reynolds stated he staked all the poles and one will not be in the middle of Mr. Berry's driveway. Mr. Reynolds will give Mr. Berry his telephone number so they can discuss further.

Butch Jackson, DPW Director, wanted to reiterate that they keep the poles, as far off the road as possible this is a narrow road.

#### **Motion: To close public hearing**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

#### **Motion: To approve National Grid installation of four (4) JO Poles on South Road and four (4) midspan poles to reduce sag along South Road with feedback from community and DPW Director**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

### **Building report**

Nelson Burlingame, Building Commissioner, Days Inn started work on the remodel, 6 picker Cold Storage Building Putting up steel frame and 90 Charlton Cold Storage putting up steel frame. Rapscaillon taking over lower level of building to meet the requirement of food service to get liquor license.

Upcoming Commercial projects, D'Erricos Market, Wicked Licks 380 Main Street (the old travel center), J.C.Penney's space divided three areas and Planet Fitness has started to work on their remodel.

### **Police Department Report**

Chief Dessert went over Novembers Operations Report, Sergeant Murray along with officers Giguere and Patterson attended the Coats for Vets event at Gillette Stadium. Officer Tytula attended the Walk-A-Thon at Burgess Elementary School. Several members of the Police Department participated in the Cops & Kids Toy Drive at the Public Safety Complex. Throughout the month, certified department personnel properly installed three (3) child safety seats for town residents.

Chief Dessert went over training for the month of November; Sergeant Murray attended FBI-LEEDA Supervisor Leadership training in Southbridge. Officers Derry and Marderosian attended Crisis Intervention training in Auburn and Sergeant Paine attended Civil Rights Symposium in Randolph.

Sturbridge Police Department was awarded for fiscal year 2022 \$44,430.00 for the Body Worn Cameras grant Program. Chief Dessert stated that the amount awarded is about half of what is needed. He is working on finding other sources to help fully fund this program.

Chief Dessert outlined the co-response program involving Mental Health Clinicians working with the Sturbridge Police Department that will benefit the agencies response to mental health crisis calls and better serve the community. The application is complete and being reviewed by the Department of Mental Health. The Sturbridge Police Department has collaborated with Riverside Community Care to determine the scope of services that will be provided.

The Clinician will be on duty between 11:00a.m. -7:00p.m. Monday -Friday. They will assist the Sturbridge Police with a few of the things listed immediate in person responses to 911 and calls for service, support for crime victims or witnesses; support for residents during next of kin death notifications by police officers. The important piece of this program is that the clinician will be a full-time employee of the Riverside Community Care and not an employee of the Sturbridge Police Department. All benefits and liability insurance will be the responsibility of Riverside Community Care.

Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator, attended a virtual meeting with Chief Dessert. Mr. Reed stated it is an excellent program; it will be a great service to the community. When you are in this program, you are in it the funding will always be there.

Vice Chair Dowling stated, she does not see a down side to this program with all due respect to the Police Department mental illness is as disease and having a representative trained for this is best for the community.

**Motion to Approve: To support Chief Dessert with the co-response program involving Mental Health Clinicians through Riverside Community Care as an agent of the Department of Mental Health for the Sturbridge Police Department**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

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Chair Blanchard asked Chief Dessert on the accident reports sometimes it just has a number and sometimes it just says Main Street

Chief they should always have an address that is either an officer error or dispatcher error

**Fire Department**

Chief Grasso stated the Fire Department finished the year with 2,519 calls, which is a record number for the Department that number averages out to approximately 6.9 calls daily.

This year the Fire Department provided mutual aid 193 times to neighboring communities. Chief Grasso stated the Sturbridge Fire Department had to call for mutual aid 188 times this year, which is an alarming number. That number is attributed to a number of factors one of them being COVID 19 having an impact on the Departments ability to provide a higher level of staffing than what they would like to provide.

Chief Grasso wanted to Congratulate Steve Joyce and his wife on the birth of their daughter.

Vice Chair Dowling asked Chief Grasso are we calling for mutual aid so much due to our staff being out due to COVID 19 or are there more calls where individuals need an ambulance and taken to the Hospital.

Chief Grasso stated it is certainly a staffing issue but COVID 19 has also affected the staffing issues.

Vice Chair Dowling were you responding to a lot of calls where people had to go to the Hospital

Chief Grasso stated much more than last year. Chief Grasso stated last year during the height of the pandemic it seems no one wanted to go the Hospital.

Selectman Dunnigan asked do you feel there has been a steady increase in calls over the last 10 years or do you think this year was just an odd circumstance. Does the Chief think next year the calls will decrease or does the Chief think the department is going to continue to see an increase in calls?

Chief Grasso stated the calls are definitely trending up and he does not see that number decreasing.

**Action Items:**

**Consideration and possible action to accept bid on Riverland Flow Trails Construction**

Robert Reed stated this is a rebid for trails construction. Trails Committee and Facilities stated the low bidder met all the specification of the bid. Mr. Reed stated he would recommend the Board accept the bid of Northern Land Clearing, LLC.

**Motion: To accept bid of Northern Land Clearing, LLC on the Riverland Flow Trails Construction in the amount of \$76,400.00.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on a Hawker and Peddler license for Isaiah Serna**

Mr. Serna did not show up for the meeting we will contact him and invite him back for the next meeting.

**Consideration and possible action on a Hawker and Peddler license for Alex Lozyniak**

Mr. Lozyniak did not show up for the meeting we will contact him and invite him back for the next meeting.

**Consideration and possible action on a Hawker and Peddler license for Chaisariya Peter**

**Sim**

Chaisariva Peter Sim stated he is an outreach representative for Trinity Solar. Mr. Sim stated he will go door to door and ask home owners a few basic questions regarding their energy bills, condition of their roof and credit standing. Mr. Sim stated then a solar professional would contact the homeowner to schedule a time to come back and speak with them. Trinity Solar's company hour are 1p.m. - 7p.m.

**Motion: To the Hawker and Peddler license for Chaisariva Peter Sim between the hours of 1p.m. – 7p.m., mask is required.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the DPW hiring David Kaitbenski and Tom Ramaska, Plow Drivers as temporary winter employees pending pre-employment screening.**

Butch Jackson, DPW Director stated he would like to hire David Kaitbenski and Thomas Ramska as temporary winter employees (plow drivers).

**Motion: To approve the hiring of temporary plow drivers David Kaitbenski and Tom Ramaska**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Goodwin**

**4-0-1 (Selectman Kaitbenski abstained)**

**Consideration and possible action on Complete Streets Funding Program**

Butch Jackson, DPW director advised that they received a grant in the amount of \$383,000.00 to fund the sidewalk construction on Cedar Street.

Selectman Dunnigan ask Mr. Jackson which side of the street would be paved.

Mr. Jackson stated the sidewalks were submitted as asphalt sidewalks but there has been talk about making the sidewalks concrete, which will costs an additional \$51,000.00, which the funds for the additional expense come from Chapter 90 funds.

**Motion: To approve the Complete Streets Funding Program and accept the grant in the amount of \$383,000.00**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

Mr. Jackson stated that they have finished the deigns and are ready to go to bid on the Maple Street Waterline Replacement Project the final engineering costs were \$855,629.00. Mr. Jackson stated they were awarded 1.1 million at the last Town Meeting so we are within budget.

**Motion: To approve the engineers estimated project costs of \$855,629.00 on the Maple Street Waterline Replacement Project**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on selecting a Town Resident to the ARPA Sub-Committee.**

Chair Blanchard read the letters of interests submitted by Diane M. Trapasso and Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin

**Motion: To appoint Diane M. Trapasso and Pareesa Charmchi Goodwin to the ARPA Sub-Committee**

**By: Chair Blanchard**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**  
**All in Favor**  
**5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the resignation of Call Firefighter Jason Edson from the Sturbridge Fire Department**

Chair Blanchard read the letter of resignation from Jason Edson, Call Firefighter

**Motion: To accept the resignation of Jason Edson**  
**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**  
**All in favor**  
**5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the Sturbridge Trails Committee Recreational Trails Master Plan Update**

Mr. Reed stated we would like to board to approve the contract with the Conway School in the amount of \$9,990.00.

**Motion: To approve the January 3, 2022 version of the contract with the Conway School in the amount of \$9,990.00**  
**By: Selectman Goodwin**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**  
**All in favor**  
**5-0-0**

**Old Business:**

**COVID 19**

Mr. Reed stated a meeting was held regarding the purchase of Covid19 at home test kits through CMRCP with a delivery date of the tests for February 15, 2022.

Vice Chair Dowling she continues to support using the ARPA funds. Availability is scarce and she would like to do this for our residents. People have a need to get rapid tests and she feels it is a small thing we can do for our community.

Selectman Kaitbenski said he would agree that one thousand five hundred to two thousand tests being purchased using ARPA funds is appropriate.

Selectman Goodwin said he sees no down side to purchasing the at home test kits.

**Motion: To approve the use of ARPA funds to purchase two thousand (2,000) rapid at home testing kits through the Central Mass Regional Planning Commission at the costs \$5.00 per test with the delivery date being February 15, 2022.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Goodwin**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

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**Mask Mandate**

The Board agreed to extended until February 7, 2022.

**Motion: To extend the mask mandate until February 7, 2022**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Goodwin**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

**Search Committee Interviews**

**Jon Weaver** 16 Hunter Lane, Sturbridge. Mr. Weaver gave a brief description of his municipal government experience. Mr. Weaver has children in the school district here and he and his wife like to be active members of the community.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked what is your overall thought on Sturbridge.

Mr. Weaver stated he would love to see more compressive planning and overall this is home and he is happy here and wants to be active in his community.

**Lisa Beaudin** 49 McGilpin Road, Sturbridge. Ms. Beaudin has lived in Sturbridge for twenty-two years she has worked in the municipality for seventeen of those years. Ms. Beaudin decided about five years ago she wanted to give back to her own town and she started the Farmers Market.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked what is your overall thought on Sturbridge.

Ms. Beaudin stated Sturbridge is a great community. She would like to see things that combine the whole community.

Chair Blanchard asked what is the unique quality you would bring to the search committee.

Ms. Beaudin stated she has worked for a few municipalities and has worked with three different Town Administrators. She has seen what happens when someone doesn't work well with people we need to find a leader that can hear people and work with everyone.

Vice Chair Dowling stated Ms. Beaudin was the brainchild on the farmer's market and is a very hard worker.

**Erik Gasper** 4 Deer Run Circle, Sturbridge. Mr. Gasper stated he feels it is important for us to focus on our local community. Mr. Gasper gave a brief description of the Boards he has worked on. He feels it is important for people of all generations to get involved.

No questions from the board.

**Steve Chidester** 154 Podunk Road, Sturbridge. Mr. Chidester stated he loves Sturbridge and is interested in being on the search committee because he wants to take a more active role in what happens in Sturbridge.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked what is your overall thought on Sturbridge.

Mr. Chidester stated he loves this town he is not opposed to Economic Development and he is currently the Vice Chair on the Conservation Committee. He would like to promote interest in Conversation and Open Space.

**Reed Hillman** is not in attendance. Chair Blanchard gave a synopsis of Mr. Hillman's resume.

**Elisa Krochmalnyckyj** 23 South Shore Drive, Sturbridge. Ms. Krochmalnyckyj stated is a member of the Library Board and she has thought about doing so many things in the Tow. She has worked as a journalist and covered several Town Administrators. She worked at the Sturbridge Times and had an insider's look. She thinks what applies here when looking for a Town Administrator is how important that role is to the Town.

Vice Chair Dowling stated she feels that Ms. Krochmalnyckyj's profession as a journalist gets to the heart of this committee. She thinks that her profession can think of questions that are more creative.

**James Waddick** 56 Bentwood Drive, Sturbridge. Mr. Waddick gave a brief description of his background and that he has been on the Finance Committee for seven years. He has twenty-five years in human service on the Board of Harrington Hospital. He enjoyed being on the previous Town Administrator search committee.

Vice Chair Dowling state Mr. Waddick is a pleasure to work with and a voice of reason.

Mr. Waddick stated he wanted to say thank you for all the support on the community garden.

Selectman Goodwin nominated Steve Chidester, Chair Blanchard nominated Reed Hillman, Vice Chair Dowling nominated Elisa Krochmalnyckyj, Selectman Kaitbenski nominated Jon Weaver and Selectman Dunnigan nominated Erik Gasper.

**Motion: To appoint Steve Chidester to the Town Administrator Search Committee**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2-3-0**

**Motion: To appoint Reed Hillman to the Town Administrator Search Committee**

**By: Chair Blanchard**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: No second**

**Motion: To appoint Elisa Krochmalnyckyj to the Town Administrator Search Committee**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**5-0-0**

**Motion: To appoint Jon Weaver to the Town Administrator Search Committee**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

**5-0-0**

**Motion: To appoint Erik Gasper to the Town Administrator Search Committee**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**3-2-0**

Chair Blanchard stated the previous search committee hired an outside firm and she feels it would behoove the Board of Selectmen if they directed the search committee to hire and outside from this time around.

**Motion: To advise the Town Administrator Search Committee to retain outside vendor to assist with finding appropriate candidates**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard stated when the search committee goes out to hire you will get a better pool of candidates if they the salary rage.

Mr. Reed stated he and Barbara Barry have discussed this and they received some information from the managers association. The salary range Mr. Reed and Ms. Barry discussed was \$160,000.00.

No salary range will be set until after the committee meets and selects the firm.

### **New Business**

Right of first refusal for property located at LOTS B,C, and D Podunk Road consisting of 4.54 acres

Chair Blanchard planning board stated the Planning Board voted not to exercise our right, Open Space Board voted not to exercise our right and Conservation Board voted not to exercise our right.

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Vice Chair Dowling asked do we have to make a decision tonight?

Mr. Reed stated you have one hundred twenty days.

Vice Chair Dowling stated she would like to meet with recreation prior to making any decision on lots B, C and D.

### **Maple Street Waterline Replacement**

Butch Jackson, DPW Director stated they have finished the design and the final number is \$855,629.00. The project is ready to go to bid.

Motion: To approve the project costs of \$855,629.00

By: Selectman Goodwin

2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

5-0-0

### **Correspondence**

No correspondence

### **Approval of Minutes**

January 3, 2022

Motion: To approve minutes of January 3, 2022

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

5-0-0

### **Citizen's Forum**

**Executive Session:** Per M.G.L. c.30A, Sec. 21(2) To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.

**Adjourn:**

**Motion:** To adjourn Public Hearing and enter Executive Session

**By:** Chair Blanchard

**2<sup>nd</sup>:** Selectman Dunnigan

**Selectman Dunnigan – Yes, Selectman Kaitbenski – Yes, Vice Chair Dowling – Yes, Chair Blanchard – Yes, Selectman Goodwin - Yes**

**The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.**

**Minutes prepared by:** Michelle Garman

**Clerk of the Board:** 

**Date signed:**  4/4/22