

**Board of Selectmen
April 4, 2022
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 Jamie Goodwin
Selectman Ian Dunnigan

Staff:

Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator
Michelle Garman, Executive Assistant

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

Moment of Silence

For all those who have suffered from Covid-19 and those suffering at the hands of the Russians.

Chair Blanchard read the agenda.

Public Service Announcements:

Voting is April 11, 2022 at Town Hall from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Chair Blanchard asked to ensure the sign listing election hours was corrected.

Vice Chair Dowling thanked the residents for their support for the past three years and hopes to have their continued support.

Water Main Flushing: The flushing will take place from April 6 until May 20. Customers can call the Water Department at (508) 347-2513 for further assistance.

Public Hearing:

Cracker Barrel Old-Country Store #462 has applied for a new Liquor License for Wine and Malt Beverages at the premises located at 215 Charlton Road, Sturbridge.

Attorney John Meridian and Cracker Barrel manager Corey Rose Scully spoke to the Board regarding the application for a new liquor license for Cracker Barrel, a nationwide chain that is adding beer and wine on its menus. Meridian noted that Sturbridge is Cracker Barrel's first such application in Massachusetts.

The request is for alcohol to be served from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Sunday. All staff and servers will be TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) and ServSafe certified.

Cracker Barrel is requesting that the patio in front of the store be included in the permit, which is important in light of Covid restrictions. Chair Blanchard requested the Board be provided with plans for the outdoor patio. Mr. Meridian requested the Board approve just the indoor portion; Cracker Barrel will plan to come back for an alteration of premise to include the outdoor patio at a later date.

Motion: To Close public hearing

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Motion: To approve the new license application for Cracker Barrel Old Country Store #462 for Wine and Malt Beverage at the premises located at 215 Charlton Road, Sturbridge for the indoor premises only, Monday through Saturday 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. Corey Rose Scully is the manager of license.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

Burgess Elementary School Vice Principal Paul Guerin is requesting \$75,000 in ARPA funds for the reconstruction of four infields at the school. Because custodial resources during Covid were focused on inside the school for students' safety, the outside of the school, including the fields, were not maintained to the usual level and are in disrepair. This will also address some long-term community concerns regarding maintaining the town's fields. Mr. Guerin is planning to have the fields ready for the spring baseball season.

Vice Chair Dowling, a member of the ARPA committee, explained that the ARPA committee thought this was a good use of funds. ARPA is federally funded to offset problems created by Covid, so the \$75,000 will not come from local funds. She noted that if work is done on the outfields in the future, the work being discussed now won't be disrupted. Chair Blanchard is disconcerted that the Burgess fields — the newest fields, said to be top-grade — came into disrepair so quickly. Mr. Guerin said there were problems with some of the products delivered to the field, and that everyone is working together to ensure the fields stay well-maintained.

Selectman Kaitbenski thanked the ARPA committee, as the fields are always busy and a nice resource for the community.

Motion: To approve \$75,000 request from the ARPA Committee toward the Burgess infields.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Vote: 5-0-0

Department Reports:

Building Department

Nelson Burlingame, Building Inspector, reported that in January there were 3 Commercial Permits, 46 residential permits, 10 electrical permits, 5 gas permits, and 15 plumbing permits. In February there were 6 commercial permits, 46 residential permits, 5 electrical permits, 8 gas permits, and 2 plumbing permits.

Mr. Burlingame gave updates on ongoing commercial projects: Days Inn is remodeling and getting their plumbing and electrical inspections done; the Cold Storage at 6 Picker Road has resumed working after stopping for the winter, and are hoping to open the building in July; Cold Storage at 90 Charlton Road is moving forward and hoping to open in early June; Edward's Gas at 40 Main Street is progressing on inside and outside work; "413 on Main," the old Jimmy D's, is almost ready to open; Deep Roots Distillery at 308 Main Street is progressing and working with the Board of Heath; progress at Wicked Licks at 380 Main Street is on hold as they change contractors; D'Errico's is signed off for plumbing and electrical and is ready to bring in equipment; Fabulous Footwear at 110 Charlton Road is redoing the inside of the store; work is progressing on Planet Fitness, the incoming auto-parts store and another space in the old JC Penny building, with Planet Fitness hoping to open in late spring; 2 School Street, the old Rovezzi's building, is being renovated into a 12-unit artisan studios/apartments with parking across the street; and Verizon is redoing its store at 120 Charlton Road.

Completed commercial projects include an insurance brokerage at 198 Charlton Road and an 8-treatment-room dental office on Hall Road; and Rapsallion on Arnold Road, which is open.

The vacant 9 Holland Road is boarded up and secure.

Upcoming commercial projects include Noble Energy at the old truck stop at 150 Charlton Road; Interstate Towing at 201 Charlton Road; also the 150-plus community at 30 Main and 20 Fiske Hill, which just obtained Planning Board approval for the subdivision road and is ready to begin.

Vice Chair Dowling asked about Lucky Mart on Route 131, which Mr. Burlingame said is expected to have the new gas pumps operating in the next two weeks.

Chair Blanchard asked about the house that was torn down next to Blackington building. Mr. Burlingame said the owner built a brand new same-sized two-family house, which solved a lot of problems in the existing building.

Department of Public Works

Butch Jackson, Director of Public Works, explained his report is fairly routine. Brush-cutting has not started, but street sweeping is under way. He noted that the ice rink was busy and open more days than usual this year.

Vice Chair Dowling commended the DPW for the improvement in clearing sidewalks this year.

Action Items:

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of Jane D. Downing to the Open Space Committee.

Motion: To approve the appointment of Jane D. Downing to the Open Space Committee.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on the discussion of the Open Space Committee's possible warrant article.

Open Space Committee members Carol Goodwin and Lynn Peterson spoke about 70 Cedar Street, which comprises 14 acres of town-owned property abutting the Cedar Street Recreation Area. The Open Space Committee has advocated it being preserved as open space. After being approached by neighbors seeking to have the property kept as Open Space, Ms. Goodwin walked the property. Seeing the obvious use and beauty of the trails on the property, Ms. Goodwin realized how nice it is for adjoining neighborhoods, and for water-resource protection, as the wetlands on the property drains into Cedar Lake. Open Space Committee members attended a Recreation Committee meeting, which said it had no active plans for the property. Ms. Goodwin noted that the use of trails in Sturbridge is high, especially during Covid.

Ms. Goodwin asked the Board of Selectmen to consider placing an article on a Town Meeting Warrant asking voters to transfer 70 Cedar Street to the Sturbridge Conservation Committee for resource protection, open space and passive recreation. Ms. Goodwin is aware that she missed the deadline for the Annual Town Meeting warrant, but is hoping to have it added to that or the Special Town Meeting Warrant. Chair Blanchard said the request would be looked into and considered.

Consideration and possible action on the extension of the Employment Agreement between Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator, and the Town of Sturbridge.

The dates on the town's employment agreement with Mr. Reed were based on an outdated Charter that hired him for three month. This action extends the contract three more months, bringing it into compliance with the current Charter.

Motion: To extend the employment agreement between Robert Reed, Interim Town Administrator and the Town of Sturbridge until June 30, 2022.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action to award the contract for the Maple Street Water Line Project.

Butch Jackson explained that engineering estimate for the Maple Street Water Line Project was \$1 million, so \$1.1 million was approved at Town Meeting. After that funding was approved, the town learned that the federal funding for which the town had applied had been granted. The winning bid was \$434,000, much lower than the projected \$1 million, Because of the additional funding and lower costs, Mr. Jackson is asking that Ricciardi Bros. be awarded the bid, and that all the existing funding be used to include the milling and paving portion of the project and to expand the project to include the Jamieson Street loop between Maple Street and Charlton Street, which has been on the department's wish-list for years.

Motion: To approve the bid for Ricciardi Bros., Inc. 14 Putnam Lane, Worcester in the amount \$433,612.97.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of David G. Martell as Deputy Fire Chief.

Flanked by a dozen members the Sturbridge Fire Company in full-dress uniform, Fire Chief John Grasso asked for the appointment to Deputy Fire Chief of David G. Martell, who was chosen from 12 applicants from as far away as Florida. Chief Grasso read from a long list of Mr. Martell's qualifications. Mr. Martell, a Tantasqua graduate from North Brookfield, has over 30 years of experience, a Master's Degree, and experience teaching at the Massachusetts Fire Academy. Mr. Reed, who was part of the hiring process, agrees with the choice.

Motion: To approve the appointment of David G. Martell as Deputy Fire Chief with the Sturbridge Fire Department with an annual salary of \$92,000 with a start date of April 25, 2022.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of Sean Moynagh as Fire Lieutenant.

Chief Grasso explained that Mr. Moynagh has been full-time with the department since 2015, has often served as the role as officer in charge often, holds two associate's degrees, is pursuing his bachelor's in Fire Science, and has various certifications.

Motion: To approve the appointment of Sean Moynagh as Fire Lieutenant with the Sturbridge Fire Department at the starting rate of \$32.21 per hour with a start date of April 4, 2022.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action to accept the resignation of Firefighter David Hoyt effective April 9, 2022.

Mr. Hoyt, with regret, submitted his two-week notice for personal reasons. He thanked the town and department.

Motion: To accept with regret the resignation of Firefighter David Hoyt.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on accepting a donation from "We're All In This Together, Inc." to the Sturbridge Fire Department in the amount of \$66.

Motion: To accept the donation from "We're All In This Together, Inc." to the Sturbridge Fire Department in the amount of \$66 with gratitude

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on an application for special one-day liquor license for Greater Good Imperial Brewing Co. for April 30, 2022 on the Sturbridge Town Common. This would allow Greater Good to sell canned beer from 4:30 to 9 p.m. the day of the Town Bonfire, has been done for the past several years. Two or three ServSave/TIPS-certified servers at the site.

Motion: To approve a special one-day liquor license for Greater Good Imperial Brewing Co. for April 30, 2022 on the Sturbridge Town Common from 4:30 to 9 p.m.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-1 (Vice Chair Dowling abstained)

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of Diane Clark to the Council on Aging.

Ms. Clark comes highly recommended by Senior Center Director Leslie Wong.

Motion: To approve the appointment of Diane Clark to the Council on Aging.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of Patrick Bressette to the Sturbridge Cultural Council.

Mr. Bressette, who grew up in Sturbridge, has returned to town and would like to serve on the Cultural Council.

Motion: To approve the appointment of Patrick Bressette to the Sturbridge Cultural Council

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on hanging the Donate Life Flag for the month of April, which is National Donate life Month.

Chair Blanchard read a Board of Selectman proclamation designating April 2022 as "Donate Life Month" in Sturbridge, urging residents to register as organ and tissue donors. Guest Robin Lataille, who received a donor transplant 12 years ago, confirmed this is the 11th year the town has a dedicated Donate Life Month. Selectman Goodwin spoke of how wonderful the program is. Selectmen will gather and raise the "Donate Life" flag on the Town Common on April 12 at 3 p.m.

Motion: To sign the proclamation designating April 2022 as "Donate Life Month" in Sturbridge.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

Consideration and possible action on the approval for use of ARPA funds as recommended by the ARPA Committee

Facilities Manager Robyn Chrabascz, who along with Vice Chair Dowling serves on the town's ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Committee, reported that the ARPA Committee has met several times over the past few months, and has received the first half of the \$2.8 million of the town's ARPA funds. The second half will be received in the fall. After reviewing requests made in a resident survey and requests submitted by department heads and other sources, the Committee submitted a series of recommendations for the Board of Selectmen's approval. Ms. Chrabascz noted the Committee declined to discuss premium pay and deferred that decision to the Board.

Ms. Chrabascz reviewed each recommendation, starting with \$75,000 for an emergency repair of the screen at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Chair Blanchard noted this is been a known problem for a while, and asked why money from their Fund Balance, or the \$60,000 approved at the last Town Meeting, is not being used. Mr. Reed said the Fund Balance holds less than expected, and the repair of the screen is critical because if the other screen were to break, continuous service would be interrupted. Vice Chair Dowling said the ARPA Committee had many of the same concerns, as Committee members' understanding is ARPA funds are for things not normally funded. The fact that it is an emergency is the only reason the Committee approved it. Vice Chair Dowling noted that all funding recommendations, including this one, were deemed appropriate by the ARPA consultant.

Motion: To approve \$75,000 from the ARPA funds to fund emergency repair of the sewer/screen at the Sturbridge Wastewater Treatment Plan.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

Motion: To approve \$66,500 for the Board of Health to continue to fund a public health nurse, purchase an iPad Pro, and purchase outdoor tents.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Chrabascz explained this includes \$60,000 for a public-health nurse, \$1,500 for an iPad Pro, and \$5,000 for outdoor tents, all of which are Covid-related. The need is no longer contract

tracing, but following up on cases. The Board of Health already spent \$40,000 of the \$60,000 appropriated earlier. This would be in addition to that.

Motion: To approve the \$20,000.00 for the replacement of the tile flooring in rooms in the Town Hall.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-0

This capital project was submitted by Ms. Chrabascz, and would fund replacing the vinyl tile in Town Hall's public-access room, kitchen, copy room, upstairs office and janitor's closet, the decay of which was a result of failure in the flooring material. This will replace the temporary fix of removing the tiles and putting carpet over the floorboards. The issue has become a safety concern.

Motion: To approve \$230,000 to partially fund construction of a parking lot at 501 Main Street, subject to approval at Town Meeting.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 5-0-0

This would cover about half the cost of the parking lot at 501 Main Street, if the project is approved at Town Meeting. Vice Chair Dowling said the Committee believed it was a good use of ARPA funds because residents have voiced concerns over the past year about the cost of the 501 Main Street property. The Committee discussed using more ARPA funds in the fall to offset more of the cost of the parking lot.

If the project is not approved at Town Meeting, this \$230,000 would revert back to available ARPA funds.

Motion: To approve the use of \$50,000 of ARPA funds for the design and cost estimate of the HVAC and Fire Safety system at the Joshua Hyde Library.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

This covers the cost of a design and cost estimate for the HVAC project and, specifically, to determine if fire sprinklers will be required, which would add \$250,000 to the cost of the HVAC

project. The information is time-sensitive, so that the final cost of the project can be determined before Town Meeting.

Old Business:

No old Business

New Business

No New Business

Correspondence

No Correspondence

Approval of Minutes:

March 21, 2022

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 21, 2022 as written.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 5-0-1 (Selectman Kaitbenski abstained)

Citizen's Forum

No citizens wished to speak

Mr. Reed reported:

- The Request for Bids for 8 Brookfield Road is being published in the Central Register;
- There is a meeting on April 5 with representatives from Southbridge regarding sewer and water issues;
- There is a Board of Selectmen meeting on April 12 to review the Warrant;
- The Town Administrator Search Committee will be doing interviews Friday, April 8 and have a meeting set for Monday, April 11 in case more time is needed to finalize the Committee's recommendations. The Board of Selectmen might consider scheduling a meeting later that week to conduct finalist interviews.
- The DPW Director Search Committee is meeting April 5.
- The Town Report is complete, thanks to Michelle Garman, who did an outstanding job.

Adjourn:

Motion: To Adjourn

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Michelle Garman/Elisa Krochmalnyckyj

Clerk of the Board:

Mary Dowl

Date signed:

4-1-2024