

**Board of Selectmen  
September 5, 2018  
Town Hall**

**Present:**

Mary Blanchard, Chairman  
Priscilla Gimás, Vice-Chair  
Mary Dowling, Clerk  
Michael Suprenant  
Chase Kaitbenski  
Leon Gaumond, Town Administrator  
Jeneé Lacy, Admin Assistant

**Also Present:**

Ann Murphy, Principle Assessor  
Paul Murphy, Chairman of the Board of Assessors  
Dale Meehan-McNeil, Secretary of the Board of Assessors.  
Stacy Abdella, Sturbridge Shuttle Tours  
Gregg Abdella, Sturbridge Shuttle Tours  
Nelson Burlingame, Building Inspector  
Chief Tom Ford, Police Chief  
Alexis St. Francis, Police Dispatcher  
Tom Chamberland, Tree Warden  
Jeremy Jalbert, IT Specialist

**Chairman Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.**

**The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Public Service Announcements**

M. Blanchard read the public service announcements from agenda.

- The Chamber of Central Mass South and Baystate Dental Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Invite
  - September 18, 2018 at 8:30 p.m.
  - Location: Baystate Dental of Sturbridge – 100 Charlton Rd. Suite 25 The Center at Hobbs Brook, Sturbridge, MA
- M. Dowling reminded citizens of the upcoming Rick Hoyt Half Marathon on Sunday September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- L. Gaumond read invitation from the Community Food Collaborative regarding a press event on September 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at 8 Maple Street, Sturbridge

**Fiscal Year 2019 Classification Hearing**

Principle Assessor Ann Murphy, Chairman of the Board of Assessors Paul Murphy, and Secretary of the Board of Assessors Dale Meehan-McNeil came forward and presented the Fiscal Year 2019 Tax Classifications for the Town of Sturbridge.

Ann Murphy presented a PowerPoint presentation regarding four different issues that the Assessors would like the Board of Selectman to vote on.

- Selection of a CIP Factor

- Open Space Discount
- Residential Exemption
- Small Commercial Exemption

Ann discussed:

- The differences in tax amounts from FY2018 to FY2019
- What the vote on the CIP Factor would include
- The current vs. proposed tax rate
- Example of the minimum residential factor at work regarding residential property and commercial property
- The impact of a split tax rate
- What the vote on the open space discount would include
- What open space taxation in Sturbridge includes
- An example of open space taxation
- What the vote on the residential discount would include
- What the 35% tax rate impact would be
- An example of the residential 35% exemption
- What the 15% tax rate impact would be
- An example of the residential 15% exemption
- What the difference between the 35% and 15% options are
- What the vote on the small commercial exemption would include
- What kind of businesses would be eligible for the exemption
- What applying the exemption to Sturbridge would look like
- An example of the small business exemption
- The impact of the small commercial exemption

The Board of Assessors recommended that the Board of Selectmen adopt a single tax rate and not to adopt the open space discount, the residential exemption discount, and the small commercial exemption discount.

M. Blanchard asked if there was any discussion from the Board or the general public. No discussion.

**Motion: To close public hearing. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Motion: To adopt a CIP Factor single tax rate of \$19.15. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Motion: Not to adopt the open space discount of 25%. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Motion: Not to adopt the residential exemption discount of 35%. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Motion: Not to adopt the small commercial exemption discount. By: P. Gimas**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**  
**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Concur With the Appointment of Jeremy Jalbert as IT Specialist**

Jeremy Jalbert came forward, L. Gaumond introduced him to the board, explaining his credentials and asked the Board if they would concur with Jeremy's appointment as the new IT Specialist.

**Motion: To concur with the appointment of Jeremy Jalbert to the position of IT Specialist effective September 20, 2018 at an annual rate of pay of \$57,395, Step 2. By: M. Suprenant**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**  
**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Concur with Appointment of Alexis St. Francis as Full Time Police Dispatcher**

Chief Tom Ford came forward with Alexis St. Francis and introduced Alexis to the Board, explaining some of her background and why he is recommending the Board to concur with her appointment to the position of full time Police Dispatcher with a starting pay of \$20/hour for a six month period effective September 6, 2018.

**Motion: To concur with the appointment of Alexis St. Francis to the position of Full-Time Police Dispatcher effective September 6, 2018 at a starting pay of \$20/hour for a six month period. By: M. Suprenant**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**  
**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Public Hearing: Hamilton Rod & Gun Club – Gravel Removal Permit Continuation**

L. Gaumond explained to the Board of Selectman that the Hamilton Rod & Gun Club is not ready for the continuation and he would recommend that the public hearing be continued on September 17, 2018 at 6:35 p.m.

**Motion: To set continuation of the Hamilton Rod & Gun Club Gravel Removal Permit Public Hearing to September 17, 2018 at 6:35 p.m. By: M. Suprenant**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**  
**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Presentation of the Gypsy Moth Dead Tree Project by Tom Chamberland**

Tree Warden, Tom Chamberland, came forward and explained that this year's Gypsy Moth infestation has resulted in a significant number of dead trees and trees that are in need of pruning. The Tree Warden had brought in trained arborists to evaluate the trees in Sturbridge and take an inventory of all trees that had sustained damage from the moth infestation. T. Chamberland indicated that he was having difficulties getting officers for safety detail while working on busy public roads which resulted in cancelled some tree removal days. Members of the Board and T. Chamberland discussed some costs and options regarding police safety detail and certified flaggers.

T. Chamberland gave three budget proposals for the cost of damaged tree removal.

- Proposal 1: Total all costs, all public trees dead and pruned = \$499,345
  - Ask: \$500,000
- Proposal 2: Tree Warden refined estimate all costs, all public trees dead and pruned = \$395,450
  - Ask: \$400,000
- Proposal 3: If National Grid participation, all public Utility trees dead and pruned, all town costs = \$281,050
  - Ask: \$285,000

T. Chamberland stated that he is waiting on a response from National Grid whether or not they are going to provide crews and equipment to take down trees. If National Grid is involved the town would still be responsible for hauling away wood and providing either police detail or flaggers. T. Chamberland mentioned that he is going to try to get this information in time to have an article ready for the town meeting. T. Chamberland also stated that there are issues with some trees that are on private property but hanging over public roads, he was debating if the town should just take care of them since the residents probably would not. M. Dowling asked if any of the private trees may be taken care of by National Grid. T. Chamberland responded that only if they were near utilities. M. Dowling inquired on how much the cost would increase if the town also paid for the removal of overhanging branches on private trees. T. Chamberland stated that it would be an additional 10 days so about \$23,000. C. Kaibenski asked if the town took care of this problem now, when would be the next time this type of maintenance would have to occur. T. Chamberland responded that the Gypsy Moth infestation is considered a natural disaster so this type of maintenance wouldn't have to be done again unless the moths came back and caused the same damage. M. Suprenant asked when the last Gypsy Moth infestation occurred. T. Chamberland responded that it was in the early 80s but doesn't remember how bad the tree mortality was during that infestation.

T. Chamberland discussed a press release regarding the Emerald Ash Borer being found in Sturbridge. He stated that the Emerald Ash Borer was an insect that attacked and killed Ash Trees. T. Chamberland stated that it would take a few years for it to really be a concern for tree health and discussed his three-pronged approach to ridding Sturbridge of the insect. Because of this new infestation development T. Chamberland requested to restart the dormant Tree Warden Advisory Committee, to review options for the insect's removal and to determine what steps the community could take regarding the infestation.

T. Chamberland asked the Board how it felt regarding the town proceeding with the trimming of private trees that overhang public roads. The Board agreed that it was a good idea.

**Motion: To approve the Tree Warden to trim private trees that are overhanging public roads. By: P. Gimás**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Sturbridge Shuttle Tours – Vote to approve Livery License for one vehicle and 2 drivers – Gregg Adbella & Stacy Abdella**

Gregg Adbella and Stacy Abdella came forward, introduced themselves, and gave the Board of Selectman an overview of their business, Sturbridge Shuttle Tours. G. Adbella explained that their shuttle service would run 8 am to 5 pm on Saturdays and Sundays to pick up families from their hotels and either going to Old Sturbridge Village or to the Sturbridge Peddler and Flea Market and then back to their hotels. They were also thinking of adding an orchard package in the fall. The Board pointed out that the application for the Livery License stated they would run on Friday as well and all three days from 8 to 4. G. Adbella requested that it be amended to only Saturday and Sunday from 8 am to 5 pm.

**Motion: To approve Livery License for one car and two drivers, Gregg Abdella and Stacy Abdella, for Sturbridge Shuttle Tours By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

G. Abdella mentioned that the Chief of Police had requested they put the name of their business, Sturbridge Shuttle Tours, on the side of their vehicles and inquired if that would be an issue. The Board referred question to N. Burlingame who stated he didn't think it would be an issue.

**Discussion of Interim Town Administrator Candidates**

L. Gaumond and the Board of Selectman discussed the candidates that applied for the Interim Town Administrator position and who the top five candidates were for each Selectman. The Board decided on three top candidates to interview: Theodore Kozak, Michael Hartman, and Brian Pallaia. It was decided that the interview would take place on Wednesday September 12, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. and that the interview would take around 20 minutes each.

M. Blanchard asked L. Gaumond what a general starting rate of pay would be for an Interim Town Administrator. L. Gaumond responded that he would ask some other towns and formulate an average going rate.

The Board of Selectman also discussed the interview for the Town Administrator Search Committee applicants. The Board discussed that it would be held on Monday September 10, 2018 at 5:00 p.m. and that each individual interview should only take about 10 each. P. Gimas asked if they would also be interviewing the department heads that had applied to be on the committee. M. Dowling, M. Suprenant, and M. Blanchard didn't think they would need to interview the department heads as well. It was decided that P. Gimas and C. Kaitbenski would talk to the department heads independently.

**Town Administrator's Updates**

L. Gaumond announced the Recycling Dividends Program grant of \$6,650 through the Sustainable Materials Recovery Program to the Town of Sturbridge. L. Gaumond thanked the Board of Health.

L. Gaumond asked the Board of Selectman to concur with the appointment of Matt Maselli as a member of the Housing Partnership Committee.

**Motion: To concur with the appointment of Matt Maselli as a member of the Housing Partnership Committee. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond asked the Board of Selectman to concur with the appointment of Richard Volpe as a member of Design Review Committee.

**Motion: To concur with the appointment of Richard Volpe as a member of the Design Review Committee. By: P. Gimás**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond asked the Board of Selectman to concur with the appointment of Amanda Normandin as a member of the Design Review Committee.

**Motion: To concur with the appointment of Amanda Normandin as a member of the Design Review Committee. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond offered to the Board of Selectman that the Town has the desire to apply for some grant monies to update the ADA plan and to make some improvements. L. Gaumond explained that a step the Board could take to make the town more competitive in this process is to formalize our ADA policy and Grievance Procedure. L. Gaumond presented the ADA Policy and Grievance Policy/Procedure and asked the Board to vote to adopt.

**Motion: To approve the ADA Policy and Grievance Policy/Procedure. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond explained to the Board of Selectman that the designer selection law requires municipalities and other local public agencies to adopt written designer selection procedures which the town complied with in February of 2017. L. Gaumond stated that the Commonwealth made improvements to the law by updating the amounts which should be adopted as part of the towns' current policy. L. Gaumond asked the Board to vote to approve amendments made to the Designer Selection Procedure/Policy.

**Motion: To approve the amendments to the Designer Selection Procedure/Policy. By: P. Gimás**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond presented to the Board of Selectman the option to adopt a Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy as part of the towns Green Communities Submission, to assist the town in reducing its energy costs

and fuel consumption. L. Gaumond stated that he reached out to the Police and Fire Chiefs as well as the DPW Director and there are no concerns with the proposed policy. L. Gaumond recommended that the Board of Selectman approve the draft Fuel Efficient Vehicle and Anti-Idle Policies.

M. Suprenant stated that the Miles per gallon for highway travel stated on the policy didn't seem realistic. The Town Administrator stated that these were illustrations of the methodology to calculate MPG amounts. The Board and Town Administrator discussed the clauses in the policy and the placement of signs in the community and teaching citizens about fuel efficiency as enforcement of the policy.

**Motion: To approve the Fuel Efficient Vehicle Policy. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

**Motion: To approve the Anti-Idle Policy. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond presented to the Board of Selectman that the WRTA is seeking a replacement on their Board of Directors due to the departure of the Town Administrator. L. Gaumond suggested that the Board could choose one of their own members to fill the WRTA vacancy until a new permanent Town Administrator is chosen.

M. Dowling asked what the meeting requirements would be. L. Gaumond responded that they hold monthly meetings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 8:00 a.m. at the Union Station WRTA. M. Suprenant stated that he would be interested in filling the temporary WRTA representative spot on the Board of Directors.

**Motion: To agree with the appointment of Mike Suprenant as a temporary representative to the WRTA. By: P. Gimás**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Blanchard**

**Vote: All in favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond presented a request from Nelson Burlingame, the Building Inspector/Zoning Enforcement Officer, to consider a warrant article to bring to the Special Town Meeting this fall for the purpose of funding an additional step.

N. Burlingame came forward and explained his request for a warrant for a step increase. M. Blanchard stated that she thought it was an unusual request and was in poor taste for a position to come forward for an amount increase from the Board and that it was up to the Town Administrator to make step increase decisions and budgeting.

L. Gaumond explained how the step allocation was figured out when N. Burlingame was hired and explained why he made the decision he did in regards to the step increase. When N. Burlingame started his employment in Sturbridge the Step program wasn't yet in place but the Town Administrator at the time had credited him with four years of service at hire for calculating Vacation leave. When the Step program started the Town Administrator based what Step N. Burlingame would be at by comparing his years of employment and salary. If Steps existed when N. Burlingame was employed he would have been at a Step 3 in FY15, Step 4 in FY16, Step 5 in FY17, Step 6 in FY18, and a Step 7 in FY19. Since he technically fell between a Step 8 and Step 9, L.

Gaumond felt it would be fair to put N. Burlingame at a Step 8 especially since there are many employees in Sturbridge who have worked for the Town longer and are not yet at a Step 8. L. Gaumond also mentioned that a town Clerk fought for a step increase at Town Meeting and was successful and that since N. Burlingame feels grievance the Town Administrator doesn't see why N. Burlingame couldn't bring the issue to Town Meeting.

M. Blanchard stated that she thinks bringing this issue to Town Meeting would open the door to other town employees requesting Step increases and that she believes N. Burlingame is at the Step he should be at.

N. Burlingame stated that he believes he only received half a Step instead of a whole Step and that his situation is unique because this type of issue wouldn't normally come up and that he believes he is being penalized.

M. Dowling stated that she was confused how N. Burlingame fell into the middle of Step 8 and Step 9. L. Gaumond responded that going by number of years employed N. Burlingame was technically at a Step 7 but his salary reflected a Step 8.

M. Dowling stated that she believes it is an unusual situation of someone falling between two steps and that she isn't in favor of going back to step 8 if he fell between 8 and 9, she disagreed with M. Blanchard that it would create a domino effect of employees going to Town Meeting for increases.

M. Blanchard reiterated that other employees would disagree with the Steps they are on and it will cause issues down the line.

P. Gimas agreed with M. Dowling, stating that the Board had approved this type of warrant before and that the increase amount in question is only \$3,000 and change. She also stated that the town has gone through four or five different Building Inspectors and they never stay; N. Burlingame is the only one to stay on and has gone above and beyond in his job and that she personally has no issue with a warrant for this issue going to Town Meeting.

M. Blanchard stated that she believes this issue will all work out in the next budget cycle.

M. Dowling stated that she believed what L. Gaumond decided was extremely reasonable but if he had chosen to increase N. Burlingame to a Step 9 that would have been reasonable as well; it could go either way at Town Meeting.

M. Suprenant asked how many hours Nelson was working when he started full time. N. Burlingame answered that he was working 35 hours. M. Suprenant asked he if received an increase at that time. L. Gaumond responded, that N. Burlingame did receive an increase when he went full time.

N. Burlingame stated that he was upset that he ended up with only a half-Step increase and all the other department heads received a full Step.

M. Dowling stated that she thinks they should let the people decide at Town Meeting.

**Motion: To honor the request from Nelson Burlingame to add a warrant article to the Special Town Meeting for a Step increase retroactive to July 1, 2018. By: P. Gimas  
2<sup>nd</sup>: C. Kaitbenski**



**Vote: 4 – 1 (M. Blanchard voted No)**

L. Gaumond recommended that the Board of Selectman set the Special Town Meeting for 7:00 p.m. on October 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion: To set the Special Town Meeting on October 29, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Tantasqua High School Auditorium. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

L. Gaumond provided the Board of Selectman with an update on the Net Metering Credit progress and that it is working well. L. Gaumond provided an update on the goals that he has been working on this year.

### **Old Business**

L. Gaumond presented to the Board of Selectman and updated draft of the 1-Day Liquor License Policy. L. Gaumond explained that at a previous meeting of the Board, the Selectman had asked him to prepare a draft policy. He stated that he had reviewed other town policies and found some good language for the Boards consideration. In regards to tip certification for a 1-day liquor license, MA general law does not require a person to be tip certified but some other communities have the rule in their policies.

P. Gimás requested that the tip certified part of the policy be removed.

**Motion: To approve amended 1-day liquor license policy with tip certification section removed. By: P. Gimás**

**Discussion:** M. Suprenant suggested checking with the towns insurance regarding town property and stated that he is very strongly in favor of requiring tip certification

M. Dowling stated that she agrees with M. Suprenant though she will be voting against regardless.

L. Gaumond stated that events held on town property must be approved by the Board and insurance certificates must be reviewed by the town before event is held.

P. Gimás stated that someone can get insurance without being tip certified and that 1-day licenses are usually for charity events. She doesn't see the need to burden them further with requiring tip certification.

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Blanchard**

**Vote: 3 – 2 (M. Suprenant & M. Dowling voted No)**

P. Gimás stated that the Council on Aging is looking into their guidelines regarding the exercise program and that they will be making a decision by December regarding letting town resident's sign up for classes first. P. Gimás stated that some elderly citizens have come to her upset that they can't get into classes because non-town residents are taking up spots.

M. Blanchard brought up the Heal Community Benefit Agreement from the executive session on 8/20/18.

**Motion: To execute HEAL Community Benefit Agreement. By: M. Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimás**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

### **Correspondence**

M. Dowling read the correspondence to the Board of Selectman

### **Approval of Minutes**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 1, 2016 as amended. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (C. Kaitbenski abstained)**

**Motion: To reopen to change minutes wording. By: M. Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Blanchard**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 1, 2016 as amended. By M. Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (C. Kaitbenski abstained)**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 22, 2016 as amended. By: M. Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: P. Gimas**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (C. Kaitbenski abstained)**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 29, 2016 as amended. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (C. Kaitbenski abstained)**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 17, 2018. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: 4-0-1 (M. Dowling abstained)**

**Motion: To approve Board of Selectman minutes from August 20, 2018 as amended. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Dowling**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

M. Blanchard mentioned that this was L. Gaumond last Board of Selectman's meeting with the Town of Sturbridge. M. Dowling stated that L. Gaumond has been a joy to work with and him leaving is a loss to the Board and to Sturbridge. L. Gaumond thanked the Board and the residents of Sturbridge for the confidence they had in him. M. Dowling stated that many residents have come forward in praise of L. Gaumond. M. Suprenant thanked L. Gaumond for creating a structured environment for the Selectman to handle polices, goals, and objectives.

**Motion: To adjourn at 9:30 p.m. By: P. Gimas**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: M. Suprenant**

**Vote: All in Favor (5-0)**

Adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Jeneé Lacy

Clerk of the Board: Mary Dowley

Date approved: Oct 1 '18