

November 4, 2019

**Board of Selectmen  
November 4, 2019  
Town Hall**

Amended

**Present:**

Mary Blanchard, Chairman  
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman  
Michael Suprenant, Clerk  
Priscilla Gimás  
Chase Kaitbenski

**Staff:**

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator  
Samantha Evans, Administrative Assistant

**Executive Session:** To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, if the chair declares that an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

**Motion: To Move into Executive Session and Return to Open Session By: Chair Blanchard**

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

**Roll Call Vote: Chair Blanchard YES, Vice- Chair Dowling YES, Selectman Suprenant YES, Selectman Gimás ABSENT, Selectman Kaitbenski YES**

**Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30pm**

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

**Chair Blanchard read through the agenda.**

**Public Service Announcements:**

None

**Department Head Updates**

**Town Administrator**

Town Administrator Jeff Bridges brought up Sturbridge Metallurgical. He stated that the Board had talked last meeting about a tax incentive plan. Sturbridge Metallurgical is still working on that, they are gathering more information on their cost. They are working on the state level as well. The process is still ongoing and they are expected to be at a meeting in either December or January.

The town has been working with the marijuana retail applicants. Town Admin. Bridges met with all three applicants November 4<sup>th</sup> to further refine their proposals to the town. By the end of this week the town will have the host community agreements in final form. That will be the retail applicants last and best offer to the town. The agreements will include the provisions the town wants for traffic and security. Town Admin. Bridges asked the Board if they would like to discuss the topic at a regular selectmen meeting or create a night to discuss the host

community agreements. Vice-Chair Dowling supported a separate night but if the agenda is minimal she would prefer to do a regular Board of Selectmen meeting night. Selectman Suprenant agreed they need one evening to focus on this issue. He would not like to have any other major items on the agenda when they sit down to go over this. It is very important to the community and the Board has to focus. Selectman Kaitbenski agreed with Vice-Chair Dowling. Chair Blanchard scheduled the start of the November 18<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen Meeting at 5:30pm. Vice-Chair Dowling shared for those watching the meeting that two members of the Board, herself and Selectman Suprenant toured the facility for Farm253 along with Jeff Bridges and Jean Bubon. Town Admin. Bridges was looking into going to Barre for Caregivers. Town Admin. Bridges, Selectman Kaitbenski, and Vice-Chair Dowling agreed to go Tuesday November 12<sup>th</sup> to Caregivers. Farm253 wants to be in the old Paoletti's building on Route 131. Caregivers is considering the land next door to Friendly's which is currently vacant. Town Admin. Bridges asked if the Board wanted to give each retail applicant a 10 minute presentation time. Vice-Chair Dowling agreed and Selectman Suprenant shared that he was not present last time they discussed this topic and concurred with 10 minutes.

Town Admin. Bridges shared Thursday November 7<sup>th</sup> the Board is going to HEAL for a tour at 5 pm on Route 20. Chair Blanchard asked if there was ribbon cutting. Town Admin. Bridges confirmed that the ribbon cutting is at Optics 20/20 at 4 pm. Town Admin. Bridges sent information to the Board for an event at the Worcester Airport on November 5<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm the Board is invited to attend. Selectman Kaitbenski had a question on Gmail. Town Admin. Bridges answered his question by relaying that First Class is still being used.

**Approval of necessary actions related to the refunding and refinancing of \$2,785,000 General Obligation Bonds**

Town Admin. Bridges said the finance department led by Finance Director Barbara Barry undertook a refunding of \$2,785,000 water system bonds they were USDA General Obligation bonds. There was enough present value savings to go ahead with the refunding. The sale was held last week and the town is going to save roughly \$400,000-\$500,000 over the next 20 years in the cost of the bonds. It went really well the true interest cost was 2.34 for the refunded bonds. Town Admin. Bridges recommended that the motion is passed. Town Admin. Bridges said that at the end of the meeting the Board needed to sign quite a few documents. Chair Blanchard asked if there was a document for the Clerk specifically and Town Admin. Bridges confirmed that.

Town Admin. Bridges said we were hoping to get a triple A rating on the SMP report but not this time. The financial advisor did a great job putting this together. Town Admin. Bridges said that the rating will be worked on for next time.

**Motion: To approve the necessary action to refunding and refinancing the \$2,785,000 General Obligation Bonds By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimás Absent)**

**Transient Vendor License – Sir Barks-A-Lot**

Chair Blanchard said that the license is a request from Suzanne Shaw. Ms. Shaw makes homemade dog treats and this license is for a show at the Sturbridge Host. To be held Saturday November 9<sup>th</sup> at 9am to 4 pm the Police Chief has signed off already. The town application states that a state transient vendor license needs to be attached but the license is for one day so it does not require it.

**Motion: To grant a Transient Vendor License to Sir Barks-A-Lot Suzanne Shaw By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimás Absent)**

**Accept resignation from Eric McLaughlin as Part-Time Dispatcher**

Chair Blanchard said that Eric McLaughlin has moved and obtained a new job. Mr. McLaughlin enjoyed working for the Town of Sturbridge. The Chief of Police accepts the resignation with regret.

**Motion: To accept the resignation with regret By: Selectman Kaibenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

**Accept donation of \$50.00 for Police K9 Unit**

Chair Blanchard shared that a donation was made of \$50 for the K9 Unit from Ellen and Robert Dymon.

**Motion: To accept the donation from Ellen and Robert Dymon in the amount of \$50 for the K9 Unit By: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

**Zoning amendments**

Chair Blanchard shared that the Board received a letter and zoning changes sent by the Town Planner Jean Bubon. In order to have public hearings the Board has to make a motion to pass it back to the Planning Board so they can schedule their public hearings. The changes are contained in chapter 2, 14, 15, and 19. Selectman Suprenant said that it was a little bit early to make the decision. He believed it put a pinch on the time frame when the Planning Board could hold the public hearing. It would have to be after the first Monday in December but before January 8<sup>th</sup>. The limit for the public hearing would be 65 days from now. Town Admin. Bridges said they are looking to get on the special town meeting if we hold it in January. Selectman Suprenant said we do not usually do zoning articles on special town meetings. Chair Blanchard replied that the Board is not restricted. Selectman Suprenant stated that with something this important I would not have this at a special town meeting. Town Admin. Bridges said these are not property specific they are just amendments to the code. These changes do not have an impact on a particular parcel. Selectman Suprenant said he is sure that it is a good idea but usually items of importance like this go to annual town meeting. He stated that he is not in favor of doing it at a special meeting.

Vice-Chair Dowling said that she respects Selectman Suprenant's opinion but does not think the Board should hold things up. If people want to attend the meetings they can attend. For the annual town meetings the amount in attendance does not differ dramatically from our special town meetings. She would be in favor of moving it forward. Selectman Kaibenski said that he is torn because he agrees with Vice-Chair Dowling on one point but was curious if there was any negativity to waiting until the annual town meeting for the Planning Department. Chair Blanchard stated that she does not believe Town Planner Bubon has said anything one way or another. The Planning Department have been working and cleaning things up. They have other zoning items to work on after these. She thinks that not passing the proposed zoning amendment changes would compound what they will be working on and discussing for the annual town meeting. Chair Blanchard compared this situation to the PUBD. She said that it was a great idea but it never flew. Town Admin. Bridges stated that PUBD needed 50 acres and commented on the fact that 50 acres is not easy to find. He went on to express that he is not familiar with Sturbridge history but he believes that if this was site specific it would be put on a town meeting. Selectman Kaibenski agreed if the changes are not site specific then making the motion is fine.

**Motion: To pass the proposed zoning amendments to chapter 2, 14, 15, and 19 on to the planning board By: Vice-Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

**Snow plow bid Contractors for 2019/2020**

Department of Public Works Director Butch Jackson went before the Board and stated that DPW is good on all their plowing this year. They lost a couple of contractors and picked up a couple of contractors. The rates and the names were provided to the Board. Town Admin. Bridges asked Director Jackson if he knew what was in the budget for contractors. Director Jackson said that he thinks they put in \$100,000. Town Admin. Bridges asked if the town supplies salt and fuel. Director Jackson answered that the contractors do not salt for the town. He also stated that they do not provide fuel to the contractors that is already provided in the rate. Selectman Suprenant stated that the money comes out of the snow and ice budget. He also shared if the amount spent goes over more than \$100,000 DPW notifies the Board and they go into deficit spending.

**Motion: To accept the recommendation of the Department of Public Works Director for snow plow contractors for 2019 and 2020 By: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

Chair Blanchard shared that the Board needed to announce to the public the parking ban that is in effect from November 15 – April 1. She stated that the town can notify for the whole season or as a storm occurs. If the town does it for the whole season then nobody can park on the street when it is snowing. Director Jackson stated he was fine to announce by storm.

**Motion: That notification on a per storm basis be given for a parking ban between November 15 and April 1 By: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

Town Admin. Bridges asked who makes that call to notify for the parking ban. Chair Blanchard replied that it has always been if it snows do not park on the street. Director Jackson said they had one incident last year starting from February to December. Town Admin. Bridges stated that something will be put online for the parking ban.

**Approval of usage of Senior Center property on October 3, 2020 for Herbfest**

Salli Greene addressed the board and relayed that they had a very successful Herbfest for their first year. The police officer that was assigned to them had some suggestions for parking. Ms. Greene said that she will be taking those into advisement. She would like to request to use the Senior Center on the same Saturday as before but on October 3, 2020. Selectman Kaitbenski stated it was great to see how crowded it was for Herbfest. Ms. Greene replied that the vendors were happy because they had so much walking traffic. Chair Blanchard shared that she heard a lot of good comments from people who attended.

**Motion: To approve the usage of the Senior Center property for Herbfest to be occurring on October 3, 2020**

**By: Vice-Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

**Accept proposal from GovHR for the Compensation and Classification Study**

Town Admin. Bridges addressed the Board about one of the tasks that were enumerated in his office and reinforced in town meeting. The task was to do a classification study. This came out of the Finance Committee and Personnel Committee. He said that the town has an archaic system to classify employees for salary purposes. There was a

desire to look at this on the administrative assistant segment. This study took on not only classification but compensation. Town Admin. Bridges put out an RFP to do a classification and compensation study for the non-union positions. Both GovHR and Executive Suite responded. Executive Suite was lower in price but GovHR had more experience particularly in MA with conducting and implementing a new classification plan, which is the goal. Town Admin. Bridges is recommending GovHR to do this study and implement a new plan. He did get the additional funding from the Finance Committee last week. There was \$20,000 put in the town meeting the remainder of the budget was needed and the finance committee signed off on it last week. Chair Blanchard asked if it was that unanimous. Jeff said there was one abstention that was from Joni Light because she had voted at the Personnel Committee.

**Motion: To accept the proposal from GovHR for personnel Classification and Compensation Study for an amount not to exceed \$28,250 By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimás Absent)**

**Concur with the appointment of Erik Gasper to the Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee representing the Conservation Commission**

Chair Blanchard said on this topic that the request to appoint Erik Gasper is not necessary. She said it is not the Board who votes they have others that appoint to this committee. She said it is still nice and wanted to tell Erik Gasper that she appreciates him putting forward his application. Town Admin. Bridges said it was ill defined in the bylaw on who goes to Board of Selectmen and who does not. Chair Blanchard said unless specified there are two committees the Lakes Committee and CPC that in the general bylaws it is spelled out who makes appointments. If there is no representative or committee then that appointment would fall to the Town Administrator. The Town Administrator appoints at large only three people. The others are appointed by their own committees.

**Motion: Not Applicable**

**Free Cash Certification**

Chair Blanchard shared that Finance Director Barbara Barry provided the Board the free cash certification and history, and the unexpended funds from last fiscal year. She had a few questions but she will see Finance Director Barry about them. Vice-Chair Dowling said that she hoped the Board would consider increasing the amount they give to tax relief. The Board has the fiscal policy they follow and it gives a range of how much they expect to have in free cash based on the size of their budget. She is in favor of being in the middle. She hopes they consider increasing again. Selectman Suprenant said we have some major capital projects coming up. We should also consider putting money aside so that when the projects happen we can pay for them. Town Admin. Bridges said he looks forward to his first budget process in the Town of Sturbridge. He believes regardless of how much money you think you have you start looking at your opportunities and your needs for spending it does not go as far as you plan. Chair Blanchard asked if we have a list on the veterans work off program. She didn't see them identified in the information provided. Town Admin. Bridges said he would find out.

**Old Business**

Selectman Suprenant asked if at some point the Board could get a schedule for Route 20 for when they are going to be doing a project request. Town Admin. Bridges said that plans were resubmitted to the Department of Transportation, something should come in the next couple of weeks. Both Selectman Suprenant and Town Admin. Bridges shared that they want to get this done.

November 4, 2019

Vice-Chair Dowling wanted to remind residents that the town is still looking for runners for the Veterans Home of the Brave 5K, about 3 miles. There will be veterans services set up on the common after the race. The race is scheduled to begin Saturday November 16<sup>th</sup> at 9am. Residents can sign up on the town website

### **New Business**

Chair Blanchard shared that she was asked to communicate that the Board is invited to the ribbon cutting for the Joshua Hyde Public Library on November 21<sup>st</sup> at 4pm after the renovation.

### **Correspondence**

Chair Blanchard shared that a letter of gratitude was written to the Board of Selectmen expressing how fortunate Sturbridge is to have Sergeant Larry Bateman as a member of the Police Department.

### **Approval of Minutes**

October 23, 2019

**Motion: To Approve the Minutes for October 23, 2019 as Amended By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

### **Citizens forum**

### **Adjourn**

**Motion: To Adjourn at 7:17 pm By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Gimas Absent)**

**Adjourned at 7:17 pm**

**Minutes prepared by: Samantha Evans**

**Clerk of the Board:**



**Date signed:** 12-04-2019