

November 18, 2019

**Board of Selectmen
November 18, 2019
Town Hall**

Amended

Present:

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

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Samantha Evans, Administrative Assistant

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:

Vice-Chair Dowling wanted to thank everyone that participated in the Home of the Brave road race and walk that took place on Saturday November 16 in honor of Sturbridge veterans. She gave a special shout out to Race Director Christine Neslusan as well as Annie Roscioli from the Recreation Department and Kevin Filchak our Tourist Coordinator. They all put in a lot of work along with the Veterans Agent. She thanked all the participants. There were approximately 135 including the Town Administrator and Town Clerk. She wanted to thank the Police Department, Fire Department, and members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT).

Chair Blanchard reminded the public that the ribbon-cutting at the Library would take place on Thursday November 21 at 4pm. The Tree Lighting will be on November 29 the day after Thanksgiving from 6-8pm. The Board wished the towns people a very Happy Thanksgiving.

Department Head Updates

Police

Police Chief Thomas Ford presented this evening the September and October monthly reports. Starting with September Chief Ford covered that the beginning of the school year was relatively normal operational events as well as the training section. Fall months are when the department started to pick up on training as the busyness of the season started to wind down. Usually September and October are a high point of training for the department.

Chief Ford asked the Board if there were any questions on September. Vice-Chair Dowling said that she noticed Sturbridge had fewer OUI arrests by approximately 20% and fewer motor vehicle citations. She inquired if it was because people were being more careful. Chief Ford answered that the numbers fluctuate but it is due to staffing.

When the department hires someone new they take two officers and put them together making them one. So there are not two different people working and initiating their own activity. Due to this the calls for service will go down. Many members of our Police Department are also committed to the military. The department may lose them for weeks and months at a time. That reduces the number of personnel that are working on top of any other shortages the department might have. Chief Ford would attribute the reasoning to the man power shortages. He made it clear that he has not done any type of scientific analysis to determine why but based on his experience he would attribute the shortages to this.

Vice-Chair Dowling said that the answer given by Chief Ford made sense and noted the business and OUI checks are down more than 1,000. Chief Ford shared that Business House Checks are traditionally self-initiated activities. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if the department is going to businesses that request a check. Chief Ford answered that they are but if it is only two people doing them, the department is going to do less on a shift with two officers in comparison to three or four officers. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if the department has refused a business or house check due to the staffing shortage. Chief Ford answered no, everything is recorded as an activity and the numbers can be affected if members are busy with other activities.

Chair Blanchard had a question on the accident reports. Sometimes it just says Main Street on the records provided to the Board. There are no other reference points. She asked if there is normal procedure where officers would put both crossroads for an accident. Chief Ford answered that the Board gets a reduced form of the information. The accidents are more accurately defined in the narrative section. He explained that the information is detailed on the department records put in for records management. In offense reports they are more specific about details on the status reports. He agreed that general location is problematic when the Board views the records but the department has more detailed records.

Selectman Suprenant said that when the crash data is entered into the state database there is a GIS map. He asked if the GIS map does not show them. Chief Ford answered that the reports are generated on the state forms and the state forms contain a lot more information. This is just a status that gives you a quick brief report. He told the Board that they can see on some of the offense reports that those status reports are more specific. Chair Blanchard stated that it would be nice to see the specific information. Chief Ford said that he will look into providing more specific information.

Selectman Kaitbenski made a comment that as a parent at Burgess he appreciated having the police out there every day. In September the department did an awesome job of following the buses. He shared that the crews are out on that dirt lot in front of the entrance and that it was really good to see.

Chief Ford replied with we appreciate that, thank you not only does our SRO work very hard but our day shift personnel do as well. He state that he will pass along the comment made by Selectman Kaitbenski.

Chief Ford then moved the discussion to October. He said that there has been more training operations which is normal, mid-fall activities for the officers, a lot of recertification and specialty training as well.

Chief Ford shared information from a letter that will be going to the Board. He received it November 4th by email. It was a notification that the Town of Sturbridge Hazard Mitigation plan was received and formally approved by FEMA. CMRPC congratulated the town on the approval. Director at MEMA acknowledged that it will be in effect from October 9, 2019 through October 8, 2024.

Chair Blanchard said she noticed on the SRO, September and October started the same way but it wasn't the same problem. The officer may have had places mixed up. Chief Ford agreed that the officer may be going off another report but was not sure.

Chair Blanchard asked Chief Ford how many beards are growing in the Police Department. Chief Ford then shared that it is no shave November. Four or five full beards are growing and all officers are participating in Cops for Kids with Cancer. A non-profit foundation that provides a \$5,000 check to a family with a child who has cancer. He found out about it from a request they received from a parent in town. With a doctor's signature and a letter from the Police Department, the foundation will come out and provide the family a check for \$5,000. The department has received up to \$855 so far this month towards their goal of \$2,500 that they set. There are other Police Departments that are actively involved. The public is welcome to visit the Cops for Kids with Cancer website or the Police Department Facebook page for links to donate. There have been a lot of donations from residents and citizens outside the community.

Building

Building Inspector Nelson Burlingame came before the Board to share the monthly September and October report. He listed the daily operations, building permits, zoning, and residential permits. Then addressed the people watching their TV. Inspector Burlingame has been getting a lot of wood and pellet stoves that he has been flunking upon inspection. He reminded the citizens to be careful. The Building Department had a chimney fire a little while ago. He shared that if the connection chimney is not kept clean, when it burns off it gets really hot. There was one he dealt with recently, a double wall pipe 6 inch had made little bubbles in the pipe. He shared that the woman he dealt with had an old Franklin stove and he did not permit it. She had already bought all the wood she would need. Inspector Burlingame requested that residents go to the Building Department first. The Building Department does not want to fail inspections they want to keep people safe.

Something Inspector Burlingame said he sees frequently is stove pipes. They are required to have an 18 inch clearance from the wall.

For zoning the Building Department usually signs business certificates. On 33 Main Street Inspector Burlingame didn't sign one plus three others. The owner of 33 Main Street is looking for himself and three new businesses in the building. If he does come back in Inspector Burlingame is giving the Board a heads up. The department has received a site plan but the owner has not marked the site plan on the cars. Inspector Burlingame wants to know who has the cars. The owner does not log who has the cars and who is driving them.

For residential permits Inspector Burlingame corrected his current report that states the number three as four new single family homes. New commercial projects, there are five listed in the report.

Inspector Burlingame put specific upcoming commercial properties to keep the Board informed. The department has engineers and different people going into the Blackington Building. They are looking into keeping five apartments up above. Inspector Burlingame said it is probably going to happen, it will keep the building in good shape.

There is a plan to take down the Pilot Travel Center building. They want to make a truck stop and they have a plan for it. Inspector Burlingame covered Dileo Gas which has a few transfers in the storage building in the industrial park. Then Compatible Canine market on Brookfield Road. The people who bought it have thought about putting in a barber shop or an arcade. They are talking about dividing the building in half. The right side would be the barber shop. Inspector Burlingame said 9 Holland Road is on hold, many people have been talking about it. One woman has an antique company she was looking at it at first. There are two problems electricity and sprinklers in the building. Some breweries we were looking at. It has been cleaned up a lot. There were 10 dump trucks that took materials away. They were supposed to go to conservation and they will.

He then shared that Studio Optics 20/20 is open. One of the engineers is working on the bar for the extension to the Thai restaurant. The Old Lincoln House Country Curtains will have a little boutique in it. Vice-Chair Dowling asked

if that would be a retail apparel store. Chair Blanchard said an upscale ladies store. Inspector Burlingame confirmed that information. Chair Blanchard shared that the house was rebuilt and moved from Worcester.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked about the building with the new Panera. She wanted to know if there was any word about what would go in the other building. Inspector Burlingame said that he does not have any interest at the moment for that area because it is half as big as Panera. Selectman Suprenant said that he knows that Five Leaves got an extension. He wanted to know if the units come off of the Substitute Housing Inventory (SHI) or if they got an extension and the town lost those units. Inspector Burlingame share that he did not know but he would find out.

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Jeff Bridges shared with the Board that the Senior Center consultant selection process is nearing an end. He received the pricing from the selected vendor. Facilities Director Robyn Chrabaszcz and Town Admin. Bridges are vetting that and will bring it to the Board for acceptance. Town Admin. Bridges requested to set the date for the Winter Town Meeting on January 27th. The Board and Town Admin. Bridges agreed to put the date request on the next agenda as an action item. He then shared that an RFP of a water and sewer rate study is being finished and will be on the next agenda.

Thursday and Friday Town Admin. Bridges will be attending a Fall Municipals Managers Conference.

The Town Hall sprinkler system sprung a leak the week of November 11. Entailing that a portion of the system is offline until repairs are made. The Town Hall currently has two sprinkler heads that are not working.

Town Admin. Bridges relayed that everyone did a great job for the 5K and he enjoyed it. He also shared that 551 Leadmine Road mobile home is processed for removal. After 30 days if it is not removed the town will get a court order to get it removed.

Town Admin. Bridges said that there has been Interest on 8 Brookfield Road. He requested information on how to go about the process to determine what will be done with the building. Chair Blanchard answered that it will be discussed at executive session. Town Admin. Bridges received a letter about a public improvement plan termination. A public hearing on the closure of the project is scheduled for November 25, 2019 from 6-7pm at Dexter Hall in Charlton. The public notice was published in multiple newspapers.

Concur with hiring of Michael DeHaan for the position of Custodian

Town Admin. Bridges shared the information on the position and the addition of the 18 hours in the current budget. He said that Michael DeHaan would be a good addition to the town staff.

Motion: To concur with the hiring of Michael DeHaan for the position of custodian with a starting wage of 16.75 per hour at 18 hours a week effective immediately. By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Special One Day Liquor License, Bay State Brewing Company, Tree Lighting, Shawn Rich

Chair Blanchard said that on the application it states 5-9pm however the Tree Lighting is 6-8pm. Selectman Kaitbenski said that he has been a big advocate of the One Day Liquor Licenses. He struggled with approving this one because the Tree Lighting is a kid friendly event with so many children. Vice-Chair Dowling said that she hasn't been in favor of alcohol on the Common for liability and other reasons. She always votes not in favor of One Day Liquor Licenses. Selectman Suprenant said that he agreed with Selectman Kaitbenski. He stated that it is

enough that we are lighting the tree, we don't have to let some of the adults get lit. He felt it is not necessary to have beer at this event. Chair Blanchard was in agreement because it is a children's event.

Motion: To deny the One Day Liquor License to Bay State Brewing for the Tree Lighting By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote to set a retreat date in January

Chair Blanchard shared that Town Admin. Bridges is suggesting January 18th to set the retreat date. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if that was the long weekend in January and declined if so because she usually travels. Town Admin. Bridges said that they can do the 25th. Chair Blanchard said that the 25th is the MMA. Eventually the Board agreed upon February 1st as the appropriate date.

Motion: To set the date for the annual Board of Selectmen retreat for February 1, 2020 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Approve request to enter into agreement with Energy Electric Co. Inc. for the Little League Field Lighting Project at \$175,000

Town Admin. Bridges explained the project request that was up for approval. The request was to enter in with the lighting projects lowest bidder. Selectman Suprenant reminisced on his days in little league the rule was if you had school you had to go home after the game. He said that times are changing. Chair Blanchard said that there are a lot more teams. Town Admin. Bridges said the lighting allows two games in one night on the field. Vice-Chair Dowling shared that there is an excitement for kids to play under the lights. Selectman Kaitbenski asked if the lighting would be for the practices or just the games. The Recreation Department shared that it would only be for games.

Motion: To approve the request to enter into an agreement with Energy Electric Co. Inc. for the Little League Field Lighting Project in the contract price of \$175,000 By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vice-Chair Dowling asked if there was a big span of pricing for the project.

Facilities Director Robyn Chrabasz said that the lighting manufacturer may have contributed to price.

Concur with the appointment of volunteer Dane LaBonte for the Community Preservation Committee

Chair Blanchard shared the request for the volunteer position with the term expiring June 30, 2022. Town Admin. Bridges said that Mr. LaBonte had a work commitment and could not make it to the meeting. Then requested a decision on what the Board would like to do. The Selectmen had no reservations and went on with the appointment.

Motion: To concur with appointment of volunteer Dave LaBonte for the Community Preservation Committee By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Accept resignation of Deb Morse as Assistant Treasurer/Collector

Vice-Chair Dowling said that Deb Morse has done a great job and the town will miss her. Chair Blanchard asked Town Admin. Bridges to send a letter thanking her for all her years of service to the town.

Motion: To accept with regret the resignation of Deb Morse as the Assistant Treasurer/Collector effective November 22, 2019 By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Concur with appointment of Sandra Sears as Assistant Treasurer/Collector

Chair Blanchard shared the recommendation to appoint Sandra Sears effectively immediately with a starting wage of \$24.11 per hour. Vice-Chair Dowling said that she thinks Sandra Sears is going to do a great job and it is good to promote from within.

Motion: To concur with appointment of Sandra Sears as the new Assistant Treasurer/Collector effective immediately at the rate of \$24.11 an hour By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Approve letter of support for participation in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program

Chair Blanchard said that the Board has a request to approve a letter for support. Selectman Suprenant said that the letter seems like it is well written.

Motion: To authorize Chair Blanchard to sign the letter of support from the Board of Selectmen stating interest in the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Concur with reappointment of Kathy Zavistosky to the Historical Commission

Chair Blanchard asked if Kathy Zavistosky was missed with the reappointments. Town Admin. Bridges confirmed that it was a possibility.

Motion: To concur with the reappointment of Kathy Zavistosky to the Historical Commission effective immediately By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Old Business

Vice-Chair Dowling shared that she went on a tour with Selectman Suprenant to the Caregivers cultivation facilities in Barre.

New Business

None

Correspondence

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Chair Blanchard read a letter by Cecelia Switzer in regard to the purchase of lot and land by CPC on 365 Main Street. Ms. Switzer shared that they would like to have the property and the mobile home behind the proposed buildings purchased by CPC. CPC proposes to keep the mobile home community and make upgrades to the area. Vice-Chair Dowling said that when she went on the tour the owners reiterated their commitment to leaving the mobile park residence in place. Selectman Suprenant said that he got an email from Ms. Switzer's son that he will submit to the Town Administrator. He said it is essentially what Chair Blanchard read. Chair Blanchard shared that Ms. Switzer is the one who owns the park.

Chair Blanchard received a fiscal plan that explained the transportation and climate initiative. It did not require action from the Board. Chair Blanchard also received a letter from Studio Optics 20/20 thanking the town for the support.

Approval of Minutes

October 7, 2019

Motion: To approve the minutes for October 7, 2019 as amended

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

November 4, 2019

Motion: To approve the minutes for November 4, 2019 as amended

By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Citizen's forum

Paula Patrino from 358 New Boston Road went before the Board about a disturbance on her road. She had previously addressed her situation with the Town Administrator and Building Inspector but nothing had been done. Ms. Patrino claimed that disturbance which she considers gravel preparation started on March 2017. The Sturbridge Police do have phone calls from the whole street on the disturbance. Ms. Patrino prepared a signed petition for the meeting. She stated that she does not want to be in her own home. She stated that a convoy load of trucks ranging from 10 to 18 wheelers were constantly lining up and waiting to get loaded with soil and gravel. She said it is not just site work the land owner is completing. He is running a gravel operation. They start at 6:40am in the morning and the trucks are already lined up.

Ms. Patrino relayed that the individual building the home was made to get permits for lots that he did not originally have in his permits.

Town Admin. Bridges explained that he understood her frustration. He said that there is no limit on the bylaw. Everyone approved it including the Conservation Department and Planning Department.

Selectman Suprenant asked the Town Administrator if there is more than one acre of disturbance. He believes that this is an ANR plan, the storm water regulations apply.

Selectman Kaitbenski was surprised this had been going on since 2017. He asked if there was any evidence of the house, if there was a foundation. Vice-Chair Dowling asked Ms. Patrino if she had pictures that he was on a different lot. She did not think it was right that a neighbor had to enforce a permit.

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Chair Blanchard suggested that everyone go through the process of gathering and sharing information. This would include the citizen, Town Administrator, Building Department, and Planning Department.

Town Admin. Bridges said that he does not disagree with Ms. Patruno on the disturbance but the gentleman has filed and paid. The bylaws exclude his specific permit from the gravel restrictions. He has been working on multiple lots over time. This allows for the exception, the driveway permit was not enough. Vice-Chair Dowling said that if there is a safety concern the town could get the Police Chief involved. Chair Blanchard said that if someone is doing something according to the bylaws they can do it. The best option is to get all the information together. Vice-Chair Dowling said that the trucks are not allowed to park that is a violation.

Ms. Patruno said that Friday evening she called about the tractor trailers being on the road. The gentleman who runs the project went to her door to speak about the situation. She shared that this made her very uncomfortable being confronted and having her information shared. He went to her and wanted to see the petition. Ms. Patruno said that he is using Lane 8 and has cut a new road in, so the tractor trailers can go in and out. She said that he needs to be stopped.

Chair Blanchard reiterated that the town cannot just stop them there has to be a reason. If everyone gets together maybe they can find something to help. Vice-Chair Dowling said if she is accurate it is not just site preparation. She is saying it is gravel removal.

Town Admin. Bridges shared that on the site excavation ordinance an applicant does not have to get a permit. He is preparing for a new structure. The issue now is severity. Chair Blanchard said to be repetitive, if the right people get together and go step by step. The citizen then said that she went to the right people. She was not happy with the result.

Vice-Chair Dowling said that maybe the counsel needs to look at the bylaw and see if it is a loophole. She also shared her concern about safety with the school buses. She thinks the safety would trump the bylaw. Chair Blanchard ended the discussion with the statement that everyone is going to work on it. Then thanked the citizen for coming to the Board to address the situation.

Adjourn

Motion: To Adjourn at 8:04 pm By: Selectman Kaibenski

2nd: Vice-Chair Dowling

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

Adjourned at 8:04 pm

Minutes prepared by: Samantha Evans

Clerk of the Board:



Date signed:

11-02-2020