

January 22, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
January 22, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

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

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

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

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Blanchard read through the agenda.

Public Service Announcements

Chair Blanchard read the press release: The Town of Sturbridge is now accepting applications for the Town of Sturbridge Tax Assistance for Low Income Senior and Disabled Citizens Program. If you would like assistance in paying your Real Estate Tax Bill and you are 65 years or older or have a state recognized disability, and your total gross household income does not exceed \$20,000 if single or \$ 30,000 if married or if others reside in the household you may be eligible. Applications are available at the Sturbridge Town Hall in the Finance Department, at the Sturbridge Senior Center, or online at www.town.sturbridge.ma.us. The deadline to file an application is February 15, 2020.

Chair Blanchard announced the Special Town Meeting date of Monday January 27, 2020, along with a winter outing put on by the Fire Department and the Recreation Department on February 1, 2020.

Presentation – Businesses of the Year – Sturbridge Tourist Association

Kevin Filchack, Economic Development Coordinator, and the Sturbridge Tourist Association came before the Board and explained that this year they had decided to nominate local businesses for recognition into four categories; Shop, Eat, Stay, and Play. Mr. Amedy, chairman

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they look forward to doing it more often. Mr. Amedy acknowledged and presented awards to the following businesses:

Shop- Alternatives for Health; Owner- Salli Greene
Eat- Sturbridge Seafood; Owner- Ken Yukimura
Stay- Comfort Inn and Suites; Owner- Parlin Desai
Play- Escape the Pike; Owner- David and Meghan Jaquith

Mr. Amedy encouraged the Board to reward local businesses in town. Vice Chair Dowling said she thinks this was a great idea, and in addition she was happy to see some funding behind it. She also asked if there was any criteria behind the nomination process and Mr. Amedy responded that since this was their first attempt there wasn't much criteria, but they did advertise and receive nominations for many businesses in town.

Department Head Updates:

Police Department

Lutenient Dessert came before the Board in Chief Ford's absence. He mentioned that he, Chief Ford and Officer Giordano attended the AAA awards ceremony where they received the Gold Award for Traffic Safety. Lutenient Dessert went over events that went on in December such as the Senior Dinner, and a holiday Senior Center breakfast, both events being extremely successful and popular. He stated that the Police Department had gone through routine trainings in both November and December. Lutenient Dessert acknowledged Nicole Patterson, an officer with the Sturbridge Police Department, saying she is in the Army and leaving for Afghanistan soon. He wished her a safe and speedy return. Lutenient Dessert ended his update by telling the Board that accreditation will begin on the morning of Tuesday, January 28, 2020, also stating that he will be coordinating it this year.

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges went over a few things including; The Board of Selectman retreat will take place on Saturday February 1, 2020, the Officer Beniot case has been resolved, and he received the Governors recommended budget for the coming fiscal year.

Grand Trunk Trail Construction – Town's financial contribution

Mr. Bridges informed the Board of the restoration work needed on River and Farquhar Roads. He stated that to help meet the Grand Trunk Trail Project Budget, staff is proposing to take on the road restoration work with local resources, and also apply for another Trail Grant.

Selectwoman Gimás asked if beginning restoration now would put off fixing the bridge on Farquhar Road. Tom Chamberland, trails committee member, explained that it would not affect it, and it would also make the design of the intersection a lot safer. Selectman Suprenant asked where the funds would be coming from if the proposed resources didn't work out. Mr. Bridges

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stated that the plan would be to use local funds first, but depending on the size of the project they may have to come back and ask for funds from other areas.

Motion: To agree that the Town will fund and perform the road restoration work with an estimated cost of \$210,000 as part of the Grand Trunk Trail construction project By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Letter of Intent to apply for economic development incentives – New England Cold. (Sturbridge Technology Park)

Christopher Baily and Jeff Eklund, representatives from New England Cold, came before the board and introduced their proposed project, which is construction of a 3.15 million cubic feet cold storage facility in Sturbridge Technology Park. Mr. Baily explained that Sturbridge is a great location for them, being on the intersection of route 84 and 90. He said although it is early for this conversation, they are applying for Tax Increment Financing with the town, and felt it would be helpful to provide a visual. Mr. Baily informed the Board that this facility will hold groceries before they go to the grocery stores, and there are very few of them in New England. Selectman Suprenant brought up the facility running off of battery and not power. Mr. Baily responded that power loss in grocery stores is a big problem. Mr. Baily also mentioned that the facility would be heavily insulated with a very modern and energy efficient style. Selectman Suprenant asked about how many jobs a facility like this would provide. Mr. Baily said about 18-20 full time job opportunities would come with opening this facility. Vice Chair Dowling asked his projected timeline. Mr. Baily said his plan is to go through the permitting process right away with the department heads, but he would hope to break ground this summer, which would allow for the business to open around the beginning of 2021. Vice Chair Dowling asked if they had their financing in place. Mr. Baily said that they do have investors and they are ready to go, they just have to finalize things, but they will first need the permits before signing off on everything.

Motion: To accept New England Cold's letter of intent to apply for local tax incentives, and to appoint Selectwoman Gimas to serve on the Local Incentive Review Committee for New England Cold's tax incentive application By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Farmers Market – Seasonal Liquor Permit

Kevin Filchack, Economic Development Coordinator, came before the Board and explained that the Sturbridge farmers market is entering its 3rd season, and in an effort to make the process a bit easier for the vendors, the Sturbridge Tourist Association would like the liquor vendors to be able to pay a onetime fee over having to pay \$25.00 per market. Chair Blanchard explained that she had done some research and found that it was only supposed to be \$50.00 for the entire season, and only wine can be sold at a Farmers Market, no liquor or beer. Selectman Kaitbenski stated that the Board should work on a general policy for liquor. Selectwoman Gimas asked how

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the maximum of four liquor vendors would be determined. Mr. Filchack stated that a group of volunteers make those decisions, and they try to be as fair as possible.

Motion: To Adopt a fifty-dollar seasonal fee for wine only sales at the Sturbridge Farmer's Market, with the stipulation that at any given market there be no more than four wine vendors. By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: 4-0-1 (Vice Chair Dowling abstained)

Accept the resignation of Sherry Lamica as a custodian for the Town of Sturbridge

Motion: To accept the resignation of Sherry Lamica as a custodian for the Town of Sturbridge By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Accept resignation of Ed Page as a Police Officer for the Sturbridge Police Department

Motion: To accept the resignation of Ed Page as a Police Officer for the Sturbridge Police Department By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Concur with the appointment of Brian Larson as a Head Mechanic for the Department of Public Works

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works Director, explained that there needs to be a head mechanic working above other employees. He explained that this is not an additional position it's more of a promotion for Brian Larson. Brian Larson came before the board and introduced himself. Selectman Suprenant stated that this position is very important.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Brian Larson as a Head Mechanic for the Department of Public Works By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Old Business

50 Farquhar Road – Appeal of water bill.

The Board re discussed this issue. Chair Blanchard stated that the use of this amount of water at the home may be possible but doesn't seem probable. The Board agreed that with this amount of

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water going through the meter, somebody likely would have heard it. Vice Chair Dowling questioned if the meter could have been read wrong.

**Motion: To not grant the abatement to 50 Farquhar Road By: Selectman Suprenant
2nd: Selectwoman Gimas**

Vote: 3-2 (Chair Blanchard and Vice Chair Dowling opposed)

Review of 2019 Town Administrator's Goals

Chair Blanchard explained that Mr. Bridges is eligible for the merit pay of 2% like other department heads.

The Board discussed department head salary organization and lists that will be provided. Vice Chair Dowling stated that Mr. Bridges has done a very good job taking initiative, and personally thinks he does deserve the 2% merit increase.

Motion: To grant the 2% merit based incentive By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Selectwoman Gimas followed up on an old request to have National Grid answer some questions about power outages that were not weather related. She stated she got other information that National Grid does not cut down trees that have been effected by bugs. Mr. Bridges stated that he has made arrangements for National Grid to attend the Board of Selectman meeting on February 17, 2020.

Selectman Suprenant asked if we were being active on recruiting people for the cable TV Committee. Mr. Bridges stated that we were still recruiting people to build a committee.

New business

Chair Blanchard mentioned she had received complaints about the street lights that are out on route 20, and she stated that she and Mr. Bridges had discussed it and he would be looking into it.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

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KP Law

Invitation to The Leader in Public Sector Law, 6th Annual Hospitality Reception, Friday, January 24, 2020.

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Massachusetts Municipal Association

Annual Business Meeting Agenda Booklet, January 25, 2020.

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The Last Green Valley

Consider sponsoring Walktober 2020

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Office of Consumer Affairs

Sturbridge Auto Sales

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Charter Communications

Upcoming Changes

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Schlesinger and Buchbinder, LLP

Heal, Inc. Community Benefit Agreement Payment

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253 Organic

Transmittal of letters of support for marijuana retail location

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 7:58pm By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 7:58p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board:

 Date signed: 01-27-2020