

January 6, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
January 6, 2020
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

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

None

Permits & Applications

Live Entertainment Permit, Sawdust Coffee House & Dessert Bar, Peter Champagne

Peter Champagne shared that live entertainment is on Friday and Saturday 8:00pm-11:30pm, and Sunday 11:00am to 2:00pm. The application provided to the Board had both the live entertainment hours and hours of operation.

Motion: To approve the live entertainment permit as hours have been stated, Friday and Saturdays from 8:00pm-11:30pm and Sundays 11:00am-2:00pm By: Selectman Gimás

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Change of Manager, Ocean State Job Lot, 178 Main Street, Michael Rodriguez

Selectman Suprenant asked if Michael Rodriguez had ever managed a store that sold alcoholic beverages. Mr. Rodriguez shared that this will be the first time in his career to do so.

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Motion: To approve the change of manager for Ocean State Job Lot By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaibenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Billiard/Pool Table Permit, S and L, LLC d/b/a Old Sturbridge Pizza, 392 Main Street, Sukmit Gurung

Bhupinder Singh came before the Board and shared that Old Sturbridge Pizza will only have one table.

Motion: To approve the Billiard/Pool Table Permit for Old Sturbridge Pizza By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaibenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

The Board inquired about the hours of operation that were provided by the applicant from 11:00am-1:00pm for the Billiard/Pool Permit. Mr. Singh confirmed that the hours would be from 11:00am to 1:00am not 11:00am to 1:00pm.

Motion: To approve amended hours from 11:00am to 1:00am By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Suprenant
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Department Head Updates

Fire Department

Fire Department Chief John Grasso went before the Board. He shared the year end numbers which included 1,975 calls of those 1,311 were emergency medical services related and 664 were fire related. The number of calls showed a slight decrease than the previous year. The nature of the calls seemed to be more difficult and required more time and man power.

Chair Blanchard had a question about the inspections. It seemed to her that John Marinelli seemed to do them all. In the past the Board had more than one individual do them. Chief Grasso shared that John Marinelli is the designated fire inspector. Selectman Gimas agreed with Chair Blanchard that the Board had a mandate that required more than one do inspections. Chief Grasso does agree that it benefits the department to have others do inspections. He did not realize there was a mandate from the Board.

Vice-Chair Dowling inquired on how many times aid was sought. Chief Grasso said the department provided aid 195 times and received aid 61 times in 2019. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if it was a similar number as the previous years. Chief Grasso said it was a little lower this year because mutual aid communities have more staffing.

Selectman Kaibenski commented on the Christmas event for Sturbridge with Santa. He felt it was an awesome event and heard others comment positively as well. Chief Grasso shared that one resident felt it was a waste of tax payer's money. Apparently this event was a long standing tradition and the Fire Department looks forward to doing it next year.

The award letters from the Department of Fire Services for the two grants received in December. The official award letters were provided to the Board.

Selectman Gimas and Vice-Chair Dowling would like some of the pictures posted on the Sturbridge website of Santa.

Town Administrator

Town Administrator Jeff Bridges provided what he had on the agenda for the evening. This included the revised articles for the Special Town Meeting. We updated some of the numbers and behind the numbers will be answers to questions that were asked previously.

On the memorandum is the 2019 Board of Selectmen goals. Chair Blanchard told the Board to be prepared to make a motion on merit pay.

Town Admin. Bridges shared about the water leak at the Senior Center. Most of the flooring has to be removed and replaced as well as work done in the stairwell. The Senior Center will be closed around January 20, 2020 for maintenance. It will be closed for a week.

Selectman Gimas brought up the last water leak that affected the elevator. She was concerned and requested that the elderly get provided information so their needs can be met during the week of the closing. Town Admin. Bridges said he would make those arrangements.

Senator Ann Gobi's office contacted and Sturbridge has been provided money for a Community Compact grant of \$194,000. This will be used to create a fiber optic network between the town and school buildings. Vice-Chair Dowling asked for more information. Town Admin. Bridges said Sturbridge would have better data rates and efficiency overall. The fiber will be owned by Sturbridge.

Move Monday January 20, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting taking place on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to Tuesday January 21, 2020

Selectman Suprenant cannot make January 21, 2020. Selectman Gimas asked if we could change it to Wednesday instead of Tuesday.

Scheduled change of the Board of Selectmen Meeting to Wednesday, January 22, 2020 at 6:30pm

Accept resignation from Sturbridge Police Department Part-Time Dispatcher Alexis St. Francis

Chair Blanchard read the resignation letter provided by Alexis St. Francis. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if Sturbridge is doing exit interviews yet. Town Admin. Bridges said that is not happening at this time.

Motion: To accept the resignation By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaibenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Accept a total of \$200 in gift cards from Studio 20/20 for the Senior Center

Selectman Suprenant said it is nice that a new business in Town is giving to the community.

Motion: To accept the amount of \$200 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Approval of contract with FM Generator, Inc. for maintenance of the standby generator at the Public Safety Complex

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Town Admin. Bridges shared that this is the firm that is currently servicing the generator we just want to extend. Selectman Suprenant asked about the cost of the base contract which states \$1,250 but in the budget it says \$1,000. Town Admin. Bridges said the \$1,250 is for the next 2.5 years total. Enough money was allocated for the budget.

Motion: To approve the contract with FM Generator By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Authorize a fund to be created on behalf of Cecelia Switzer for funds to benefit the Sturbridge Senior Center

Motion: To approve By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Accept Walmart Community Grant in the amount of \$1,500 for the Sturbridge Fire Department

Motion: To approve By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Review of Special Town Meeting warrants

Town Admin. Bridges shared that Article #44 was voted on and Article #45. There were no questions. Article #46 now has an amount of \$15,000 for the design, the lowest response was \$13,000. Grants will be looked into during the process.

Motion: To support Article #46 as written By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Chair Blanchard

Vote: (3-2) (Selectman Suprenant and Selectman Gimas Opposed)

On Article #47 the Board had questions on the value of the home and how affordability is determined. The Assessor Ann Murphy provided the formula used in a document to the Board. The memo by Assessor Murphy talks about how to come up with the value for the home, then provided an example of the possible amounts. Once all the information is in from the purchase and sale the number will go down considerably.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked if a typing mistake was made in the information provided. It is the monthly mortgage amount not the sale price.

Town Admin. Bridges shared the sale price is set so it is no more than 30%.

Vice-Chair Dowling wants to know the formula used and what the sale amount is going to be. She wants a hypothetical. Town Admin. Bridges shared that on page two of the document it tells you how they come up with the affordability factors.

Chair Blanchard said Habitat for Humanity will not set an amount until they work with a specific family.

Town Admin. Bridges believes the Board needs to not take into consideration regular values set. They should take into consideration that Habitat for Humanity does not make a profit.

Vice-Chair Dowling shared that the explanation we got from Jenee was not helpful towards her question.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked what the benefits are of the town having this property.

Chair Blanchard and Vice-Chair Dowling shared that state law requires communities to have 10% of affordable housing. Sturbridge is below what is required for affordable housing.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked if Assessor Murphy could explain more for “the sale price is set at 30%” or rephrase the sentence in the article.

Motion: To place Article #47 By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: (4-1) (Selectman Suprenant Opposed)

Article #48 was completed. Article #49 had a question on leasing a one-page email from the Attorney that says the Board of Selectman may lease a building for up to 30 years without Town Meeting. The article would allow to lease or sell land.

Selectman Gimas asked if the building is leased and the tenant wants to occupy, does Sturbridge have responsibility to keep it up to code. Town Admin. Bridges said that it depends on the arrangement.

Selectman Suprenant thinks that the town acquired this from the Town for a fire station but we leased it after. If we want to sell the property, there may be restrictions on the deed.

Selectman Gimas would venture to say there is not one. A study was done on it and it would have been brought up.

Motion: To place and support Article #49 By: Vice-Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Gimas

Vote: (4-1) (Selectman Suprenant Opposed)

Article #50 is on hold awaiting an appraisal. Article #51, #52, and #53 are completed. Article #54 was voted on but the Board requested a more expansive summary. This summary was provided and the minimum lot size will be one acre. Article #55 was completed. Article #56 has \$100,000 in for the estimated additional funds and the account number was put in the article.

Motion: To place and support Article #56 By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Article #57 and Article #58 are completed. All spelling and grammatical errors were corrected.

Motion: To close warrant for Special Town Meeting By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Old Business

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Water bill appeal for 50 Farquhar Road

Chair Blanchard would like to postpone this and have another discussion with the Department of Public Works Director. It would have impacted the septic tank if the amount of 9,000 gallons was used. With other water bill appeals the Board has found a result and this time there was none.

Selectman Gimas talked about the meter reading. The Board was not in favor in the past because the meter was faulty. This meter was proven to be working, so the water went somewhere.

Chair Blanchard assumes someone would see where the water went and nobody saw proof.

Selectman Gimas talked about how the Board has seen these issues before. She believes the Board is setting a precedent and she is hesitant to do so. Chair Blanchard said this is a case by case basis, it does not set a precedent.

Motion: To give Department of Public Works Director Butch Jackson time to provide an answer By: Chair Blanchard

2nd: Vice-Chair Dowling

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read the correspondence.

A. Charter Communications

December 10, 2019

B. Department of Environmental Protection

December 18, 2019

C. Notice of Community Outreach Meeting January 7, 2020 at 6:00pm, Heal Sturbridge, Inc.

December 23, 2019

D. Heal, Inc., Petition of Heal, Sturbridge, Inc./660 Main Street

December 23, 2019

E. MIIA- Report of the Nominating Committees

December 23, 2019

Selectman Suprenant shared that there are two new nominees. There was also a request if the Board wanted to nominate anyone else.

Approval of Minutes

December 16, 2019

Motion: To approve the Minutes for December 16, 2019 as amended By: Selectman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourn

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Motion: To adjourn at 7:46 p.m. By: Selectman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Samantha Evans

Clerk of the Board: Michael Suprenant

Date signed: 02-18-2020