

June 1, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
June 1, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman
Selectman Suprenant
Priscilla Gimás
Selectman Kaitbenski

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:33pm

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Blanchard read through the agenda.

Chair Blanchard read the following statement: Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. c. 30A Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Sturbridge Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation can be found on the Town's website at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/town-administrator/pages/how-access-virtual-meeting>. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen and or watch the meeting either online via the Town's on demand video broadcast, on cable television on channel 191, or dial into the meeting at 774-304-1455, enter 1428# for the meeting number and 12345 for the access code. (This phone number is only active for the public during public meetings). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Public Service Announcements

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With the Town Election coming up, Selectwoman Gimas wanted to thank the residents of Sturbridge for the opportunity to serve the community. Vice Chair Dowling stated she's enjoyed working with both Chair Blanchard and Selectwoman Gimas, and she wished luck to all of the running candidates. Selectman Suprenant agreed.

Chair Blanchard stated that she has really enjoyed working for the Town over the past four terms, and thanked the residents for all their support.

The Board held a moment of silence for all of those affected by Covid-19.

Ragged Hill Cider Company- One Day Liquor License- Sturbridge Farmer's Market

Ann Garwood, owner of Ragged Hill Cider Company, came before the Board remotely and explained that she has a very strict protocol in place due to Covid-19, they will not be doing tastings, and they will take pre orders, to eliminate people coming and gathering at the tent at the Farmer's Market.

Motion: To authorize the application for a one day liquor license for the Sturbridge Farmer's Market to Ragged Hill Cider Company By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: ABSTAINED, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

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

Brimfield Winery – One Day Liquor License- Sturbridge Farmer's Market

Kate Corriveau, owner of Brimfield Winery, came before the Board virtually and stated that they are aware of all the guidelines in reference to Covid-19. She stated she has highly encouraged curbside pickup during this time and it's been well received by customers.

Motion: To authorize the application for a one day liquor license for the Sturbridge Farmer's Market to Brimfield Winery By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: ABSTAINED, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

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

Motion: To allow Chair Blanchard to sign the licenses on behalf of the Board of Selectmen By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible acceptance of donations to the Sturbridge Senior Center

Motion: To accept the donation of \$500 from Philip Lebel with appreciation from the Board of Selectmen By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

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Consideration and possible action on a request for sewer service – 6 Picker Road – New England Cold, Inc.

Mr. Bridges explained that New England Cold is the soon to be resident of 6 Picker Road, and they need to connect to Town Sewer.

Motion: To authorize the owners of 6 Picker Road to connect the new facility to Town's wastewater system By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible authorization for Department of Environmental Protection / Environmental Protection Agency Section 319 Grant application and approve letter of support for the Alum Treatment of South Pond

Mr. Bridges stated that at the June 2019 Town Meeting, the Town approved support for a grant application and funding towards treating Quacumquasit Lake. He said the Town pledged \$55,000 and administration of the grant. He explained that The Quaboag Quacumquasit Lake Association is now preparing the grant for submittal and have asked for the letter of support from the Town. Carl Nielsen, consultant working for Quaboag Quacumquasit Lake Association, came before the Board virtually and explained the few things he would need from the Town of Sturbridge to move forward. One being a letter of support, and several different forms to be signed. Vice Chair Dowling asked what the total cost of the project is. Mr. Neilson said stated the total of the project is \$325,000. Selectman Suprenant asked about the length of project. Mr. Neilson stated that they anticipate getting started in the spring with permitting, and the treatment would begin in September, but it would last 15 years. Mr. Neilson went over the surrounding towns that border the pond and which towns would be submitting a letter of support. Selectman Suprenant stated he is in favor of the project right now but he thinks it's a very expensive long term project.

Motion: To authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support and authorization submission of the grant application with the Town of Sturbridge as grant administrator By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on a request by the Recreation Commission for use of a portion of 70 Cedar Street for the multi-use field on 60 Cedar Street

Mr. Bridges stated that the Recreation Commission is currently conducting a feasibility study on the location of a multiuse field for 60 Cedar Street. He said the field can fit solely on 60 Cedar Street but it is very compressed against the road. Given the elevation differences between the proposed playing surface and the street level, he said that a considerable retaining wall will be very close to the road and could encumber walking along the road. Mr. Bridges stated that the Recreation Commission is asking for limited use of the land at 70 Cedar Street to move the field further up the hill and provide additional separation from the field area to the road. It is anticipated that the field would extend no further than 50 feet onto 70 Cedar Street. He added that using the small area of 70 Cedar Street would not interfere with any studies or potential plans for using 70 Cedar Street as a proposed location of a new senior center.

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Selectman Suprenant stated there appears to be a sizeable amount of gravel on the site, and he asked if it was necessary to keep the gravel there or if some was removed would the field sit at a lower elevation. Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, stated they are in the very early stages of calculating the removal, so they aren't sure how much it will benefit to remove gravel, but the goal is to make the retaining wall as short as possible. She stated that they don't have answers yet about materials, but it will come down to cost and the value. Selectman Kaitbenski asked if they were moving gravel would it eliminate some of the retaining wall. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated that it could possibly eliminate some of the retaining wall, but it would create an extra space between the retaining wall. Vice Chair Dowling stated she was in favor of the project.

Motion: To authorize the use of a portion of 70 Cedar Street for a multiuse field By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on authorizing a Community Development Block Grant application for a Micro-Loan program in partnership with the Towns of Southbridge and Charlton.

Mr. Bridges stated that the Towns of Sturbridge, Southbridge, and Charlton are seeking to apply regionally for the Community Development Block Grant – COVID-19 Funds (federal funds) for the creation of a microenterprise deferred payment (grant) program. He said that the Town of Southbridge would be the lead agency on the grant. Mr. Bridges stated that businesses with five employees or less could receive grants from \$2,500 to \$10,000 for items such as rent support, staffing, and utilities. He said that the application will be for funds totaling \$250,000. He mentioned that the public hearing on the proposed grant is set for Wednesday, June 3, 2020 adding that the notice was posted on the Town's website, at the Town Clerk's Office, and sent to businesses in the community.

Vice Chair Dowling asked if the new Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator would assist with this. Mr. Bridges stated that yes he could assist, but the Town will receive a lot of support from Southbridge as well. The Board agreed that this is an excellent program.

Motion: To authorize participation in the regional Community Development Block Grant – COVID 19 funds grant application for the creation of a Regional Microenterprise grant program and authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support from the Town of Sturbridge By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on a contract with Johnson Controls for Fire Alarm System maintenance for Town Hall, Center Office Building, and the Joshua Hyde Public Library.

Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, explained that she is recommending the Town approve a three-year maintenance and monitoring agreement with Johnson Controls for system maintenance and monitoring for the Town Hall, Center Office Building and Joshua Hyde Public Library. She stated that they are using

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the state contract rates and therefore are compliant with the Massachusetts purchasing laws. She informed the Board that this is a renewal contract, however she would like to sign the contract with the new Town template provided by KP Law. She stated that Johnson Controls are agreeing to the Towns terms.

Motion: To approve the contract with Johnson Controls and authorize the Town Administrator to sign the contract By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on a contract with Worcester Elevator for preventive maintenance for elevators at Town Hall, Center Office Building, Joshua Hyde Public Library, and the Senior Center.

Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, stated she recommends the Town renew their contract with Worcester Elevator for preventive maintenance of the elevators at the Town Hall, Center Office Building, Joshua Hyde Public Library, and the Senior Center. She stated that it is a one-year agreement. Ms. Chrabasz mentioned that she has been happy with their services. Selectman Suprenant asked if it was competitively bid. Ms. Chrabasz stated that to the best of her knowledge it was, and right now she is not ready to re bid, but in the future they could. Selectman Suprenant stated he couldn't vote in favor of it since it hasn't been sent out to bid within the last two years. He stated it wouldn't need to be a formal bidding process, they would just have to receive verbal quotes since the contract is under \$10,000.

Motion: To table the topic until the next Board of Selectmen's meeting By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Chair Blanchard

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on FY 21 Budget Adjustments

Mr. Bridges stated that considerable adjustments had to be made to make up the expected lost revenue due to COVID-19. He said not only are there expected drop offs in local revenue, but they are unsure about unrestricted aid received from the State. He stated that this will impact the General Fund, Capital, Betterment, and particular warrant articles that utilize the "raise and appropriate" funding methodology that ultimately impacts the tax rate.

Mr. Bridges shared the formula for tax rate calculation with the Board. Barbara Barry, Finance Director, stated they do not know all the information at the current time, adding that Ann Murphy, Principle Assessor, did her best on the current assessed rates. Mrs. Barry recommended that the Board hold off on a dollar amount for the stabilization fund. She informed the Board that any decisions they make during this meeting, the numbers are subject to change. Selectman Suprenant asked about utility values, and Mrs. Barry stated they do not have that number yet. Ann Murphy, Principle Assessor joined the meeting by phone and stated that the utilities are part of personal property values not real-estate values, and they will not be coming out until June 15th. Mr. Bridges stated none of the rates are certified, they are estimates.

Motion: To accept the figure of \$175, 338 being changed in the budget By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman

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Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on revisions to certain Town Meeting warrant articles.

ARTICLE 16 ROAD CONSTRUCTION, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Motion: To change the amount from \$434,648 to \$36,648 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 19 BETTERMENT COMMITTEE

Motion: To change the amount from \$176,364 to \$138,821 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 20 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Motion: To change the amount from \$808,576 to \$755,741 BY: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 22 OPEB TRUST FUND

Motion: To change the amount from \$100,000 to \$75,000 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 23 TAX RATE RELIEF

Motion: To approve \$550,000 for tax relief as amended in the article By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: NO, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 4-1 (Selectman Suprenant Opposed)

ARTICLE 24 CAPITAL STABILIZATION

Motion: To delete Article 24 from the Warrant By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 27 WATER DEPARTMENT

Motion: To change the amount from \$1,447,288 to \$1,365,288 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 28 SEWER DEPARTMENT

Motion: To approve the Article as amended By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 30 INFLOW AND INFILTRATION STUDY AND REPAIR

Motion: To approve the Article as amended due to a type By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 41 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS AND THEIR SPOUSES

Motion: To place and support Article 41 By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 42 PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR GOLD STAR PARENTS

Motion: To support Article 42 By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 44 COMMUNITY PRESRVATION LITTLE LEAGUE LIGHTING PROPOSAL

Motion: To place and support Article 44 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

ARTICLE 45 TAX RATE RELIEF FROM STABILIZATION

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Motion: To place and support Article 45 By: Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the Board of Selectmen Certification of the Town Meeting warrants for the June 29, 2020 Town Meeting.

Motion: To sign the Warrant Certification Form By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Old Business

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Bridges went over his update and the Governor's new guidance, which brought him to discuss the reopening plan of Town Hall, and Center Office Building.

Facility re opening plan

Mr. Bridges stated he would like to start with being open for a limited amount of hours each day at first, and evolve into a full time opening. Selectman Suprenant asked if he had seen the guidance about the setting aside of mail for three days once it's been delivered before opening. He also asked about use of town vehicles, stating that the original guidance required sanitizing of the vehicles daily. Selectman Suprenant said it should be one person per vehicle at a time, and he added that the reopening plan doesn't look as complete as he's seen from other towns. The Board went over the revisions they would like the reopening plan to show.

Motion: To approve the reopening plan as amended By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Mr. Bridges stated he would like the same gatekeepers being hired to work the doorway entrances, to help at the Town Election and Town Meeting. Selectwoman Gimas asked if any plan had been made for Town Meeting seating. Mr. Bridges stated that the auditorium will fit 150 in seats. He said that Finance Committee will be on the ground level, and the Board of Selectmen will be on the stage. Over flow of attendees will be in cafeteria and it will be live streamed. Vice Chair Dowling shared concerns about who would be in charge of cleaning the auditorium after other towns use it for a Town Meeting. Mr. Bridges stated that the schools custodians would be cleaning in between each use of the space. Vice Chair Dowling stated she would like it to be double checked. She also asked if they looked into holding it on the football field, since the virus is far less spread outdoors.

Motion: To allow gatekeepers to work at the Town Election and Town Meeting By: Selectwoman Gimas

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2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that restaurants are interesting in incorporating outdoor seating. He said that the Governor has stated that the Local Licensing Authority can adjust the premises location, for a restaurant that already holds a liquor license, and approve for alcohol to be sold and consumed at the outdoor premises without sending the application back to Alcohol Beverages Control Commission. Selectman Suprenant stated he would like to hear some expectations before approving the applications. Vice Chair Dowling stated she would be in favor of making accommodations to serve alcohol outside and exercising the rights that Governor Baker has given, in support of local businesses.

Selectman Suprenant stated he received a copy of the tourism plan and he believes its comprehensive and he would like the Board to look at it for the next meeting.

New Business

Vice Chair Dowling mentioned that other towns are taking the money they are receiving for COVID relief and making kits with masks and hand sanitizer, and she thinks it would be a good use of some of the COVID money that Sturbridge is receiving, to do the same. She said that possibly a volunteer could give them out at Town Hall.

Chair Blanchard asked about the extension they had decided on with Mrs. Belanger. Mr. Bridges stated they would need to hear from her by the end of this week.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

Ann Murphy, explained to the Board that the Sellow property was purchased as Chapter 61A land in 2013. She stated that there was a note from the Principle Assessor at that time that Mrs. Sellow was planning to keep it as Chapter 61A land. Mrs. Murphy said when Mrs. Sellow filed an application in 2014, she didn't have income information, so she explained to her that to use the land to braise her horses she should switch to Chapter 61B land. Mrs. Murphy stated that Rebecca Gendreau, Conservation Agent, reached out to her to let her know that Mrs. Sellow was leasing the property, and she had never filled out the application. Ann contacted her then DOR and her question of if it qualifies for chapter land and it does not.

Chair Blanchard stated that the option of purchasing this land should be sent to other Boards in Town to see if they have any desire. Mrs. Murphy mentioned that the Sellow's home is on the property.

Approval of Minutes

May 18, 2020 Warrant Review

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Motion: To approve the minutes of May 18, 2020 as amended By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

Vote: 5-0

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 9:30pm By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectwoman Gimas: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.

All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 9:30 pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board:  Date signed: 06-29-2020