

March 16, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
March 16, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

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

Absent:

Mary Blanchard, Chairman

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Vice Chair Dowling called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice Chair Dowling read through the agenda.

Public Service Announcements

Selectman Suprenant stated that we are facing challenging times at the moment and asks that everyone to do the things they need to do in order to keep safe. Vice Chair Dowling stated that while we are dealing with the Coronavirus as a community and as a globe her primary concern is our residents and the staff. She stated that anyone can check the Town's website for updates. Vice Chair Dowling mentioned that at this point there have been no confirmed cases of Covid-19 in Sturbridge, but things are changing daily and we should remain vigilant. She went over the precautions that Sturbridge has already taken as a community such as: The recreation department cancelled the NYC bus trip, Tantasqua Union 61 schools are closed until April 6, 2020, the Joshua Hyde Library will be closed until April 6th, the Senior Center will be closed until April 6th, and the senior center staff will be coordinating meals and outreach while closed. They will be limiting visitors to the lobby at the Public Safety Complex, all evening meetings for board and committees have been cancelled until April 6th. The Board of Health is working with businesses and restaurants to provide take out or delivery only.

Public Hearing- Transfer of Liquor License- The Host Hotel- Yogesh Patel

Selectman Suprenant read the notice advertised in the Southbridge Evening News.

March 16, 2020

Motion: To open the public hearing by: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Yogesh Patel, new owner of the Sturbridge Host Hotel, came before the Board and explained that the transfer of license is because he is the new owner taking over the liquor license.

Motion: To close the public hearing By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Motion: To approve the transfer of liquor license to Yogesh Patel and approve Renuka Patel as the manager By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Public Hearing- Transfer of Liquor License- Hemlock Ridge Golf Course- Lee Palmer

Selectman Suprenant read the notice posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

Motion: To open the public hearing By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Lee Palmer, new owner of the Hemlock Ridge Golf Course, came before the Board. Vice Chair Dowling asked about the citizen background information and asked Mr. Palmer to provide an affidavit. He said he had already submitted it to the Alcoholic Beverages Control Commission, and could also provide it for the Board to see.

Motion: To close the public hearing By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Motion: To approve the transfer of liquor license to Lee Palmer, subject to getting a copy of the affidavit By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Taxi Livery License, Dawn Marie Walley, Charles River Service, Inc.

Dawn Walley came before the Board. The Board discussed that they didn't have a copy of the insurance and the vehicles registration. Ms. Walley stated she would have the owner of Charles River Service provide it for them.

Motion: To approve a taxi livery license to Dawn Marie Walley subject to getting the vehicle registration and insurance By: Selectman Suprenant

March 16, 2020

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Department Head Updates:

Fire Department

Chief Grasso came before the Board with his department report. He mentioned that the fire department is business as usual although they have noticed an increase in brush fires. He stated these fires are mostly due to carelessness, and he would like to remind the public that the fire department posts the fire risks in front of the public safety complex. Chief Grasso stated that he had included some feedback from the public in his report. Vice Chair Dowling read some of the positive feedback given to the fire department from the community. Chief Grasso reassured everybody that the fire department is ready to respond to the current situation of Covid-19.

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges notified the Board that the budget public hearing had been cancelled due to Covid-19 and he is unsure of a rescheduled date. He mentioned that he is in charge of putting a committee together for recruitment of a police chief, and he said that he had selected people and formed the committee but unfortunately they have not been able to meet yet due to the current Coronavirus situation. He plans to possibly meet remotely to get the ball rolling

To consider and possibly vote on a host community agreement for the retail sale of adult use marijuana with Heal Sturbridge, Inc., and consider and possibly vote on amendments to a community benefit agreement for the sale of medical marijuana with Heal, Inc. (To be considered after the 6:35pm public hearing)

Mr. Bridges stated the difference in the host agreement is that Heal, Inc. had reinserted moratorium language to reflect that if Heal, Inc. receives a special permit that they will agree to never convert.

Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he is holding out hope that three retail stores could open. Vice Chair Dowling stated that if Heal, Sturbridge moves forward and they receive a special permit there would be one more available for another retail establishment. She said if Heal, Sturbridge is not successful, the other two could move forward and Heal, Sturbridge could still convert in one year. Vice Chair Dowling stated that the Board already agreed to sign with Heal, Sturbridge, the change is the language to lifting the moratorium.

Motion: To approve and enter into the proposed host community agreement with Heal Sturbridge, Inc. for a retail adult-use marijuana establishment at 660 Main Street in Town, and in conjunction therewith to approve and enter into the proposed amendment to the existing community benefit agreement with Heal, Inc. for a medical marijuana treatment center at the same location, which vote shall supersede the vote of this Board taken on February 3, 2020 to enter into and amend host community agreements for this location By: Selectwoman Gimas

March 16, 2020

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: (3-1) (Selectman Kaitbenski opposed) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Approval of BB5k, Hyland Orchard, Sturbridge MA

Motion: To approve of the BB5K, Hyland Orchard, Sturbridge, MA By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Approval of Running out of Summer 5K, Rapsallion, Sturbridge MA

Motion: To approve of the Running out of Summer 5K, Rapsallion, Sturbridge, MA By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Concur with the appointment of Laura Bonnette as the Administrative Assistant to the Finance Department

Mr. Bridges stated that finance director, Barbara Barry would like to appoint Laura Bonnette as the administrative assistant to the finance department, and he stated that he concurs with the appointment.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Laura Bonnette as Administrative Assistant in the Finance Department effective March 23, 2020 with a starting salary of \$20.20 per hour contingent upon passing all pre-employment screening By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Concur with the appointment of Shawn Lans as a part time Custodian for the Town of Sturbridge

Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, came before the Board and explained that after interviewing Mr. Lans, she feels he is the right fit for the custodian position.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Shawn Lans as a part time custodian effective March 17, 2020 with a starting wage of \$16.75 per hour contingent upon passing all pre-employment screening By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Acceptance of deed for 501 Main Street

Mr. Bridges stated that the site at 501 Main Street had been cleaned up, and they are prepared to take owner ship, so they are asking the Board to sign deed in order to schedule a closing. The Board discussed needing the title and something in writing from the attorney stating that the title is clear. They agreed to move this item to the next meeting date once title and verification is provided.

March 16, 2020

Accept a donation from WAITT Marketing on behalf of Baba Sushi's fundraiser nights for \$78.00, for recreation programs

Motion: To accept the donation from WAITT Marketing on behalf of Baba Sushi's fundraiser nights for \$78.00 for recreation programs By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Approve the job description for Recycling Assistant

Mr. Bridges notified the Board that the Board of Health has two part time recycling assistants but they never had a job description, he mentioned that the personnel committee approved this job description.

Motion: To approve the job description for Recycling Assistant By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Approve the job description for Farmers Market Manager

Mr. Bridges mentioned that the farmer's market manager has not been a town position in the past so they needed to create a job description. He explained that it is a \$1,500 per year stipend position.

Selectman Suprenant stated that he thinks somewhere in the job description it should state the position as "part time".

Motion: To approve the job description of farmer's market manager as amended to add the status as "part time" By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Concur with the seasonal appointment of Caitlin Tomko as market manager for the Sturbridge Farmers Market

Motion: To concur with the seasonal appointment of Caitlin Tomko as market manager for the Sturbridge Farmers Market By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Approval of an agreement with the Town of Spencer for the loan of a firetruck

Chief Grasso came before the Board and explained that the Town of Spencer is offering to lend the Town of Sturbridge a fire truck for any amount of time for free of charge, to replace the fire truck that is out of service. Vice Chair Dowling mentioned she would like to have a letter of thanks sent to the Town of Spencer.

Motion: To approve the agreement with the Town of Spencer for a loan of a fire truck and ask the Town Administrator to send a thank you letter By: Selectman Suprenant

March 16, 2020

2nd: Selectwoman Gimas

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Trash services for municipal buildings

Robyn Chrabaszcz came before the Board and explained that she has been tasked with finding trash pickup services for the town buildings. She stated she asked for proposals from three different companies, and Republic had come back as the recommended vendor, so she is recommending using Republic. Selectwoman Gimas asked if she had checked with other communities who had used Republic, to see if they have had good experiences, because on the residential end she had some problems with them in the past. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated that Republic is vetted by the state. Vice Chair Dowling asked what Republic is doing now for Sturbridge. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated they are on call, and pick up takes place when called, at the Public Safety Complex.

Motion: To approve a three-year service agreement with Republic Services for trash and recycling services for the Sturbridge Municipal Buildings for a three year contract for \$19,385.85, subject to procreation of years two and three By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Old Business

NONE

New business

Email and correspondence

Selectwoman Gimas asked if when the Board has conversation through email, that the Town Administrator just respond to the specific member asking the question, rather than replying to all. Selectman Suprenant stated that sometimes the Board has discussions via text messaging but he believes they should be communicating through email. The Board agreed that email would be best and more official.

Selectwoman Gimas stated she wanted to make a motion to close the Town Hall and Center Office Building to the public due to the Coronavirus.

Motion: To close the Town Hall and Center Office Building to the public and to suspend night hours as the Governor has suggested, until April 6th By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Discussion: Mr. Bridges asked if the Board decided to close the Town Hall and Center Office Building and not hold evening hours, would Friday still be a half day. Selectwoman Gimas stated Friday would still be a half day, for now. Mr. Bridges stated that would leave many employees

March 16, 2020

that work hourly with three less hours a week. Selectwoman Gimas said she thinks those employees should still be paid their normal works week pay and reevaluate come April 6th.

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Motion: To pay the hourly employees of Town Hall and Center Office Building their normal amount of hours until April 6th By: Selectwoman Gimas
2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Discussion: Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he agrees but he would like to talk further about it at the Boards special meeting being held on COVID-19.

Vote: 2-2 (Selectman Suprenant and Selectman Kaitbenski opposed; to further talk about the topic at the Board's special meeting) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Selectman Kaitbenski mentioned that Stop and Shop is opening from 6:00am-7:30am for people over the age of 60. Selectwoman Gimas stated that may be early for some seniors, possibly someone from the senior center could go for them if needed.

Motion: To suspend the Personnel Rules until June 30th so that an employee who is isolated due to COVID-19 or is recovering from COVI-19 or is caring for somebody in their household with COVID-19, can stay home and not use accumulated sick time. This would include part time personnel who would be compensated based upon what the average number of hours they would have worked By: Selectwoman Gimas
2nd chase

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Motion: To cancel the joint budget meeting on March 21, 2020 with the Board of Selectman and Finance Committee By: Selectwoman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Motion: To declare and submit a declaration of emergency By: Selectwoman Gimas
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenki

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that with the Town Hall and Center Office Building closed to the public that there is a lock box on both of the buildings for residents to drop of payments and/or license requests. He stated that phone numbers and contact information will be posted on the doors of both buildings. Board and committee meetings have been cancelled. Mr. Bridges mentioned that the town attorney stated that the concern with town meeting will be if the school is re-opened, they may not want a large group of people in the building. In this case, the Town Clerk and Moderator will show up and move the meeting to a later date, preferably after the kids are out of school. He stated that building inspections will continues if they have to, and field visits will still happen when necessary.

March 16, 2020

Vice Chair Dowling stated she thinks building inspections should only happen if completely necessary, to eliminate routine inspections.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

Approval of Minutes

March 2, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 2, 2020 as amended By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

March 5, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 5, 2020 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

March 9, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of March 9, 2020 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 8:46 p.m. By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Chair Blanchard Absent)

Adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board:



Date signed: 06-29-2020