

**Board of Selectmen
Budget Meeting
April 21, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman
Priscilla Gimas
Selectman Kaitbenski

Absent:

Selectman Suprenant

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:30pm

Chair Blanchard read the 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.

Review of proposed Fiscal Year 2021 Budget

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that Barbara Barry, Finance Director, was on the remote meeting for any questions. He mentioned that there are two pieces to what they had to go through: the current year budget, and next year's budget which the Finance Committee had started reviewing last week. Mr. Bridges stated that looking at the current year, although they may see a reduction in some revenues, they know that there is enough money that the current year should be okay.

Chair Blanchard asked about the hotel motel and meal tax and if there is a prediction what they would be reduced by. Mrs. Barry stated that at this point and time the worst case the taxes would be about \$95,000 dollar short in revenue for hotel motel and \$66,000 short for meals.

Selectwoman Gimas asked about the status of the study for personnel classification. Mr. Bridges stated that he was expecting to receive the study back this week. Selectwoman Gimas stated she noticed the department head salaries range and she wondered how the study would impact that. Mr. Bridges said that the current salaries are based upon the compensation plan that the Board had already adopted, which is what they used to build the budget. Mr. Bridges stated that the budget would get replaced with numbers from the compensation study when and if the Board adopts the new plan.

Chair Blanchard asked about the school budget, teachers' pay and pension, stating that their pension usually comes from a different budget. Mrs. Barry stated that she is correct and that the Worcester Regional Retirement only includes town employees, and that teachers are a part of a different plan.

Mr. Bridges explained to the Board that because of the current pandemic and COVID-19 they are currently talking about what will happen with the budget going forward. He stated that he and Mrs. Barry agree that right now that is unknown. Mr. Bridges stated that until the economy begins to function again, the budget development process right now is looking at expenditures, because it's a big unknown on the revenue side.

Vice Chair Dowling wondered if the change to the Economic Development Coordinator hours were in this budget. Mrs. Barry stated that they were not because the budget book was made before the Board voted to increase that positions hours, so they will have to adjust that number. Mr. Bridges explained that the money for those extra hours are coming from the Sturbridge Tourist Association budget, so it will affect the budget.

The Board went over the Finance Committee Handbook, lines one through seventy two.

Motion: To approve the budget as written By: Selectman Kaibenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

All in Favor (4-0) (Selectman Suprenant Absent)

Vice Chair Dowling asked if every year they should expect the debt service interest to decline. Mrs. Barry stated yes they should expect it to decline.

The Board discussed the Annual Town Meeting and if it was going to still happen at the beginning of June given the COVID-19 crisis.

Selectman Suprenant arrived to the meeting.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 6:22pm By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 6:22pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board:

 **Date signed:** 06-29-2020