

June 15, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
June 15, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman
Selectman Michael Suprenant
Selectman Chase Kaitbenski
Selectman Ian Dunnigan

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:17pm

**Motion: To move into executive session as declared by the Chair By: Selectman Kaitbenski
2nd: Vice Chair Dowling**

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman
Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.**

Vote: 5-0

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

June 15, 2020

recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Board Reorganization

Motion: To nominate Mary Blanchard as Chairman of the Board of Selectman By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Motion: To nominate Mary Dowling as Vice Chair of the Board of Selectmen By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 5-0

Motion: To nominate Michael Suprenant as Clerk of the Board of Selectmen By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 5-0

Public Service Announcements

Vice Chair Dowling expressed that she was very proud of the June 4th peaceful protest and she thanked the organizers, participants and the Police Department who worked together. She stated it was a very meaningful way to honor the black lives that were lost, including the life of George Floyd.

Moment of Silence

The Selectmen held a moment of silence in honor of all those suffering from COVID- 19

Public Hearing- Logging Permit- Ladd Road- Jim DiMaio

Selectman Suprenant read the ad that was posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

Jim DiMaio, forester of the project, introduced himself stating that he represents the landowner of the property on Ladd Road. He explained that the project is to thin the trees along Ladd Road. He informed the Board of the area, and said he has flagged it off and also painted the trees that are going to be removed, in case the flags come off. Mr. DiMaio said they are trying to create a higher quality forest in that area. Selectman Suprenant said initially the permit was not approved and he asked for an explanation. Mr. DiMaio said it was denied at first because of the terminology that was used. He also stated he hadn't mapped the trees, so he went back and did so.

June 15, 2020

The Board and Mr. DiMaio went over the conservation conditions. Mr. DiMaio stated he would comply with the conservation conditions.

Motion: To close the public hearing By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Motion: To approve the logging permit for 17 and 30 Ladd Road subject to the conditions set forth from the Conservation Commission By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Public Hearing- Amendment of Liquor License- The Thai Place

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

Dave Bartley, attorney of the Thai Place, introduced himself, stating that it is an honor to be before the Board. He explained that the Thai Place is looking to transfer the license to Debby Sundara and also hoping she will be approved as the new manager. They are also expanding their premises to the outside porch, and making alterations to the inside premises. Lastly, they have applied to change the category of their license so they are able to sell all alcohol. Mr. Bartley stated they have already received approval from Old Sturbridge Village.

Motion: To transfer the existing liquor license to Debby Sundara and appoint her as the new manager By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0-1

Motion: To approve the change of category of the liquor license from wines and malts to all alcohol By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0-1

Motion: To extend the service area to the porch permanently By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0-1

Motion: To approve the expansion of premises contingent on receiving the additional narrative on the application By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

June 15, 2020

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: ABSTAINED, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 4-0-1**

**Motion: To close the public hearing By: Selectman Suprenant
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 5-0**

Department Reports

Fire Department

John Grasso, Fire Chief, came before the Board remotely. He welcomed Ian Dunnigan as a new Selectman and congratulated Chair Blanchard on her reelection. He stated that the call volume had remained consistent across the board in the Fire Department. He added that sick and COVID calls have leveled out now, but his concern is that in Sturbridge and in the Commonwealth they will see a spike in numbers, just as they are seeing happen in other towns. Mr. Grasso said they are doing all they can to stay diligent and ready for that. He mentioned to the Board that the Fire House had been completely cleaned and decontaminated by the Last Call Foundation, put together by the Boston Fire Department. He said they did a great job and the program is a really nice contribution to fire houses around the Commonwealth.

Police Department

Earl Dessert, Interim Chief of Police, came before the Board remotely with his department's report. He congratulated Ian Dunnigan and Mary Blanchard on being elected as Selectmen. He stated that there had been a change in some numbers from 2019, since the department had been battling through the pandemic. Interim Chief Dessert mentioned that many trainings have been cancelled, but that the department was continuing with online trainings. He said that in May the department put out an announcement about scams in the area, and got positive feedback. He also mentioned that they had begun boat patrolling. Chair Blanchard asked he thought that the spike in mental health numbers would be attributed to the Covid -19 virus. Interim Chief Dessert stated that without doing a complete analysis on that it would be hard to say, but he thinks it may be related.

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges stated that there is a large project on the Sturbridge, Charlton line in the works, which will create traffic. He provided the Board with a document from the Town Planner briefly going over the project. He said they will discuss this in the near future. Mr. Bridges mentioned to the Board that many employees have returned to work from working remotely and they are ready to open to the public gradually.

Consideration and possible action on the annual reappointments

Chair Blanchard read through the list of reappointments that needed to be made.

Staff Positions: (3-Year Term)

Principal Assessor

Ann Murphy

June 15, 2020

Building Inspectors:

Peter Starkus (Plumbing and Gas)
Paul Mazeikas (Plumbing and Gas)
Clyde Gagnon (Electrical)

Department of Public Works:

Brian Curboy
David Mitchell
Andrew Szumilas
John Booth
Brian McRoy

Emergency Management Coordinator:

David DeMings

Finance Director:

Barbara Barry

Town Accountant:

Christopher Gerharty

Fire Department:

John Grasso
Eric Riendeau
Stephen Joyce
Tina Kruczek
Ryan Mullen

Town Planner:

Jean Bubon

Police Department:

Larry Bateman
Barbara Boiteau
Garrett Danna
Earl Dessert
Jeffrey Lavalee
Thomas Giordano
Daniel Hemingway
Toniah Maloney
Melissa Palmer

Board and Committee Appointments:

Safety Committee (3-year term):

Butch Jackson, DPW Director

Zoning Board of Appeals (3-year term):

Michael Young

Capital Planning Committee:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator

June 15, 2020

Jean Bubon, Town Planner

Kathleen Neal, Chair, Finance Committee

Butch Jackson, DPW Director

John Grasso, Fire Chief

Annual Appointments:

Town Counsel:

K-P Law, Jonathan Eichman Representing

Motion: To concur with appointments as listed By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the Farmer's Market, adjustments to restrictions

Mr. Bridges stated based off of the first couple of Farmer's Markets the Farmers Market volunteers have gone over the guidelines and have some things they would like to change. Caitlin Tomko, Farmers Market manager, stated they have received positive feedback from the community on the Farmers Market so far. She said that the guidelines as they are now allow them to have 40 people in the market at one time. She said they would like to increase that number to 70. Mrs. Tomko added that they have noticed a long line outside the market and a lot of space inside the market so to make social distancing easier they would allow for more people in the empty space of the market. She stated that they will still be following the state guidelines if they boost the number to 70. She also stated they have the Board of Health's approval.

Motion: To approve the amended Sturbridge Farmer's Market guidelines as requested By:

Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 5-0

Mrs. Tomko asked if going forward the Farmer's Market committee could make changes without having to come in front of the Board of Selectmen. She stated they would work alongside the Board of Health to be sure they were always following the guidelines. Vice Chair Dowling stated she would like written approval from the Board of Health on any changes they have made.

Motion: To allow the Farmers Market volunteers to modify the Farmers Market rules consistent with the state guidelines and consistent with getting written confirmation from the Board of Health agent and notifying the Board of Selectmen By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

June 15, 2020

Consideration and possible action on a revised Tax Increment Financing Agreement with New England Cold Storage, Inc.

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that they had approved a Tax Increment Financing Agreement with New England Cold Storage, Inc. in February of this year. He said that the agreement they had approved included a 3.15 million cubic feet of space. Mr. Bridges stated that the owners of the facility had reached out and they are planning to increase the size of the facility but have yet to settle on a definitive size. He said that after discussing this issue with Town Counsel, he is requesting modifications to the Tax Increment Financing Agreement to allow for a larger facility. Mr. Bridges mentioned that this is an article on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and the current language reads 3.15 million cubic feet. He stated that they would need to work with the Moderator before the Town Meeting to make sure the voters at the meeting understand that it could be larger. Mr. Bridges added that any changes in size will have to be approved by various offices such as Zoning and Building.

Chair Blanchard said she could see a slight problem with the language being so open ended. Mr. Bridges stated that the building can only be so big based on the zoning. The selectmen discussed which language to have the Moderator read at Town Meeting.

Motion: To add the language "or greater" to the Tax Increment Financing Agreement with New England Cold Storage, Inc. Warrant Article subject to the Zoning and Planning Boards approval
By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the schedule adjustment for the July 4th holiday.

Mr. Bridges explained that the Fourth of July Holiday falls on a Saturday this year and per Town policy, the holiday is observed on Friday, July 3. He said that Friday's are four-hour work days so an additional three hours of holiday time must be awarded to the employee. Mr. Bridges stated that he is recommending approving the holiday to begin at 1:00 PM on July 2nd for Town employees with a four hour work day on Friday.

Motion: To approve the observance of the July 4th Holiday, for those employees adhering to a noon Friday closure schedule will include three (3) hours (1:00 PM to 4:00 PM) on Thursday, July 2nd, and 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM on Friday, July 3rd By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the expenditure of \$10,174.00 from the Wetlands Protection Fund for the Fiscal Year 2021.

Mr. Bridges explained that as part of the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget, \$10,174 was planned to be expended from the Wetlands Protection Fund for funding a portion (approximately 10 hours per week) of the Administrative Assistant to the Conservation Agents position. The current balance in the Fund is approximately \$85,000.

June 15, 2020

Attachments: Memo from Conservation Agent Rebecca Gendreau date June 3, 2020.

Motion: To approve the expenditure of \$10,174 from the Wetlands Protection Fund for Fiscal Year 2021 to fund a portion of the salary of the Conservation Department's Administrative Assistant By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the renewal of Injured on Duty (I.O.D.) insurance for the Sturbridge Police and Fire Departments for Fiscal Year 21.

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that Police Officers and Firefighters in Massachusetts are not covered by Worker's Compensation insurance. He stated that alternative coverage must be purchased which is called Injured on Duty (I.O.D.) insurance. He said that the Town would purchase the insurance through the Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (M.I.I.A), which is the insurance that the Town is under contract with currently. Mr. Bridges stated he would like to renew the Injured on Duty insurance with Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (M.I.I.A) because he thinks the Town has been well served with them.

Motion: To approve the Injured On Duty insurance for the Sturbridge Police and Fire Departments for FY 21 with M.I.I.A for \$66,588 By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on approving a "1/12th" Budget for Fiscal Year 2021.

Barbara Barry, Finance Director, stated that although Town Meeting is scheduled for June 29, 2020, out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Revenue, the finance department has put together an expenditure plan for the month of July. She stated that the 1/12th budget will allow for the sufficient funds necessary to allow for continued operations on July 1, 2020.

Motion: To adopt the 1/12th spending plan for July of 2020 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 5-0

Old Business

COVID-19 Update

June 15, 2020

Mr. Bridges stated that he had gone through the states guidance with all of the departments. He said the Personal Protective Equipment has been distributed, the proper signage has been displayed, and the gatekeepers are ready to begin working. He proposed to the Board opening the Town Hall and Center Office Building to the public on Tuesday's, Wednesday's, and Thursday's from 10am-2pm. He stated that he would like that schedule to hold until after the July 4th Holiday. Mr. Bridges stated after July 4th he would like to see where the Covid-19 pandemic is, state wise and as a community. Vice Chair Dowling stated she thinks this sounds like a reasonable approach. Mr. Bridges stated that there is a plan in place if the open hours do not work for someone, they will be able to make an appointment.

Motion: To reopen the Center Office Building and Town Hall to the public on Tuesday's, Wednesday's, and Thursday's from 10am-2pm and by appointment and to reevaluate the schedule following the July 4th Holiday By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 5-0

Vice Chair Dowling stated she would like to suggest that the Town Administrators evaluation be covered at the Selectmen's retreat in January.

Selectman Suprenant asked about the elevator agreement. Mr. Bridges stated it is still pending and Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, is looking for quotes from other companies.

New Business

Selectman Suprenant stated that in the last few days MASS DOT and the BAR Association had announced a grant program for sidewalks and parking which is designed to help restaurants with outside facilities during this pandemic. He stated that communities are eligible for up to \$300,000 for sidewalk or parking improvements and he would like to ask the Town Administrator to have someone look into it. Mr. Bridges stated that he has already asked Todd Miller, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, to look into it and he has started the planning process.

Vice Chair Dowling thanked Lynne Girouard and Sheila O'Connell for a successful election.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

Approval of Minutes

June 1, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of June 1, 2020 as amended By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0-1

June 15, 2020

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 8:16pm By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

**Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES,
Chair Blanchard: YES.**

All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 8:16 pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board: Michael E. Suprenant Date signed: 09-18-2020