

July 6, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
July 6, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

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

Absent:

Selectman Ian Dunnigan

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:03pm

Chair Blanchard read through the agenda

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance

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

July 6, 2020

Vice Chair Dowling hoped everyone had a happy and peaceful Fourth of July, and apologized for not making Town Meeting adding it was for a good reason. She's glad everything went smoothly.

Moment of Silence

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

Presentation to the Board of Selectmen on the proposed development of an Equine Center in the Town of Sturbridge

Bob George and Karen Davis, attorneys for Armand Janjigian, introduced Mr. Janjigian, as the one behind this project. Tim Burke, the engineer of the project, also joined the meeting. Mr. Janjigian thanked the Board for giving him the time to present his vision. He stated that he has been involved with horses all his life and involved with horse racing for many years. He said about a year ago when it was evident that racing would come to an end in Massachusetts he started to think what he could put together. He spoke to many people about his dream of building a race track and got a lot of feedback with interest in casinos and gambling, but he assured the Board that wasn't his vision. Mr. Janjigian said he looked many locations, but it's not easy to find an area to build a track because you need the land and space. He informed the Board that it needs to be something that benefits the Town, and he understands that there needs to be an easy way to get to the track. He stated that he began looking into Sturbridge because he has some friends that live here. He found Bob George and Karan Davis when searching for local counsel. Mr. Janjigian said that Mr. George and Mrs. Davis were hesitant about the project at first, but after thinking about it for a while they decided it would be a good place to a horse track. Mr. Janjigian stated that he does not live in Town but he does not want it to be detrimental or disruptive to the Town, and he thinks that's the decision of those who live in Town. He stated that if the local officials were behind him on the project then he would have a better chance bringing it to the community. He mentioned that he had done extensive research to avoid having traffic be a problem. He found that he could put a road before you even got to any of the houses on Mashpaug Road for entry way to the track.

Mr. Janjigian stated that his vision was that the track would be a mini Saratoga and not a conventional race track. He explained that this meant in the first year or two races would take place 8-10 days per year, with the hope that it would build to possibly run 6 weeks in the spring and 6 weeks in the fall. He stated that in the grand scheme of things racing is an important ingredient but the amount of racing would take place would be minor. This is where he would incorporate other types of horse activities. He mentioned to the Board that he doesn't see a lot of horse activity throughout the winter months. Mr. Janjigian said he has discussed this project with several different horse organizations and they are all behind it. He said he had a virtual meeting with the Gaming Commission and they seem to be in favor of the project, especially because what he would be proposing wouldn't need legislative change. He stated he understands it would have to go to Town Meeting, but if the Town officials were not supportive of the project first then he is not going to try to throw something down anyone's throat at a Town Meeting.

Mrs. Davis stated that Mr. Janjigian came to her and Mr. George over a year ago and they had spent a lot of time trying to determine if this was something that would benefit the Town of Sturbridge. She said that Mr. Janjigian was being shy in stating what he brings to a community. She said what he's presenting is a horse track that would offer a venue for many types of activities. Mrs. Davis said she doesn't want to lose sight of Mr. Janjigian's overall vision, which she stated would be a great addition to Sturbridge.

Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he is really excited about this project, he fully supports it and is behind it 100% and he thanked Mr. Janjigian for his interest in bringing his business to the Town of Sturbridge.

July 6, 2020

Selectman Suprenant said he was interested in this idea and is really excited about the potential economic impact stating that it would be rather sizable. Selectman Suprenant stated that over the years Sturbridge has seen many proposals for several types of racing venues and many have not done well when going to Town Meeting. He stated that public relations would be important in order for the public to be supportive of this type of proposal. Mr. Janjigian stated he agrees with that, he knows people will question it, and he knows that it is not easy to get a 2/3 vote at Town Meeting, but he would certainly try his best to meet with people and various committees to see if there is some way to make this become something that's very good for the Town.

Mrs. Davis stated that Mr. Janjigian is willing to spend a lot of money for something that will provide the community with a lot of great opportunities and his vision of this race track would serve as a community center.

Selectman Suprenant said that several residents in Town are active in the sport of Polo, and he asked if Mr. Janjigian had any consideration for that at the track. Mr. Janjigian said he would not be opposed to having Polo at the track, as long as it wasn't disruptive.

Vice Chair Dowling thanked Mr. Janjigian for his interest in bringing his business to the Town. She stated they would have to weigh the quality of life and if it would be a benefit for the Town. She stated that she would have to do some research as she doesn't know too much about horse tracks. Vice Chair Dowling asked if Mr. Janjigian owned other race tracks and also asked if, other than Saratoga, could he provide another track that she could review to compare size wise. Mr. Janjigian stated that he does not own any other tracks and he said the conventional tracks are much larger than what he would like to build. He stated that he would love to be a mirror version of Keeneland in Lexington Kentucky. He said he thinks it's the most beautiful facility. Vice Chair Dowling asked with 223 acres, on a race day, what would be the maximum amount of people the facility would hold. Mr. Janjigian stated the building itself would not accommodate thousands of people and that in addition to the building they would have tents and benches, so on a perfect day he would envision a few thousand people at the facility.

Mrs. Davis stated that it's not going to be a large building, the goal would be to have it be a family event place. Vice Chair Dowling stated that it is important to have a great working relationship with Mr. Janjigian if he does come to Sturbridge but she wondered if he decided to sell the facility once its built, where would that leave them. She said they may not have the same working relationship with the next owner. Mr. Janjigian stated he is involving his family in this process, so he would hope it stays in the family. He stated that he is not doing this for financial involvement so he certainly would not be selling it and he would hope that his family's interest in this would be the same.

Chair Blanchard stated she appreciates Mr. Janjigian's interest in the Town, but she foresees lots of problems with the traffic. She said she realizes that they have put plans in place to help, but not everyone will forgo those routes and plans.

Jean Bubon, Town Planner, stated that the land is zoned for rural residential so it would take some kind of zoning change.

Chair Blanchard stated she thinks it's a good idea but it will be a long tedious process.

Tim Burke, engineer of the project, shared his screen to provide the plans, beginning with a bird's eye view of the site. He showed drawings of how the track would fit on the land and he showed renderings to show Mr. Janjigian's initial thoughts and vision.

July 6, 2020

Vice Chair Dowling stated she is not committed to endorse a project and she wants to look into how it would impact Sturbridge. She asked if the amount of days or weeks for racing out of the year were going to be contractual. Mr. Janjigian stated he would like to cover himself a little bit and have some leeway, but he would be willing to contractually put that in writing. Chair Blanchard stated these questions are for down the line, and that they were looking for words of support because they are wondering if they should go forward.

Motion: To have Mr. Janjigian move forward with the process with the Board of Selectmen's support step by step By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Discussion: Vice Chair Dowling stated she didn't think that there was going to be a motion tonight and at this point in time without having a chance to do more research she is not willing to encourage or discourage the project.

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

Vote: 3-0-1 (Vice Chair Dowling Abstained) (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Department Reports

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges stated that an Arbor Day tree was planted at Old Sturbridge Village. He informed the Board that the Health Department had reported the first EEE mosquito had been found in Orange, Massachusetts. He also stated that the water system is back up and running how it should be.

Building Department

Nelson Burlingame, Building Commissioner, came before the Board virtually to give his department highlights. He stated that through the Covid-19 pandemic permits were still were taken out, and he added that outdoor dining was a success. Mr. Burlingame stated that compared to last year residential permits aren't doing bad. He went over the commercial permits and what they have been working with. He stated that Stonewall Grille will likely expand, the Thai Place has started construction, and that Sawdust Café had invested in a patio. He said that Table Three has made a plan for social distancing, which includes a tunnel underground to allow for easy access from the kitchen to the buildings. Mr. Burlingame thanked the businesses in town for investing during the pandemic and he added that they've done a really great job through all of this. He went over potential projects that may be coming in the future.

Recreation Department

Annie Roscioli, Recreation Director, came before the Board and gave them an overview of the department's events over the last year. She stated that during the pandemic had many cancelled events, but the events that they were able to hold did receive very good feedback. She stated that they are not able to have summer programs with the current guidelines, but in replacement they will have outdoor educational classes, for ages 10 and under. Ms. Roscioli stated that in terms of other activities, the youth league has returned to practicing and the games can happen. She stated that they will be deciding about concerts on the common on a week by week basis.

Department of Public Works

Butch Jackson, Director of Department of Public Works, brought his reports from April and May to the Board. He stated that main highlights included the setup of the Farmers Market, and the renovations at the Department of Public Works to adhere to the Covid-19 guidelines.

Water and Sewer

July 6, 2020

Shane Moody, Veolia Water, came before the board with his April and May reports. He stated that they just updated a motor in one of the pumps. He stated that lead and copper sampling will be starting in July and the results will be collected by September.

Review and possible action on a change order for substitute pumps for the Fiske Hill Water Pump Station project.

Motion: To approve Change Order # 1 to the Fiske Hill Water Pump Station project to replace the pumps for \$35,598.62 By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the FY21 milling and paving bids

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works, explained the bids he had received from different companies.

Motion: To accept the bid for milling services from Garrity Reclamation and Palmer Paving for paving services for the FY 21 Paving Program By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the summer 2020 paving program

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works, went over where they would be paving.

Motion: To approve the FY 21 Paving Program and authorize up to \$400,000 of Chapter 90 Funds for FY 21 Road Improvements By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on revisions to the Sturbridge Police Department's Use of Force Policy.

Motion: To approve the proposed changes to Chapters 200-7 and 200-8 of the policies of the Sturbridge Police Department pending review and approval by Town Counsel By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Discussion: Vice Chair Dowling suggested that Town Counsel take a look at the language. Earl Dessert, Interim Police Chief, said that this was always in the policy but it was kind of hidden and after the George Floyd incident he felt it needed to be amended.

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

July 6, 2020

Concur with the appointment of Reed Ide to the Sturbridge Cultural Council

Reed Ide stated he is committed to diversity and looks forward to being a part of the cultural fabric of the community.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Reed Ide to the Sturbridge Cultural Council with a term of three year beginning July 1, 202 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Concur with the appointment of Dr. Alicia Reddin to the Cultural Council

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Dr. Alicia Reddin to the Sturbridge Cultural Council for a three-year term with an effective date of July 1, 2020 By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Concur with the reappointment of Rich Paradise as a full member to the Trails Committee

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Rich Paradise to the Trails Committee as a full voting member for a three-year term effective July 1, 2020 By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the replacement of the roof top air handling unit at the Public Safety Complex

Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, gave the Board an overview of the project and said that Town Counsel had reviewed the contract.

Motion: To accept the bid from New England Mechanical Services for \$47,381 for the replacement of the roof top unit at the Public Safety Complex and approve the agreement By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the bay door replacement at the Public Safety Complex.

Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, stated this was one of the capital items. She said the doors are failing one by one and she is excited to work with the contractors and take care of the first responders at the Public Safety Complex.

July 6, 2020

Motion: To accept the bid from Door Systems, Inc. for the replacement of the fire apparatus bay doors at the Public Safety Facility for \$74,358.52 and approve the agreement By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action of transferring Truck 27 from the Department of Public Works to Burgess Elementary School.

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works, stated that Burgess needs a truck to do their errands and they have been using their own vehicles.

Motion: To approve the transfer Truck 27 from the Department of Public Works to the Burgess Elementary School By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on a contract for heating oil for FY 21.

Robyn Chrabaszcz, went over the quotes she had received. She stated that there is a list of locations in the contract but it doesn't list the Route 20 pump station and she would like that added.

Motion: To accept the bid from American Discount Oil for heating oil for \$1.59 per gallon and approve the agreement and to add the Route 20 pump station and have the Town Administrator sign the contract By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on a contract for unleaded gas, diesel fuel, and propane for FY 21.

Motion: To accept the contract with Dennis for unleaded gas and diesel fuel and allow the Town Administrator to sign the contract By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Motion: To accept the contract with Amerigas for propane and allow the Town Administrator to sign the contract By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

July 6, 2020

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)**

Consideration and possible action on an agreement between the Sergeants of the Sturbridge Police Department, the Sturbridge Police Association, and the Town of Sturbridge for the temporary increase in compensation during the term of the Interim Chief of Police.

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that while Lieutenant Dessert was filling the role of Interim Police Chief some of his duties as the duties as a lieutenant have been passed down to the sergeants. He stated that the sergeants had approached him about a temporary increase in pay. Chair Blanchard asked what additional duties the sergeants had and she stated that she would personally like to see a list of those duties before approving an increase in pay. Earl Dessert, Interim Police Chief, stated that in order to keep the quality control in the department there needs to be a series of tiers of people. Vice Chair Dowling said she thinks it is a reasonable request. She also stated she feels for the same reason the acting Chief should receive an increase in pay. Mr. Bridges stated that when Interim Chief Dessert was appointed they did increase his pay. Vice Chair Dowling stated she believes the sergeants should receive consideration. Selectman Kaitbenski stated he agreed with Vice Chair Dowling, but also has no problem waiting for a list of duties.

The Board decided to wait until their next meeting to act on this matter, after receiving a list of additional duties.

Consideration and possible action on accepting the resignation of Andrea Mensen as Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator.

Motion: To reluctantly accept the resignation of Andrea Mensen as Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator, effective date to be determined By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Consideration and possible action on an agreement for engineering services for design of the municipal parking lot for 501 Main Street.

Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Coordinator, stated that at Special Town Meeting in January they approved the purchase of 501 Main Street and she had received three quotes for the engineering. She is recommending CHA Engineering to design an early planning and site plan review for a new parking lot at 501 Main Street.

Motion: To accept the proposal from CHA Engineering for \$12,200 for the design of the parking lot at 501 Main Street and approve the agreement By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Old Business

Consideration and possible action on a contract for elevator services for FY 21.

July 6, 2020

Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, stated that a couple meetings ago the Board discussed elevator services for the four buildings that have elevators. Since then she did get some quotes for other companies, and she recommends Otis Elevator for FY21 elevator services pending legal review.

Motion: To approve the good and services contract with Otis Elevator for FY 21 elevator servicing pending legal review By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

Mr. Bridges mentioned that the Nursery School had a flood in kitchen and it is completely destroyed. He mentioned they will be filing an insurance claim.

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Bridges went over the Governors new guidelines. He mentioned that he has two requests. First, he is asking for the Boards support on the delay of opening to the public for full time hours. He stated he wished everything was in place to be ready at this point, but that there is still some work to be done and they need a little more time to coordinate. Second, he informed the Board that there were temporary guidelines that came out about traveling and quarantining expectations for employees. He went over the order which was given to the employees. Mr. Bridges stated that essential employees can be tested once arriving back from vacation and if they test negative they can return to work or if they test positive they can use sick time to recover. Vice Chair Dowling asked if an employee is traveling due to a death or a family emergency could they be treated as an essential employee and get tested to return to work. She also asked if non-essential employees were able to work remotely after they vacation and Mr. Bridges said yes.

Motion: To approve the proposed policy with the stipulation that if an employee is required to go out of New England, New York, or New Jersey for a death or family emergency area that they can use some sick time By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)

New Business

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

Approval of Minutes

June 10, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of June 10, 2020 as amended By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

July 6, 2020

**Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: ABSTAINED, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 3-0-1 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent) (Selectman Suprenant Abstained)**

June 15, 2020

**Motion: To approve the minutes of June 15, 2020 as amended By: Vice Chair Dowling
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)**

June 29, 2020

**Motion: To approve the minutes of June 29, 2020 By: Selectman Kaitbenski
2nd: Selectman Suprenant
Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: ABSTAINED, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 3-0-1 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent) (Vice Chair Dowling Abstained)**

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

**Motion: To adjourn at 8:57pm By: Vice Chair Dowling
2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski
Roll Call Vote: Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Chair Blanchard: YES.
Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Dunnigan Absent)**

Adjourned at 8:57pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

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