

August 17, 2020

**Board of Selectmen  
August 17, 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 6:05pm**

**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.

Selectman Suprenant read the executive session statement: To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, if the Chair declares that an open session may have detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

**Motion: To move into executive session By: Chair Blanchard**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.**

**Public Service Announcements**

NONE

**Moment of Silence**

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

**Chair Blanchard read through the agenda.**

**Consideration and possible action on a request by Yankee Spirits to approve the pledge of their liquor license to Rockland Trust Company**

Nike Amanti, the attorney representing Yankee Spirits, informed the Board that Yankee Spirits is in the process of restructuring existing debt, and this trust company has asked Yankee Spirits to amend the current holder of the debt.

**Motion: To approve the pledge of the liquor license by Yankee Spirits, Inc. to Rockland Trust Company By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: 4-0-1 (Selectman Dunnigan Abstained)**

**Department Reports**

**Police Department**

Earl Dessert, Interim Police Chief, came before the Board with the Police Departments June and July reports. He stated that in June the department received accreditations. Chair Blanchard asked about the breaking and entering incidents. Interim Chief Dessert stated he has put several announcements out about the breaking and entering happening in Town. He said that it is a gang of juveniles, stealing cars or going into unlocked cars and stealing the valuables in them. Vice Chair Dowling asked if he saw any kind of pattern. Interim Chief Dessert stated that most of the stolen vehicles are being recovered in Hartford. He stated that some of the gang members have been known to be armed, and most of these crimes are happening after midnight. Interim Chief Dessert encouraged anyone who sees and suspicious activity to call 911 and report it.

**Water and Sewer**

Shane Moody, Veolia Water, came before the Board with the June and July reports. Vice Chair Dowling stated that her house is one that has the water tested for lead and copper and wondered if there were any houses that had high numbers or traces. Mr. Moody stated there were no homes that have traces of lead and copper. He said they will be testing all the schools in September, but he is not anticipating any issues. Selectman Suprenant asked if it was true that they have one hauler than can dump septic overnight. Mr. Moody stated there are two haulers that can dump overnight. Selectman Suprenant asked if they take their own sample and leave it there for Veolia. Mr. Moody said that they've been doing that for over a year, and

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it's been working really well. Mr. Moody added that they will be doing construction on the Fiske Hill water pump in the next couple of weeks.

**Town Administrator**

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that the owner of Sturbridge Marketplace is having challenges with their portion of Old Mill Dam. He stated that McClure Engineering is contracted to do the testing. Mr. Bridges said that Old Sturbridge Village has decided to shut down their food service and catering due to COVID-19, and weddings will be put on hold.

**Consideration and possible action on the resignation of part time dispatcher Melissa Palmer from the Sturbridge Police Department.**

**Motion: To accept the resignation of Melissa Palmer as a part time dispatcher with the Sturbridge Police Department effective July 30, 2020 By: Selectman Dunnigan**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the resignation of Todd Miller as the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator.**

**Motion: To accept the resignation of Todd Miller as Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator effective August 10, 2020 By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible on an agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for the acceptance of a \$150,000 Mass Trails Grant for the Grand Trunk Trail Westville Section.**

Tom Chamberland explained that through Mass Trails they had applied for a grant and Mass Trails funded \$150,000 to help cover the cost of engineering design. He stated that it is a one year grant so the clock is ticking.

**Motion: To approve the agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for a \$150,000 Trail Grant By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on a Challenge Partnership Agreement between the Department of the Army and Town of Sturbridge, Massachusetts for the construction of a portion of the Grand Trunk Trail.**

Tom Chamberland explained to the Board that this is a national process to allow the partners to do work on the property and that this is just finalizing the agreement with the Army Core of Engineers.

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**Motion: To approve the Challenge Partnership Agreement between the Department of the Army and Town of Sturbridge for the construction of a shared use path along the Westville Recreation Area By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on a contract for commissioning services for Roof Top Units (RTU) 1 and 2 at the Public Safety Facility.**

Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, stated that roof top unit #1 is on order for the Public Safety Facility and roof top unit #2 was replaced last year after funds were appropriated at Special Town Meeting. She explained that she would like to have these units professionally commissioned at the same time to make sure they are installed and function properly. She informed the Board that these funds remain in both project budgets.

**Motion: To approve the agreement with C3 Consulting for commission services for Public Safety Facility roof top HVAC units for a price not to exceed \$9,000 By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the lease of an officer trailer for the school bus drivers for one year to be located at the Department of Public Works Facility.**

Butch Jackson, Department of Public Works, explained the reasoning behind wanting to add a trailer for the bus drivers. He stated the trailer will provide more separation for the bus drivers, and expose less people to each other. Vice Chair Dowling asked if he would be using the COVID-19 money for this. Mr. Bridges stated they could but they would need to use additional funds from the CARES Act to cover utility expenses.

**Motion: To authorize the leasing of an office trailer from Willscott for a year at a cost of \$45,434.92 plus insurance, and additional expense for utility connections, to be paid for by CARES Act – COVID-19 Funds By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action for a survey for 70 Cedar Street.**

Mr. Bridges explained that 70 Cedar Street is one of the locations being studied as a location for a new Senior Center. He said that part of the study included a full survey, but that portion of the project was to be authorized after the initial review of the site was prepared. He added that 60 Cedar Street, directly adjacent to 70 Cedar Street, is the proposed location for a multiuse sports field and that study is underway as well. Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, stated that both McClure and Levesque are highly qualified, and she will leave it up to the board, but Levesque came in with a lower rate.

**Motion: To authorize the survey for 70 Cedar Street and accept the proposal from Levesque Geomatics in the amount of \$7,500 By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**Consideration and possible action on the election workers for the primary and general elections.**

**Motion: To approve the election workers for the upcoming primary and general elections By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the primary election warrant.**

**Motion: To approve and sign the warrant for the primary election By: Selectman Suprenant**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Old Business**

**Discussion on upgrade to the water meters.**

Mr. Bridges explained that at a previous Board of Selectmen meeting there was a request to get pricing for the cost to upgrade the water meters to a meter that can transmit its data to a location rather than a staff member driving through Town taking readings from them. He asked Shane Moody of Veolia Water for this information. Mr. Bridges stated that the cost for the equipment per meter is \$190.00 and does not include installation. He said there are approximately 1,750 meters which would make the total cost \$332,500 plus the cost of installation. Vice Chair Dowling asked about notifying residents monthly or every 2 weeks when they hit a certain percentage over their typical use. Mr. Bridges said they are still working out a process to do that. Chair Blanchard said she wouldn't support the upgrading of the water meters at this price, and the Board agreed.

**COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Bridges provided the schools reopening plan. Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he is disappointed that the schools went against Governor Baker's recommendations. He stated they have spent a lot of money to keep the buses clean, they just spent money on an additional area for the bus drivers, and he thinks that children should be going back to school full time with all these safety precautions in place. Chair Blanchard said that decision is not within the Board's realm.

Mr. Bridges stated that they are going to cut down on the gatekeepers at Town Hall and Center Office Building and Vice Chair Dowling suggested that they hire volunteers as gatekeepers to keep them on staff. Selectman Dunnigan agreed and stated that people are going to be out of work, so this would be a good option for people looking for work.

**New Business**

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Selectman Dunnigan asked about when they would be starting to meet again in person. Mr. Bridges said the Board can come together in one room, but they wouldn't be able to open it to public, so they would have to figure out how to merge the two. Chair Blanchard asked Mr. Bridges to work out the logistics, because there's better interaction when they are together in person. Selectman Kaitbenski stated he is ready to get back. Selectman Suprenant said it can work. Vice Chair Dowling said she doesn't have a problem going back if they follow strict Covid-19 guidelines. She said that Boards and Committees, especially those of volunteers and those that meet in the smaller conference rooms, shouldn't be required to come back to meet in person.

Items from the Board of Assessors:

Letter from the Board of Assessors regarding Preliminary Billing.

Ann Murphy, Principle Assessor, explained that given the possibility that the Town would not be able to set a tax rate, the Board of Assessors are requesting the authority from the Commissioner of the Bureau of Accounts to be able to issue preliminary tax bills. She said that a preliminary tax bill would be based upon a tax rate that could change once the Town was able to fix a tax rate. This would provide for one bill to go out under one tax rate and another to go out under the final rate.

Letter from the Board of Assessors informing the Board of Selectmen of a vacancy on the Board.

Ann Murphy informed the Board that Board of Assessors member, Dale Meehan, has moved out of town creating a vacancy on the Board. Chair Blanchard said the vacancy has to be advertised since it is an elected board. She explained that once they have applicants then they would have a joint meeting with the Board of Assessors and the Board of Selectmen. Chair Blanchard added that the person appointed would be on Board of Assessors until the next election.

Letter from the Board of Assessors requesting the setting of a hearing on the classification of values for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 6:45 PM.

**Motion: To set the public hearing for the classification of property for Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 6:45 PM By: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Correspondence**

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence.

Vice Chair Dowling referenced the letter that the Board received from Mr. Riordan, stating that it is not first time a resident has reached out about the intersection of New Boston Road and Route 20. She said she would like to look into his suggestion. Chair Blanchard stated she had responded to Mr. Riordan telling him that there was a report that came in a couple years ago from the state. Mr. Bridges said that prior to Covid-19, they were talking to Mass DOT about the possibilities for that intersection. He stated he will follow up with them.

**Approval of Minutes**

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**Motion: To approve the minutes of August 3, 2020 as amended By: Selectman Kaitbenski  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Suprenant**

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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Citizen's forum**

NONE

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn at 8:30pm By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice Chair Dowling**


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

**Vote: 5-0**

**Adjourned at 8:30pm**

**Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen**

**Clerk of the Board:**

 **Date signed: 09-18-2020**