

September 9, 2020

**Board of Selectmen
September 9, 2020
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

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

Absent:

Selectman Chase Kaitbenski

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:30pm

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.

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Service Announcements

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Vice Chair Dowling stated that the Special Events Committee is planning to hold the Home of the Brave run virtually this year and it will be the weekend of November 14th. She said that you will choose your own route and more information will be available in the coming weeks.

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.

Public Hearing- Change of Category Liquor License- 3 Arnold Road- Jonathan Cook and Suzanne LePage

Selectman Suprenant read the legal advertisement from the Southbridge Evening News.

Suzanne LePage, President of Homefield Brewing, said they have only served beer and wine up until now. She stated that during Covid they shut down, and came up with new ideas. Mrs. LePage said they have a lot of local fruit that would make excellent cocktails so they are looking to obtain a full liquor license. Selectman Suprenant stated that Homefield has been a great business for the community, and he hopes they keep the local aspect. Vice Chair Dowling stated anything they can do to help local restaurants, they should try to encourage, and she thinks it's great that they are trying to move forward and stay optimistic.

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

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 3-0-1 (Selectman Dunnigan Abstained) (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

**Motion: To approve the change of category for the Homefield Brewing liquor license to all alcohol
By: Selectman Suprenant**

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 3-0-1 (Selectman Dunnigan Abstained) (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Public Hearing- allocating the local property tax levy among the classes of real property and personal property for FY2021.

Selectman Suprenant read the legal ad advertised in the Southbridge Evening News.

Ann Murphy, Principle Assessor, came before the Board to present them with the FY2021 real property and personal property tax rates.

Vice Chair Dowling thanked Mr. Bridges and the staff for their efforts to make this year's tax rate stay the same as last year.

Motion: To close the public hearing By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

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Motion: To adopt a single tax rate By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Motion: To not have an open space discount on the tax rate By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Motion: To not have residential exemption on the tax rate By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Motion: To not have small commercial exemption on the tax rate By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Department Reports

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges provided the Board with his report and welcomed questions. Selectman Suprenant asked about the Green Communities Grant for \$176,918 wondering what they were spending the money on. Mr. Bridges said the money was being spent on different updates, and he will send the breakdown to the Board. He mentioned that they will be seeing an agreement for this grant at their next meeting.

Mr. Bridges had additional items to add to his report which included:

Pilot truck stop is under construction, and the Town will be taking their septage, and charging them for about 4 weeks.

He said that the horse track teleconference is on Friday where they will see where things are at and he will provide information to the Board afterwards. Vice Chair Dowling said she would like to see a written time line so she can be more converse with residents.

Mr. Bridges mentioned that the church is working with the Town on electric charging stations, and a collaboration for sidewalks outside the buildings that all share a space.

He also mentioned that there is a project to codify the Town charter and bylaws stating that certain tweaks and adjustments are being made. He said the Board will be receiving it, and they will have to make about 30 different decisions.

Mr. Bridges said that New England Cold received final approval from Planning Board and Conservation Commission so they are good to go. He added that the Town was approached by another cold facility who will be submitting a letter of intent for Tax Increment Financing in the same area.

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Lastly, he asked the Board approve him to share 37.5 hours of his vacation time with Robyn Chrabasz due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to take some time for her family's needs.

Motion: To allow Jeff Bridges to share 37.5 hours of his vacation time with Robyn Chrabasz for this year By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Suprenant: YES, Chair Blanchard: NO

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

Consideration and possible action on the retirement of Mary Lou Volpe as a Firefighter / EMT with the Sturbridge Fire Department.

John Grasso, Fire Chief, presented Mary Lou Volpe a certificate from the Board of Selectmen for her years of service with the Sturbridge Fire Department.

Chair Blanchard and the members of the Board acknowledged her for making a big difference in the Town and the community and for being the first person appointed to this position in the Town of Sturbridge. They agreed she would be greatly missed and they wished her luck in her years of retirement. The Board thanked her for her years of service and congratulated her on a very successful career. Mary Lou Volpe thanked the Board, the Fire Chief, and the Town for giving her the opportunity to work in Sturbridge.

Consideration and possible action of acceptance of a donation of substantial amounts of personal protective equipment to the Sturbridge Fire and Police Departments.

Motion: To accept the donations with the gratitude of the Sturbridge Board of Selectmen By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the resignation of Scott Belanger as a Dispatcher with the Sturbridge Police Department.

Motion: To accept the resignation, with regrets, of full-time Dispatcher Scott Belanger By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the resignation of on-call Firefighter / EMT Scott Belanger from the Sturbridge Fire Department.

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Motion: To accept the resignation, with regrets, of On Call Firefighter / EMT Scott Belanger of the Sturbridge Fire Department By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the concurrence of the appointment of Call Firefighter / EMT Robert Moynagh to a full time position with the Sturbridge Fire Department.

John Grasso, Fire Chief, stated that Robert Moynagh has been a part time firefighter with the department since 2012. He stated that he received a number of applicants for the full time position, one of them being Mr. Moynagh, and during the interview process it became clear that Mr. Moynagh would be the best fit. Mr. Moynagh thanked the Board, the Chief, and the department for all the support and stated he appreciates the opportunity.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Robert Moynagh as a Full-time Firefighter / EMT with the Sturbridge Fire Department effective October 6, 2020 at a rate of \$24.54 per hour By:

Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the purchase of Fire Pumper for the Sturbridge Fire Department.

Chief Grasso stated that several months ago the department had a failure to one of the engines. He stated the Department of Public Works and the dealership determined that it suffered a cracked frame rail and was not reliable anymore.

Motion: To approve the purchase of the Pierce Fire Pumper Truck from Allegiance Fire & Rescue of Walpole, Massachusetts for \$659,643 as recommended by Chief Grasso By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the appointment of Marc Widing as a part-time dispatcher with the Sturbridge Police Department.

Interim Chief Dessert stated that Mr. Widing started with the Sturbridge Police Department as an intern and a full time student. He said when the position opened up Mr. Widing applied and was the number one candidate. Mr. Widing thanked Interim Chief Dessert, the Board, and the Town for the appointment and stated he hopes to do great things for the Town.

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Motion: To concur with the appointment of Marc Widing as a part-time dispatcher with the Sturbridge Police Department effective September 10, 2020 at a rate of \$20.80 per hour By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the concurrence of appointment of Alexandra McConnon as Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator.

Mr. Bridges mentioned that he had interviewed for the position, and Ms. McConnon came out as the top candidate. Ms. McConnon stated she is looking forward to this opportunity.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Alexandra McConnon as Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator effective September 24, 2020 at a rate of \$19.75 per hour By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action the acceptance of the resignation of Holly Lapidus as Administrative Assistant to the Conservation Commission.

Motion: To accept with regret the resignation of Holly Lapidus as Administrative Assistant to the Conservation Commission By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the purchase of security camera systems for the Town Hall, Central Office Building, and Public Safety Building.

Motion: To accept the proposals from Valley Communications for security cameras for the Town Hall, Center Office Building, and Public Safety Building By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the contract for installation of fiber optic cable between town buildings.

Motion: To accept the proposal from Comm-Tract for the fiber optic network installation By: Selectman Suprenant

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2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the contract for annual audit services

Motion: To approve the extension for audit services for Robert E. Brown Certified Public Accountants for fiscal years 2021, 2022, 2023 as recommended by the Finance Director By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on an agreement for hazardous materials removal consulting services.

Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator, explained to the Board that she received three quotes and would like to go with Fuss & O'Neill's contract. Selectman Suprenant questioned if it was based on fee why she would have picked this company over a company that the Town has used in the past. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated the time estimated is why this decision was made. Vice Chair Dowling stated she will defer to Ms. Chrabaszcz's opinion, but when you have a good experience with a company and they come in close to another company who hasn't done work with the Town she would think we would go with the company we have a good rapport with.

Motion: To accept the quote from Fuss & O'Neill for the Non-traditional Work Plan and Pre-Construction Phases of their agreement for a cost of \$5,550 By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Chair Blanchard

Roll Call Vote: Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Suprenant: NO, Chair Blanchard: YES

Vote: 3-1 (Selectman Suprenant Opposed) (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on providing a letter of support from the Board of Selectmen to a Limited Application Waiver for the herbicidal treatment of right-of-ways by the Department of Public Works.

Motion: To authorize the Chair to sign the letter of support on behalf of the Sturbridge Board of Selectmen By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

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Consideration and possible action on the acceptance of donations to the Senior Center.

Motion: To accept the donations with the gratitude from the Board of Selectmen By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaibenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on an amendment of an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration for the funding of the construction of a portion of the Grand Trunk Trail.

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that with the recent award of a \$150,000 Mass Trails Grant, those funds need to be added to the funding mix for the ongoing design and construction project of the Grand Trunk Trail. He stated that these funds will be added to funds previously received from the Commonwealth of \$131,038.15 for a total of \$281,038.15 of Commonwealth Funds applied to the project.

Motion: To approve the amended agreement By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaibenski Absent)

Consideration and possible action on the concurrence of appointment of Christopher Kane as a full time dispatcher to the Sturbridge Police Department.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Christopher Kane as a full time dispatcher effective September 10, 2020 at a rate of \$20.80 per hour By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaibenski Absent)

Old Business

COVID-19 Update

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that he has been looking into the logistics of in person meetings. He said the challenge is the Board can meet in person, but the public being involved in an in person meeting isn't so doable given the space. He stated that they are trying to work out how to have a GoToMeeting feature where the Board meets in person and the public would be able to access from the teleconference side, but the audio is an issue.

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Vice Chair Dowling asked if Mr. Bridges could send out the contact of the potential race track to the chair of the Board of Health.

New Business

Vice Chair Dowling stated that the Sturbridge Board of Health and the Charlton Board of Health have been in contact about 508 International applying for a live entertainment license in Charlton. She suggested they put this on a future agenda to discuss what they would do in the event 508 International applies for an entertainment license in Sturbridge.

Discussion on petition for purchase of 66 Westwood Drive

Selectman Suprenant stated any detailed discussion should happen in executive session if the property is up for sale, but he wondered if the Town received a notice that there was a potential buyer. Mr. Bridges said the Town has not received notice. Chair Blanchard explained that if someone is interested in buying the property and changing the youth the Town would need to be notified and then they would have the right to take a look at purchasing it. Selectman Suprenant said until they get a notice there is nothing they can do.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read through the correspondence

Vice Chair Dowling stated that the YouTube video that discusses what a resident is concerned with can be found under 508 International Red Trail.

Approval of Minutes

August 17, 2020

Motion: To approve the minutes of August 17, 2020 as amended By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

Citizen's forum

NONE

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 9:01pm By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Chair Blanchard

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

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Kaitbenski Absent)

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Adjourned at 9:01pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Suprenant", written over a horizontal line.

Date signed:

10-01-2020