

April 20, 2021

**Board of Selectmen
April 20, 2021
Town Hall**

AMENDED

Present:

Mary Blanchard, Chair
Mary Dowling, Vice Chair
Selectman Chase Kaitbenski
Selectman Ian Dunnigan
Selectman Jamie Goodwin

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Alex McConnon, Executive Assistant

Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Blanchard read the agenda.

Reorganization of the Board of Selectmen

Motion: To nominate Mary Blanchard the Board of Selectmen Chair.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Mr. Bridges asked the Board of Selectmen if there were any other nominations. There were no other nominations for Chair.

Motion: Motion to close the nominations for Chair.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Motion: To make Mary Blanchard the Board of Selectmen Chair.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Nominate Mary Dowling the Board of Selectmen Vice Chair.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

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2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Chair Blanchard asked the Board of Selectmen if there were any other nominations. There were no other nominations for Vice Chair.

Motion: Motion to close the nominations.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in Favor

Vote 5-0

Motion: To make Chase Kaitbenski the Board of Selectmen Clerk.

By: Chair Blanchard

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Chair Blanchard asked the Board of Selectmen if there were any other nominations. There were no other nominations for Clerk.

All in Favor

Vote 5-0

Public Service Announcements

Selectman Kaitbenski and Selectman Goodwin thanked all the people who voted, supported Sturbridge, and congratulated each other. Vice Chair Dowling, Selectman Dunnigan, and Chair Blanchard congratulated Selectman Kaitbenski on his reelection and welcomed Selectman Goodwin. They also thanked Selectman Suprenant for his years of service.

Chair Blanchard read the Arbor Day proclamation.

Motion: Motion to support Arbor Day.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Vice Chair Dowling also thanked Selectman Gimas for her years of service.

Moment of Silence

The Selectmen held a moment of silence in honor of all those affected by COVID-19.

Review of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting Warrants

The Selectmen reviewed the warrants for the upcoming Annual Town Meeting on Monday, June 7, 2021.

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Article #1: TOWN REPORTS:

Motion: To place and support the article.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #2: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

Motion: To place and support the Community Preservation Committee report.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #3: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ADMINISTRATION FUNDS:

Motion: To place and support Article 3, Community Preservation and Administration funds.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #4: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION DEBT SERVICE:

Motion: To place and support the Community Preservation Debt Service article.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #5: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMUNITY-WIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN:

Mr. Bridges said that the number currently listed would change.

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #6: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION DRAPER-MILLS MONUMENT RESTORATION:

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Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #7: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION GRAVESTONE RESTORATION:

Motion: To place and support the Community Preservation Gravestone Restoration.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #8: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION RECREATIONAL TRAILS MASTER PLAN:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #9: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION STREETER BEACH ENTRY ROAD FEASIBILITY STUDY AND DESIGN:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #10: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION TRAIL CONSTRUCTION:

Motion: To place and support the Community Preservation Trail Construction.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Chair Blanchard stated that the Board of Selectmen would go through Article #11: TOWN BUDGET separately.

Article #12: ROAD CONSTRUCTION, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE:

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Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Mr. Bridges said this line item was wiped out due to COVID to make room in the budget and the Town is trying to build it back to its original \$400,000+ but the amount of paving will still be done through the Chapter 91, so the paving program would not suffer.

Article #13: PUBLIC ACCESS DEPARTMENT:

Motion: To place and support the Public Access Department.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Mr. Bridges said this cost is more than what has been in the past due to the upgrade of equipment from analog and to provide broadcast capability to broadcast anywhere.

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #14: STURBRIDGE TOURIST ASSOCIATION:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #15: BETTERMENT COMMITTEE:

Chair Blanchard said Polly Currie and the Bloom Committee are separate. Vice Dowling asked what the plan was with wayfinding improvements. Mr. Bridges said it goes back into the fund or it could be used for something like the "Welcome to Sturbridge" sign.

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #16: CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN:

Robyn Chrabaszcz, Facilities Coordinator said the lightning protection for the buildings would be a series of rods and cables that would be grounded and direct any direct lightning strikes away

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from the buildings and into the ground. Ms. Chrabascz said that none of the Town buildings currently has lightning protection. Per Ms. Chrabascz, it is excluding the Senior Center because its future is pending. Mr. Bridges asked Ms. Chrabascz to update the number with the Senior Center.

Motion: To place and support the Capital Improvement Plan.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #17: AMBULANCE STABILIZATION FUND:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote 5-0

Article #18: OPEB TRUST FUND:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #19: TAX RATE RELIEF:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #20: REVALUATION/INTERIM ADJUSTMENTS:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #21: REVOLVING FUNDS – SPENDING LIMITS FY22:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

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2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #22: WATER DEPARTMENT:

Motion: To place subject to the numbers being plugged in.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #23: SEWER DEPARTMENT:

Motion: To place pending the amount.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Ms. Barry, Finance Director clarified that the budget numbers are the numbers that are necessary for the Water and Sewer budget. She said because of the declining usage, they are trying to balance it and that is why there are numbers missing in the draft articles. Per Ms. Barry, the unknown is the amount of money the Town will be comfortable with using from the Fund Balance. Mr. Bridges said the number to Southbridge would go away but long-term, it is money that would not be spent on Capital or Septage.

Vice Chair Dowling asked how much the fees have gone up. Ms. Barry said they continue to go up, as do the rates in Southbridge. Per Ms. Barry, the amount currently paid is more than it was with the original contract agreement. Vice Chair Dowling asked why people are using less water. Ms. Barry said the usage has been going down prior to COVID-19 and people have been conserving water.

Article #24: SEWER PROJECT DEBT:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #25: PIPE COATINGS MAINTENANCE PROGRAM:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

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Vote: 5-0

Article #26: DESIGN AND PERMITTING FOR A NEW WASTEWATER PUMP STATION AND FORCE MAIN TO SERVICE THE FISKE HILL AREA:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #27: INFLOW AND INFILTRATION STUDY AND REPAIRS:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Mr. Bridges explained that the DEP is requiring all municipal wastewater utilities to stop ground flow into the system. Ms. Barry said this is a 10-year program and the Town is in year two.

Article #28: TAX INCREMENT FINANCING AGREEMENT AND PROJECT CERTIFICATION: RLS COMPLETE REGIONAL, LLC:

Motion: To place and support Article 28.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Mr. Bridges explained that RLS is a Coldstorage facility. The Board of Selectmen appointed a committee, consistent with policy, which consisted of Mr. Bridges, the Town Planner, the Assessor, the Economic Development Coordinator, and a member of the Board of Selectmen. They applied for a tax increment financing economic development incentive per Town policy. Mr. Bridges said they recommended to the Board of Selectmen that this be approved; however, this agreement is subject to Town meeting approval.

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #29: EMERGENCY SERVICES RADIO SYSTEM EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF A NEW INEROPERABLE RADIO SYSTEM:

Motion: To place and support

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

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Mr. Bridges said there are several dead zones in Town and this consultant will design a system to 95% penetration of the signal capability in the center of the road. Per Mr. Bridges they will also research where the dead zones are in the school buildings.

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #30: EASEMENT TO NATIONAL GRID/MASS.ELECTRIC FOR UTILITY POLE /ANCHOR AND GUY, 65 WHITTEMORE ROAD:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #31: ACCEPTANCE OF EXTENSION OF HILLSIDE DRIVE:

Motion: To place and support Article 31.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #32: EASEMENT ON 77 FARQUHAR ROAD:

Motion: To place and support Article 32.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Mr. Bridges said Article #33, "READOPTION OF CHARTER" is a placeholder right now and he is unsure if it will be moved forward yet.

Article #34: READOPTION OF GENERAL BYLAWS:

Motion: To place and support Article 34.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #35: ACCEPTING THE PROVISIONS OF M.G.L. c. 60, SECTION 3F ESTABLISHING A STURBRIDGE VETERANS ASSISTANCE FUND:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

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Vice Chair Dowling asked if this was on the tax bill itself, or on a card similar to the one for the low-income seniors who meet the economic threshold. Ms. Barry said if it passed at Town Meeting, there would be a second check box on the tax bill.

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #36: READOPTION OF ZONING BYLAWS:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Chair Blanchard stated that the Board of Selectmen would hold off on Articles #37 to Article #44 for now because of placeholders.

Article #45: RECREATION – SITE PLAN AND CONCEPT PLAN FOR 60 AND 70 CEDAR STREET:

Motion: To place Article 45.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #46: ARTICLE FOR MAPLE STREET WATER LINE (PLACE HOLDER):

Mr. Butch Jackson, DPW Director said they have two numbers right now but they will test it to see the final value. Per Mr. Jackson, they may want to do the whole street.

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

The Selectmen then moved on to the Special Town Meeting Warrant.

Article #45: FREE CASH TRANSFER – SNOW AND ICE DEFICIT:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

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Article #46: UNPAID BILLS OF A PREVIOUS FISCAL YEAR (9/10 vote required):

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #47: FUNDING FOR DISALLOWED COSTS OF THE FY2012 ASSISTANCE TO FIREFIGHTER GRANT PROGRAM:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #48: ELECTRICITY BUDGET:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote 5-0

Article #49: FUNDING FOR OVERLAY ACCOUNT:

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in favor

Vote: 5-0

Article #50: COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE – PURCHASE OF 48 OLD FARM ROAD AND 133, 137 AND 139 FISKE HILL ROAD

Motion: To place and support.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Vice Chair Dowling

Selectman Kaitbenski said he believes it should go to Town Meeting, although he does not support it.
Chair Blanchard agreed.

Vote: 2-3

(Chair Blanchard NO, Selectman Kaitbenski NO, Selectman Dunnigan NO)

Motion: To place Article 50.

By: Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Chair Blanchard

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All in favor

Vote 5-0

Chair Blanchard stated that the next agenda item was for an Executive Session.

Motion: To convene in Executive Session to comply with the requirements of MA General Laws Chapter 6, §167, Purpose 7.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Roll Call Vote:

Chair Blanchard: YES, Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Goodwin: YES

Vote: 5-0

Chair Blanchard announced that the Board of Selectmen would reconvene into open session at 6:45 p.m.

Chair Blanchard welcomed everyone back at 6:45 p.m.

Public Hearing – Teddy G's Pub & Grille, Inc. amendment for a Change of Officers/Directors/LLC Managers and Change of Stock Interest on their liquor license at the premises currently located at 179 Main Street

Selectman Kaitbenski read the legal ad posted in the Southbridge Evening News.

Ted Gidopoulos said they added Jenna Gidopoulos to the corporation and as a secretary and in doing so, wanted to do it for their liquor license as well. Per Mr. Gidopoulos, nothing else is changing on the license; they just wanted to add her to it.

Motion: To close the public hearing.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Motion: Make a motion to approve the application.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: 4-0-1 (Selectmen Dunnigan abstained)

Department Reports:

Department of Public Works

Butch Jackson, DPW Director reported on February and March. In February, his department was busy with plowing and salting. In March, they got the Fiske Hill pump station delivered and

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installed. Per Mr. Jackson, the electrical will be installed May 5, 2021 and it should be hooked up in mid-May.

Chair Blanchard asked about the sick time reported in February and asked how he got 0.75 man-days. Mr. Jackson said it could be a partial day that some people went home and said he would confirm with the Administrative Assistant. Chair Blanchard asked what the 90-days for "other days" reported. Mr. Jackson said it could be when they were on shifts; half of the crew was on so they were on other time. Per Mr. Jackson, there was a crew that was sitting unless they were needed for snow/ice.

Chair Blanchard said she had a concerned resident reach out to her about the safety of the crosswalk near MickNucks. Mr. Jackson said he could look into a crosswalk sign that flashes. Vice Chair Dowling said the crosswalks on Route 20 are faded and Mr. Jackson said he could put a request in.

Selectman Kaitbenski said that a resident informed him about Route 20, saying that it needed help from the state for maintenance. Selectman Kaitbenski asked if would be possible to write a letter to state to take care of the area. Mr. Bridges said he would prepare a letter.

Vice Chair Dowling said the pothole going into Santander bank is not covered, which goes to the Old Sturbridge Village lodging houses. Mr. Jackson said he would take care of it and put a request in for the other potholes.

Water & Sewer

Shane Moody, Water & Sewer Department, reported on January, February, and March. Mr. Moody said in March, the Town was recognized for its fluoridation efforts but other than that, it is just business as usual.

Mr. Moody said the sewer usage has gone down and is starting to come back. He said on the water side, he believes the new RV resort owner will be the biggest water user during the summer. Per Mr. Moody, his department did not pump as much because of COVID.

Mr. Moody said the wells are back up even after the spill at Old Sturbridge Village. Per Mr. Moody, he waited for notification from DEP that the well had been restored to service, even though the oil spill cleanup is still ongoing. Mr. Moody reported that all of the wells in Town are up and running and he hopes to have the pump station electricity running by the end of May.

Mr. Moody said they will be finishing the flushing of the fire hydrants and they did a meter upgrade with new software, which went well. Chair Blanchard asked about the septage cost increase and Mr. Moody said it went into effect January 1, 2021 and there was no pushback since the surrounding towns are at the same amount. Mr. Moody said he would run an analysis and put it in the June report for an update to the Board of Selectmen.

Town Administrator

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Mr. Bridges said the Police Fleet Report is in the packet and the new firetruck is in the works. Per Mr. Bridges, the DPW Director is working on the costs of the road paving list program. Mr. Bridges reported that the Fire Department received a \$12,500.00 grant for tracking the firefighters at a fire scene.

Mr. Bridges said that he attended a meeting earlier in the day about the horse park proponents and they will be back in a few weeks with additional information. Mr. Bridges updated the Board of Selectmen that at their next meeting, they will be provided the draft bylaw.

Vice Chair Dowling said a few residents received a spam call about living in Sturbridge and if they supported an equestrian center. She asked if Mr. Bridges could ask if it came from the horse park people. Mr. Bridges said he already asked and they said it was not them but he said he would follow-up again.

Consideration and possible action on discarding items that do not sell for the online auction of surplus items coordinated by Facilities Coordinator, Robyn Chrabascz.

Mr. Bridges stated that the results of the auction was \$40,930.75. Vice Chair Dowling asked if the chemical tank was considered hazardous waste for disposal. Ms. Chrabascz, Facilities Coordinator said she would check with DPW and the Water & Sewer Department that it was cleaned properly.

Ms. Chrabascz said the remaining lightbulbs are the non-energy efficient ones and Vice Chair Dowling asked if they could go to a charity. Ms. Chrabascz said she could reach out to the Recycling Center to see if they could be taken.

Motion: Authorize disposal by scrap of the unsold auction items.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

Vice Chair Dowling suggested adding the items to a "take it or leave it" and then if no one wanted it, to scrap it.

Motion: Dispose of or offer for free at the Recycling Center.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on creating a Deputy Fire Chief position.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if this position was comparable to a Captain's position and what the difference was. He also asked in civilian terms, how a Lieutenant position may be different in the Police Department verses the Fire Department.

Chief Grasso said the rate structure is Private, Lieutenant, and then Captain. Chief Grasso explained to the Board of Selectmen what each group is responsible for. Chief Grasso said the

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Deputy Chief position is a non-union Administrative position whereas a Captain would be a union position and working actively at the Firehouse and overseeing personnel. Chief Grasso explained that one is Administrative/non-union and the other is an aligned Firefighter position with more responsibilities than a Lieutenant.

Chief Grasso said the Compensation Commission Consultant regarded the Town's choice of using the 70%, saying that the pool of candidates would not be the same quality as it would as using the title of "Deputy Fire Chief".

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if the pay was comparable as the Deputy Chief for a Captain. Chief Grasso said the Deputy Fire Chief's pay would be higher than a Captain but because of the economy, it is hard to determine. Selectman Goodwin asked if a Captain got overtime and Chief Grasso confirmed and asked if the intent was for the Deputy Chief to receive overtime confirmation and Chief Grasso said no.

Vice Chair Dowling asked Chief Grasso to address the union letter and asked if Chief Grasso agreed that it puts residents of the Town and other Firefighters at risk by not having that front-line person since this would be eliminating one Firefighter front-line person. Chief Grasso said there are 12 full-time Firefighters working that are split up into three groups with four people and if one ambulance goes out, there are two people left at the Firehouse to respond to a call. Per Chief Grasso, with adding the position, there would be five people on one of the groups. Chief Grasso said if both ambulances go out, there is only one person left at the firehouse who could not respond to a call alone and if no one comes back, then they will have to go to Mutual Aid regardless if they have that position or not. Chief Grasso stated that the response time would not change with that person on or off duty.

Chief Grasso explained the differences between a Lieutenant in Fire Service versus the Police Department. Per Chief Grasso, the Fire Service is similar to a Sergeant in the Police Service. He said there is a distinction between the two positions of Fire and Police. Chief Grasso said the problem with not having a number two in command is that it goes to the Lieutenants, but they have other duties that they are responsible for with regard to their crewmembers that conflict with having to operate at a different command level.

Selectman Goodwin asked what the schedule of the Deputy Chief would work be and Chief Grasso said it would be an Administrative schedule of 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. since this person would be the Town's Fire Inspector, which would be convenient for the businesses in Town. Selectman Goodwin asked if anyone else in Department had interest in being the Fire Inspector. Chief Grasso said one expressed interest but they may leave for different department.

Chair Blanchard said she agreed with union letter and supported having another full-time firefighter.

Jim Marks, Union representative said they support the Deputy Chief position but it is hard for them to give up a position when it is a safety factor. Mr. Marks disagreed with Chief Grasso, saying that one person left at the Fire Station is not useless, for they can respond to a situation. Per Mr. Marks, a Captain could do a lot that a Deputy Chief could do saying that the contract gives the ability for

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a Captains position but there are concerns with the Deputy Chief position. Mr. Marks expressed concern that there are candidates who looked at it before it is even posted.

Mr. Marks said the Union supports a short-term, giving up a "boots-on-the-ground" person to get a Deputy Chief to help the Chief but asked if there is a timetable that they could move forward with to get the "boots-on-the-ground" person that they are giving up. He also asked if the Board of Selectmen would be willing to entertain a Captains position.

Chair Blanchard said she does not think the Board of Selectmen could set a timeframe for the positions. She also said the Town would have to look carefully at the budget for the effect from the Deputy Fire Chief and a full-time employee. Vice Chair Dowling said she thinks the Fire Chief should have a second in command but she is uncomfortable with not filling the other position. Vice Chair Dowling agreed with the Union about fifth person back at the station, and wants to see what percent from the Government for budget is going to be. Mr. Bridges clarified that when the position was originally brought up, the idea was not to get rid of the Firefighter position. Per Mr. Bridges, this was a temporary vacancy with a larger goal on enhancing the personnel. Chief Grasso stated that he would like to see more personnel on shift but the economics do not support that. Vice Chair Dowling said the position would not be eliminated but it would not be filled right now.

Mr. Marks said the staffing for adequate Fire and Emergency response grants gave them three more people. Per Mr. Marks, A Captain's position would fill a Deputy Chief position and a "boots-on-the-ground" which will be a good compromise and save money. Mr. Marks said if people get hurt, they will be relying on people to help and this is a job that you cannot take and have fatigue.

Chief Grasso said the National Fire Protection Agency (NFPA) recommends a two-in, two-out practice, explaining that if there are two going in to a fire structure, there are two out ready to go in. Per Chief Grasso, having a fifth person does not help them with that service. Chief Grasso said the service they provide will not change wither or not there is someone in the Fire House. Vice Chair Dowling asked what their recommendation was and Chief Grasso said they have 12 Firefighters, which is a 4-assigned group.

Mr. Marks said the vision was five officers on every company and that the fifth Firefighter could get in a vehicle, head to a scene, and stabilize the scene while other on-call Firefighters are being called in to respond. Per Mr. Marks, the fifth person is not useless and has value, which could possibly save someone's life.

Mr. Bridges explained that when Chief Grasso got COVID-19, it could have been worse but Chief Grasso was still able to do work from home. Mr. Bridges said it is difficult for Chief Grasso and a Deputy Chief would allow him to split the workload.

Motion: To support the Chief's request for a Deputy Fire Chief but this is not in lieu of ultimately filling the vacant Firefighter position.

By: Vice Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

Vote: 3-2 (Chair Blanchard NO, Selectman Kaitbenski NO)

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Consideration and possible action on the removal of a water tank at the Fiske Hill Water Pump Station.

Mr. Jackson said the end of the pressure tank in the ground is much larger than they thought. Per Mr. Jackson, after the project is finished, they will have to remove the fence and they would like to do it when the Contractor is there.

Motion: Approve Change Order # 2 to hire the Contractor for the underground water pressure tank removal at the Fiske Hill Water Pump Station project in the amount of \$9,377.38.

By: Selectman Goodwin

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the acceptance of a donation to the Sturbridge Fire Department and authorize its use in support thereof.

Motion: Accept the gift with thanks and authorize and support by the Sturbridge Fire Department.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on the acceptance of a resignation of Anthony Messina from the Sturbridge Fire Department.

Motion: Accept the resignation of Anthony Messina as a call Firefighter effective May 9th with regret.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Consideration and possible action on disposing of by sale, auction, or scrap two DPW vehicles: 2006 GMC C5500 and 2005 Chevrolet Silverado 2500

Motion: Authorize Town Staff to dispose of the two trucks by sale or auction.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

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Consideration and possible action on Change Order #2 for the agreement with New England Mechanical Services for the RTU #1 at the Public Safety Complex and #2 Change to New England Mechanical Services RTU #1.

Motion: Approve Change Order # 2 in the amount of \$8,984.00 for the Roof Top Unit # 1 Project at the Public Safety Building

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaithenski

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Old Business:

COVID-19 Update:

Mr. Bridges said there is a planned Walgreens clinic at the Senior Center. Per Mr. Bridges, they were going to use Johnson and Johnson but that has been delayed, so the Town is working with Walgreens on getting another vaccine.

Vice Chair Dowling asked to open up the meetings to the public while still offering a remote option, saying the likelihood of hitting maximum capacity for a public hearing is extremely low. Chair Blanchard said staff would have to check the capacity for the Town Hall and the state guidelines. Mr. Bridges said not everyone at Town Hall has had the opportunity to get vaccinated yet, which is also a consideration. Selectman Goodwin said since the COVID vaccine opened up to general public on April 19th, it is a possibility but would hate to rush it. Mr. Bridges said he hopes to open meetings up to the public in the summer.

New Business:

Chair Blanchard said they would have to set another meeting to go over the line item budget. The Selectmen planned on Monday, April 26, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

Discussion: Vacant Lieutenant position in the Sturbridge Police Department

Chief Dessert said the Sturbridge Police Department had six in their management staff in the past. Per Chief Dessert, it is more effective to have two Lieutenants because there is too much work for one Lieutenant.

Chief Dessert requested the Board of Selectmen to refill the position and calculated that he could deduct overtime from his overtime account because when the previous Chief of Police did not fill the position, he added additional overtime from the budget. Chief Dessert said and could remove it from the overtime budget because the Lieutenant position is overtime exempt and he could move the Operations Lieutenant up to cover so he could have access to both Lieutenants and maximize supervisory coverage if he puts in the Operations Lieutenant.

April 20, 2021

Selectman Kaitbenski asked if refilling this position would put more "boots-on-the-ground". Chief Dessert confirmed and said there would be three people on each shift and they can spend more time on the roads.

Vice Chair Dowling asked if there was a difference in philosophy than the previous Chief of Police. Chief Dessert said Chief Ford added additional money to the overtime budget but with this position, he would not have to pay administrative overtime.

Selectman Kaitbenski said there is a difference with the Fire Chief's situation because with this, their Union endorsed the position and by adding this position, these three Sergeants would be on the road. Selectman Goodwin said there is a staffing difference as well. Chief Dessert said there are 20 sworn officers and 7 full-time Dispatchers. Selectman Dunnigan said he liked the fact that the Union supported the request and Chair Blanchard agreed saying that the Sergeants will be out on the road instead of doing Administrative work. Vice Chair Dowling asked if the Union was aware that he was planning to fill the Lieutenant position but not the Patrol-Officer position and Chief Dessert said when he spoke to the Union, they recognized the Administrative workload. Chief Dessert said next fiscal year, he will ask the Finance Committee for a Detective and maybe an additional Police Officer and the Union is aware of Chief Dessert's staffing goals.

Motion: To fill the second Lieutenant position in the Sturbridge Police Department, which includes the additional dollars added to the budget to accommodate.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Goodwin

All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Discussion: Nomorobo spam call blocking App. from Charter (Spectrum)

Chair Blanchard and Selectman Dunnigan said Charter would do what they think is best. Mr. Bridges said Charter replaced the App with the new App. Chair Blanchard suggested that Mr. Bridges throw away his draft letter to Charter asking to bring back the Nomorobo application.

Correspondence:

Selectman Kaitbenski read the correspondence.

Approval of Minutes:

April 5, 2021.

Motion: To approve minutes of April 5, 2021, as written.

By: Selectman Dunnigan

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

All in Favor

Vote: 4-0 (Selectman Goodwin ABSTAINED)

Citizen's forum:

April 20, 2021

NONE.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 8:30 p.m.

By: Chair Blanchard

2nd: Selectman Dunnigan

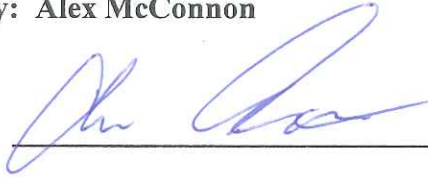
All in Favor

Vote: 5-0

Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Minutes prepared by: Alex McConnon

Clerk of the Board:



Date signed:

