

August 2, 2021

**Board of Selectmen  
August 2, 2021  
Town Hall  
Veterans Memorial Hall, Sturbridge Town Hall  
308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566**

**AMENDED**

**Present:**

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

**Staff:**

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator  
Alex McConnon, Executive Assistant

**Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.**

**Selectman Kaitbenski read the following statement: Executive Session: Per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

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

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**The Selectmen went into Executive Session at 6:03 p.m. and returned to Open Session at 6:35 p.m.**

**Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.**

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

**Chair Blanchard read the agenda.**

**Public Service Announcements**

**Chair Blanchard read the notice from the Finance Department: The Finance Department will be closed for training on August 10th, 11th, and 12th. Payments can be made online at the Town's website: [www.sturbridge.gov](http://www.sturbridge.gov) or can be put in the payment drop box in the back of Town Hall.**

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Chair Blanchard also reported that the Department of Public Works put out a notice that Hall Road will be closed on August 3, 2021. Mr. Bridges added that they are replacing a main that has crumbled.

### **Moment of Silence**

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

### **Department Reports:**

#### **Town Administrator:**

Mr. Bridges updated the Board of Selectmen on the following items:

- National Night Out is on August 3, 2021 and is Nation-wide event. It will take place from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the Sturbridge Common.
- Mr. Bridges asked if the Selectmen wanted to have a public hearing on the feasibility study for the Senior Center project. He also said he would like this to be a project on a Special Town Meeting warrant, depending on COVID protocols.
- Mr. Bridges reported that the Town of Sturbridge is a party to the Opioid Lawsuit and there are settlements with opioid producer taken place. More information on this will be forth coming.
- The banners for Old Sturbridge Village's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event are in. There are about 40 of them.
- Mr. Bridges said he has been talking to Attorney Art Krieger about the warehouse projects in Charlton, to discuss the options at their next Board of Selectmen meeting. Per Mr. Bridges, one of the statements for the non-Amazon facility talks about the traffic impacts and thinks they are a combined issue that needs to be taken in their entirety. Vice Chair Dowling asked for a link on the website with information about the Charlton projects and Mr. Bridges confirmed.
- The Cookout with the Fire Department and the Seniors is scheduled for August 12, 2021 at noon and the Selectmen are invited.

### **Action Items:**

#### **Consideration and possible action on a Green Communities Grant**

Mr. Bridges said Jean Bubon, Town Planner and Robyn Chrabasz, Facilities Manager worked on another set of Green Community Grant funding projects. The Selectmen reviewed the list of projects and Mr. Bridges asked for their concurrence.

**Motion: Accept the Green Communities Grant and authorize the Chairman to sign the grant agreement on behalf of the Town and any purchases therein.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

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**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on a MassTrails Grant**

Mr. Bridges said Tom Chamberland of the Trails Committee had a vision and the Trails Committee got an additional piece for this same project to keep it running. Vice Chair Dowling said this is a beautiful trail in the Westville Recreation area.

**Motion: Accept the grant and authorize the chair to sign the grant documents on behalf of the Board of Selectmen.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the resignation of Ashley Griffin as a Dispatcher with the Sturbridge Police Department**

**Motion: Accept the resignation of Ashley Griffin as a full-time dispatcher and confirm her appointment as a part-time dispatcher effective July 31, 2021 with an hourly rate of \$26.33 per hour.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on an offer or a Right of First Refusal for 355 Leadmine**

Mr. Bridges said that in accordance with Town policy and M.G.L., the notice for the Right of First Refusal for 355 Leadmine was sent to the Planning Board, the Conservation Commission, the Trails Committee, and the Open Space Committee and all did not express an interest in the Town acquiring the property. Mr. Bridges said the Board of Selectmen could either hold a public hearing on the acquisition or decide not to exercise its right of first refusal and allow the sale in accordance with the purchase and sale agreement. Chair Blanchard said if the other Boards involved have no interest in it, the Town should waive the Right of First Refusal.

**Motion: The Town not to authorize the Right of First Refusal for the property located at 355 Leadmine Road.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

Mr. Bridges said for the property on Fiske Hill, the title report is back to K-P Law and they are finishing the documents to complete the sale for the purchase for the Town.

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**Consideration and possible action on a revised job description for the position of Lieutenant in the Fire Department**

Mr. Bridges said as the Town looks to pull the promotional process for the retirement of Lieutenant Marinelli, in reviewing the job description, it says that the Lieutenant reports to the Captain, but the Captain position is vacant in Sturbridge. Mr. Bridges requested to add in that the Deputy Fire Chief could be listed as a direct report in the absence of a Captain. Per Mr. Bridges, the Personnel Committee approved it last week and Mr. Bridges asked the Board of Selectmen to approve and amend the position. Selectman Goodwin asked if this position was posted externally or internally and Chief Grasso answered that it is an internal promotional process.

**Motion: Approve the revised job description for the position of Lieutenant in the Sturbridge Fire Department.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

Chief Grasso said the new Firetruck will arrive on August 3, 2021 and they will get it ready to show to the public.

**Old Business:**

**COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Bridges said with the occurrence of the delta variant, Dr. Fazen from the Board of Health asked to speak to the Board of Selectmen as a citizen. The Selectmen concurred.

Dr. Fazen asked if there was a mask policy in place for indoor Municipal workers. Mr. Bridges said the new guidance specifies masks for people with health conditions. Mr. Bridges asked the Board of Selectmen what level of masking they would recommend. Dr. Fazen said there could be different variations on the health conditions. Mr. Bridges said currently, the protocol is that if an individual is not vaccinated, they need to wear a mask inside Municipal buildings. Dr. Fazen said the delta string could affect people who have been vaccinated because a new variant appears. Per Dr. Fazen, the Center of Disease Control's guidance says that people should wear masks indoors for high-incidence areas. Dr. Fazen also read that the Massachusetts Medical Society says that it is strongly recommended that people wear a mask in an indoor public setting. Vice Chair Dowling asked if Dr. Fazen wanted to offer any suggestions on his recommendation concerning Municipal buildings. Dr. Fazen said it is safer for people to wear masks indoors and takes away the whole vaccine issue and makes it easier to ask everyone to wear masks; however, he is unsure if it can be required if it has not reached a mandate at this point. Mr. Bridges recommended that the Municipal buildings post that masks are strongly recommended for people visiting, regardless of their medical history.

Vice Chair Dowling said she was surprised to learn in July that the number of cases increased and said when the Board of Selectmen are equipped with this information they can and share this

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information with residents so they can be informed. She asked that this be posted on the website and Chair Blanchard agreed that the information should be up for people so that they could be aware. Vice Chair Dowling also recommended doing a tally with staff on what they prefer. Mr. Bridges said without the Governor saying it, it is difficult for Sturbridge to enforce mask wearing as it creates confrontation with people who do not want to wear them. Mr. Bridges reminded the Selectmen that the Town of Sturbridge is still under the principle that if an employee is not comfortable, they can still work from home. Mr. Bridges said having a policy alerts people and it will make people aware that things are getting worse right now and these little actions will tell people that this is important.

**Motion: Request our Board of Health, through our Town Administrator, to start posting cases again in the Town of Sturbridge.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

Dr. Fazen said many people are purchasing their own kits and testing themselves, which also are not recorded. He said the numbers he saw from Ken Lacey, the Health Agent, are small, so there is not really a significant increase. Dr. Fazen said it would be helpful to know what different areas look like for people visiting. Dr. Fazen said because the numbers are small, the better part is to know what the vaccination rate is in Town. Vice Chair Dowling read Ken Lacey's correspondence for the public.

**Motion: Request the Board of Health to begin posting the number of cases in the Town of Sturbridge as they did in previous months.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

Chair Blanchard asked that the word "request" be changed to "suggest" on the motion.

**Motion: Suggest the Board of Health to begin posting the number of cases in the Town of Sturbridge as they did in previous months.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Motion: When we receive updates from the Board of Health with respect to any COVID issues, that the Board of Selectmen, through our Town Administrator, post these public documents on the website.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

Chair Blanchard said she would leave that discretion to Mr. Bridges on what should be posted since some cases should not be available to the public.

**Motion: We post the latest advisory email that we received and any similar emails that we receive on COVID updates.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

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**Vote: 3-2-0 (Chair Blanchard and Selectman Kaitbenski NO)**

Selectman Goodwin said he voted yes to increase the communication and Vice Chair Dowling said it was very helpful to get an update from the Health Agent but her just having it for herself is not doing any good. Mr. Bridges said the link on the Sturbridge website brings the public to the Mass.gov website and he does not want people to believe that the Sturbridge website is the main information resource for COVID.

**Other Old Business:**

Vice Chair Dowling asked what the latest update is on the parking lot project on Route 20. Mr. Bridges said the design is done and it needs to go to Town Meeting for funding for the paving of and Senator Gobi put \$50,000 in the state budget to help pay for it. Vice Chair Dowling asked how much ARPA money was given to offset the budget. Mr. Bridges said he anticipates they need \$800,000 to a million dollars in ARPA funds in the first year to balance the budget but have only received half a million dollars. Mr. Bridges said the Town is supposed to get 2.8 million but the funds, which would have been distributed to a functioning County but will be distributed directly to towns, are held up at the State level.

**New Business:**

NONE.

**Correspondence**

Selectman Kaitbenski read the correspondence.

**Approval of Minutes**

**Motion: To approve the Minutes of July 19, 2021 as written.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Citizen's Forum**

NONE.

**Selectman Kaitbenski read the Executive Session statement: Executive Session: Per M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Section 21(3): To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the Chair so declares.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

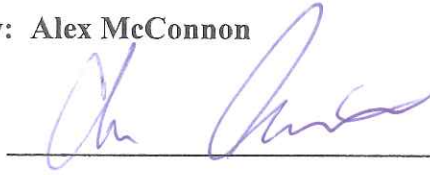
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**Roll Call Vote: Chair Blanchard: YES, Vice Chair Dowling: YES, Selectman Kaitbenski: YES, Selectman Dunnigan: YES, Selectman Goodwin: YES**  
**Vote: 5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard stated that the Board of Selectmen would go into Executive Session not to return to open session at 7:24 p.m.

**Minutes prepared by: Alex McConnon**

**Clerk of the Board:**



**Date signed:**

9/7/21