

September 3, 2019

**Board of Selectmen
September 3, 2019
Town Hall**

Amended

Present:

Mary Blanchard, Chairman
Mary Dowling, Vice Chairman
Michael Suprenant, Clerk
Priscilla Gimás
Chase Kaitbenski

Staff:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Andrea Mensen, Administrative Assistant

Executive Session: To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real property, if the chair declares that an open session may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

Motion: To Move into Executive Session and Return to Open Session By: Vice- Chair Dowling

2nd: Selectwoman Gimás

Roll Call Vote: Chair Blanchard YES, Vice- Chair Dowling YES, Selectman Suprenant YES, Selectwoman Gimás YES, Selectman Kaitbenski YES

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

The Selectmen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Blanchard read through the agenda

Public Service Announcements:

Chair Blanchard mentioned the public reception that the Town is holding for the new Town Administrator, the public meeting at the Public House for 263 Organic, and she stated that outdoor activities will continue to be cancelled from 6pm- 8am because of EEE.

Department Head Updates

Building Department

Nelson Burlingame, Building Inspector, came before the board and went over his department reports from July, 2019. He updated the board on several projects and commercial work that have been happening around Town such as the Petro Gas and Edwards Gas projects and the progress of landscaping. Vice- Chair Dowling thanked Mr. Burlingame for staying on top of the Edwards Gas project, saying the landscaping looks very nice.

Mr. Burlingame went over the status of Rovezzi's and stated that the new owner is starting to get some work done on the building, which will not include renovating or changes to the kitchen, in case a restaurant decides to open business in the building. Mr. Burlingame stated that he got a complaint about chickens on someone's property. He stated that the Town goes by the right to farm which states you cannot have chickens right near your neighbor's property, and that zoning needs to be addressed. Mr. Burlingame stated if anyone had questions about the right to farm they should bring their concerns to the Building Department. Mr. Burlingame updated the Board on the building that the Thai Place is in, and stated that the building will be a lot nicer once renovations are complete and that it's going to be full with businesses. Mr. Burlingame mentioned that they are putting together a list of all the signs in Town to make sure that they are all permitted.

Fire Department

John Grasso, Fire Chief, came before the Board and mentioned that since his August report was generated on the 25th the updated total number of incidents was 115 for the month and call volume is continuing to rise. Vice-Chair Dowling asked the Chief why he thought that was. Chief Grasso explained that it is because of a number of reasons including the rise in number of section 12's they are responding to, and the rise in population. Chief Grasso informed the Board that the Fire Department had finished with their first Junior Program. They had ten students attend who all received basic fire knowledge, completed the CPR certification, went to the Boston Fire Department, and got to see the life flight land at the Sturbridge Fire House. Chief Grasso expressed that the response from this program was overwhelming, and that parents were very happy. He stated that parents are already asking what's next for these students. Chief Grasso thanked the Fire Fighters and the whole team that helped put it all together and make the program a success. He explained that the hope for the program is to encourage young children to get involved in the Fire Department. Chief Grasso stated that he wanted to start looking at doing a citizens academy for adults, to give them an orientation of the Fire Station and introduce adults to the day to day operations of the Fire Station.

Town Administrator

Mr. Bridges stated that he received a letter from the Federated Church about their pumpkin event, and informed the Board that on Saturday September 28th at 8am there will be a truck unloading pumpkins.

Mr. Bridges mentioned that the Town is moving to outlook email, and he stated that the current system isn't very good. Outlook will be a small increase in price and be an additional \$2,000 per year but can be covered under the IT budget this year. Mr. Bridges informed the Board that part of the funding is to give each member of the Board a town email address. He stated that the Town has acquired the domain of .gov and that now the Town emails will be different addresses that are more modernized.

Mr. Bridges stated that the PFAS testing was completed in Town last week, and they should be receiving the results soon.

Mr. Bridges informed the Board that the Senior Center RFP's had come in and he mentioned that they met with the committee, who will spend three weeks reviewing the RFP's and rating them.

Mr. Bridges stated that he had a meeting with the owner of Pine Lake RV & Cottages about his sewer possibilities. He stated it will likely have to be an agenda item for the Board of Selectmen's next meeting. Mr. Bridges said that the owner is proposing to have the sewer built for the Town if the Town would be willing to engage in an agreement with the development. Selectwoman Gimaz stated that she thinks this is great news for Route 15. Chair Blanchard stated that the tie in fees would be used for construction. Selectman Suprenant questioned how many tie in's there would be for the Town. Chair Blanchard stated they would have to look at it and look at the sewer bylaws. Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he was in support of the development if the owner of the RV resort was going to pay, but he would want to be sure they were clear in the agreement that no tax payer dollars would be spent going into it, even if the project were to go over the amount that was agreed upon. The board discussed details pertaining to the tie in's. Selectman Suprenant asked who would be owning and operating

the development, and Mr. Bridges informed him that the owner of the RV resort will. Selectman Kaitbenski stated that the owner was going to pay all the tie in fees for all of Route 15, but since there are not many places along Route 15, he wondered how it would benefit the Town. Mr. Bridges stated that he would provide more information at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting.

Accept donation to the Senior Center in memory of William Grandone

Motion: To accept the donation to the Senior Center in Memory of William Grandone By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Concur with the appointment of Anthony Crane as Tree Warden

Anthony Crane came before the Board and introduced himself. Mr. Bridges stated that Mr. Crane had great references and he thinks he will be great at the job. Chair Blanchard stated that she was impressed with his resume and previous experience. Mr. Crane stated that he very excited to take on the position.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Anthony Crane as Tree Warden effective immediately By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Accept resignation of Alexis St. Francis as a full time emergency dispatcher

Motion: To accept the resignation of Alexis St. Francis as a full time emergency dispatcher By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Concur with the appointment of Alexis St. Francis as a part time dispatcher

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Alexis S. Francis as a part time dispatcher By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Review of proposed cemetery signage: Sturbridge Historical Commission

Barbara Search, Historical Commission, came before the Board and stated that the cemetery is now open from sunrise to sunset. She went over the new signs and what they will read, and what she hopes they will enforce. Ms. Search specified that the signs would be black with gold writing and measure 20" by 30". She stated that the Historical Commission has \$1,000.00 allotted for the project, and the total overall cost would be: \$638.00 for the signs and \$115.00 for the installation.

Chair Blanchard mentioned that one of the proposed signs states that the cemetery is a museum, and she doesn't feel the word museum is what a cemetery should be referred to as. The Board discussed that referring to a cemetery as an outdoor museum would not be appropriate. The Board decided that calling it a historic cemetery rather than museum would be better, and that they would like the sign to read historic cemetery.

Motion: To approve proposed cemetery signage with the amendment that outdoor museum be changed to Historic Cemetery By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Chair Blanchard

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Concur with the appointment of Charles Blanchard to the Historical Commission with a term from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022

Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he is happy Mr. Blanchard would like to be a part of the Historical Commission. Selectman Suprenant mentioned that he thinks Mr. Blanchard will be a good member of the commission, because he's expressed interest in the history of the Town and we need people that are advocates.

Motion: To concur with the appointment of Charles Blanchard to the Historical Commission with a term from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2022 By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Concur with the appointment of Joshua Thomas as a Fire Fighter/ Paramedic for the Sturbridge Fire Department

Chief Grasso introduced Joshua Thomas to the Board and went over all of his certifications and his prior experience. He also mentioned that Mr. Thomas had successfully completed all the pre-employment requirements. Mr. Bridges stated he agreed with everything that Chief Grasso had said and he thinks Mr. Thomas will do well for the Town of Sturbridge.

Motion: To concur with the Appointments of Joshua Thomas as a Fire Fighter/ Paramedic for the Sturbridge Fire Department effective immediately By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Accept donation from Clearview Construction of \$500.00 for costs of National Night Out

Motion: To accept the donation from Clearview Construction of \$500.00 for costs of National Night Out By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Authorizing to Conservation Commission to tentatively agree to hold a conservation restriction on a parcel of land owned by James Misselwitz of Florida as requested by Opacum Land Trust

Ed Hood came before the board. Selectman Suprenant would suggest that the Board of Selectmen request a contribution to the conservation fund be made in the process of accepting this restriction. Mr. Hood stated that would be unusual, and while he understands the point he doesn't know where that money would come from as they are doing this to assist the land owner of the property. Mr. Bridges stated that he thought it would be an opportunity to gain a conserved parcel with no impact cost wise to the Town, and overall it achieves many of the goals to conserve land.

Motion: To agree in principle and express support for the Conservation Commission holding the conservation restriction on the Misselwitz property as requested by the Opacum Land Trust contingent of a final conservation restriction that is acceptable to the Town By: Selectman Suprenant

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Community compact grant – Vendor selection

Kevin Filchak, Economic and Tourism Coordinator, came before the Board and recommended that they approve of McCabe Enterprises to conduct the economic development self-assessment and strategy development for Sturbridge under the recently awarded Commonwealth Community Compact grant. Selectwoman Gimas wondered what they were planning to do. Mr. Filchak stated that they would assess our town and its economic development and will compare it to five other like communities surrounding and then will provide us with a strategy to grow our economy for the next few years.

Motion: To offer the bid for the 2019 Commonwealth Community Compact to McCabe Enterprises, and to permit the Town Administrator and Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator to negotiate a contact with McCabe to complete said work by June 30, 2020 at the quoted amount of \$23,989. By:

Selectman Kaitbenski

2nd: Selectman Suprenant

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Request for letter of support from Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission for their application to create the Southern Worcester County economic development organization

Mr. Bridges brings to the Board's attention that there is a reservation about going forward with this, and that is the time spent on task. He stated that CMRPC covers a lot of ground now and if this were to happen they would need to make sure the sufficient resources and people are dedicated to the issue. The other concern with CMRPC taking this on themselves would be that it serves regionally, and not just a small area. Mr. Bridges stated that CMRPC has said there will be four people working on this job, one of which will be a full time, and the other three part time. Vice-Chair Dowling asked if it would be in the Town's best interest given those reservations. Mr. Filchak stated that he agrees with Mr. Bridges' reservations and mentioned that CMRPC has been expanding and adding a lot of positions however there are a lot of different tasks, and the one full time person would have to build an entire organization which brings a lot of question marks. He stated that he was part of the strategy group, and he thinks it would be good to have a dedicated organization whose full time focus is on the growth and development of the Town. Mr. Bridges stated that if the Board chose to not make a motion that he would let CMRPC know that it wasn't because they were not supportive it's because there are too many unanswered questions.

No Motion made by the Board

Old business

Marijuana Host Community Agreement Policy

Mr. Bridges addressed the delivery only question from the Board's last meeting, stating that it is not allowed in Sturbridge because the state law does not allow it. He informed the Board that all of these details could be covered in the Host Community Agreements. Mr. Bridges stated that they need to get started with negotiations. The Board discussed what could be included in the Host Community Agreements.

Motion: To approve the Marijuana Host Community Agreement Policy By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

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Selectwoman Gimas asked if the Town had sprayed for EEE, and Mr. Bridges stated that we have not because the aerial spraying is controlled by state. He also mentioned that individuals can get their own properties sprayed at no cost.

Selectman Kaitbenski commended the three applicants of the marijuana establishments for coming to every meeting.

Selectman Suprenant brought up the grant for a dog park, and said there needs to be a town employee that would like to take the lead on a dog park who can look into the grant program. Mr. Bridges stated he would have an answer at the next meeting.

Chair Blanchard followed up on the Altruist Brewing Company's event and if they had received approval from all parties for their one day liquor license to pass. They had followed through on all the contingencies.

Correspondence

Selectman Suprenant read the correspondence.

August 19, 2019 **Charter Communications**
Upcoming Changes

August 20, 2019 **Charter Communications**
Upcoming Changes

August 26, 2019 **Charter Communications**
Upcoming Changes

Approval of Minutes

August 19, 2019

Motion: To Approve the Minutes for August 19, 2019 as Amended By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Citizens forum

Eleanor Williams came before the board, and stated she had concerns about the communication systems in town, and the problems with the high costs. She stated that she came in front of the Board hoping to find a reasonable solution. Ms. Williams wanted to know if Spectrum was chosen off a bidding system. Chair Blanchard informed her that no other provider will come into Town because they would have to buy all the equipment from Charter. Ms. Williams stated that she was speaking for many people who are feeling this same concern. Chair Blanchard said they renewed the contract with Charter Spectrum 2 years ago and it is at least 5 years. Chair Blanchard stated that possibly the Town Administrator could get in touch with Charter to see if anything else could be done. Selectwoman Gimas stated that she understands that the price is very high for Charter and she suggested that Ms. Williams get a Roku. She stated that Ms. Williams would still have an internet bill, but that it would save her money on the cable side. Chair Blanchard asked Mr. Bridges if he could speak to Bruce Butcher to see if he could take the time to look up some of these suggestions. Vice Chair Dowling stated that when the Board renews the contract they are always thinking of the resident's best interest.

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Ms. Williams addressed the Town Meeting time and mentioned that for a lot of people it is too late in the evening. She asked the Board if they would consider making the Annual Town Meeting earlier.

Adjourn

Motion: To Adjourn at 8:28 pm By: Selectwoman Gimas

2nd: Selectman Kaitbenski

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Adjourned at 8:28pm

Minutes prepared by: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board: 

Date signed: 10-03-2019