

November 15, 2021

**Board of Selectmen**

**November 15, 2021**

**Town Hall**

**Veterans Memorial Hall, Sturbridge Town Hall**

**308 Main Street, Sturbridge, MA 01566**

**Present:**

Mary Blanchard, Chair

Mary Dowling, Vice Chair

Selectman Chase Kaitbenski, Clerk

Selectman Ian Dunnigan

Selectman Jamie Goodwin

**Staff:**

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator

Michelle Garman, Executive Assistant

**Chair Blanchard called meeting to order at 6:00p.m.**

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

**Chair Blanchard read the agenda.**

Executive Session: Per M.G.L.c.30A, Sec. 21 (6) To consider the purchase, exchange, lease, or value of real estate, if the Chair declares that an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the public body.

**Motion: Motion to recess the Public Session and move to Executive Session**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**Chair Blanchard: Yes, Vice Chair Dowling: Yes, Selectmen Kaitbenski: Yes, Selectmen**

**Dunnigan: Yes, Selectmen Goodwin: Yes**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Motion: Motion to exit Executive Session and begin Public Session**

**By: Selectmen Dunnigan**

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

**Chair Blanchard: Yes, Vice Chair Dowling: Yes, Selectmen Kaitbenski: Yes, Selectmen**

**Dunnigan: Yes, Selectmen Goodwin: Yes**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

## **Public Session**

### **Public Service Announcements**

Vice Chair Dowling thanked everyone that participated in the Home of the Brave 5K run.

Selectmen Kaitbenski wished all the residents a safe and Happy Thanksgiving.

### **Moment of Silence**

For those affected by Covid-19

### **Public Hearing – Deep Roots Distillery, USA, LLC for a Farmer Series Pouring Permit Liquor License located at 559 Main Street, Unit 209, Fiskdale, MA.**

Selectmen Kaitbenski read the public hearing notice

Erica Devarenne, Keith Devarenne and Thomas T. Cane owners of Deep Roots Distillery stated they are applying for a Farmers Series Pouring Permit Liquor License for the property located at 559 main street, Unit 209, Fiskdale. Ms. Devarenne stated they are going to be a craft distillery, where they would like to collaborate with local farmers as they use a lot of produce in their flavorings. Ms. Devarenne also state they would like to bring in some local goods.

Chair Blanchard asked if the Board had any questions, the Board did not. She then asked the audience if they had any questions or comments, the audience did not.

#### **Motion: Motion to close the Public Hearing**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

#### **Motion: Motion to approve the Farmers Series Pouring Permit Liquor License for Deep Roots Distillery, USA, LLC at 559 Main Street, Unit 209, Fiskdale, MA**

**By: Selectmen Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

### **Department Reports:**

#### **Police Department**

Chief Dessert stated he would start with September's reports. He started with some operational highlights. Officers held a car seat checkpoint at the Sturbridge Coffee House that is always a successful event and much appreciated. The Police Department applies for a Grant every year through that grant they are able to distribute car seats and have officers trained on how to properly install them.

Bus evacuation drills were performed at Tantasqua High School, Junior High and Burgess Elementary. This is done every year to make sure children know how to properly evacuate the bus in an emergency.

Chief Dessert stated two School Resource Officers attended Norwood for training as a part of the new policy reform. The Officers are required to attend state training beyond the training they have. Chief Dessert discussed October Highlights. We had our first Faith in Blue event on the Common, which was a successful event. The event is to help build the relationship between the community and the Police Department. At Burgess Elementary School there was a show and tell with the police cruiser. There was also a Halloween Safety Presentation where the officers handed out Halloween bags to the students.

Chair Blanchard stated the Police Department received a grant for \$19,000.00 for municipal road safety.

Chief Dessert stated the State combined three grants into one grant this year. That includes the click it ticket, drive sober get pulled over, distracted driving. Chief stated they could purchase \$5,000.00 in equipment with the funds.

Chair Blanchard asked Chief Dessert are we going to start getting reports from the School Resource Officers.

Chief Dessert stated he still gets them every month and he will start attaching them to the reports he submits.

### **Town Administrator**

Mr. Bridges stated that on November 29, 2021, there would be kick-off meeting for the Radio Communication Project. Mr. Bridges stated the Consultant would be in Sturbridge for several days reviewing the existing system, looking at tower sites and reviewing paperwork. The Consultant will also conduct interviews with the Police Department, Fire Department and the Schools to find out what their needs in communications are and to get started on the design of a new system.

Mr. Bridges stated that at the Board of Selectmen meeting on November 1, 2021, there was a door-to-door salesperson application. The applicant for that application has since withdrew his application. Mr. Bridges also stated that at the last Board Meeting there was a question

regarding what other communities contributed to the South Pond Alum Treatment Project. Brookfield provided \$25,000.00, East Brookfield provided \$15,000.00, Sturbridge \$55,000.00, Frank Day YMCA provided \$5,000.00 and the QQLA provided \$40,000.00. Mr. Bridges stated the project has begun the Consultants and Engineers are working together on a plan to do the treatment.

Mr. Bridges stated there are three additional agenda items. Mr. Bridges gave a brief description of the three additional agenda items, Sturbridge Senior Center acceptance of donations, acceptance of the resignation of Ken Benson from the Council on Aging Board and the approval of a transient vendor license for Country Folk Art Show for November 26-28, 2021 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel.

**Action Items:**

**Consideration and possible action on the Transient Vendor License for Weathervane Enterprises, LLC.**

Maxine Cater-Lome owner and president of Weathervane Enterprises, Inc. located on Hall Road, Sturbridge stated they are a publishing company that publishes the Home Town Shopper and The Journal of Antiques and Collectables. She will be hosting the Antique and Collectable show on New Year's Day show at the Sturbridge Host Hotel. She stated in their first year they had over seven hundred attendees and she is back this year.

Chair Blanchard asked the Board if they had any questions. The Board did not have any questions.

**Motion: To approve the Transient Vendor Licenses for Weathervane Enterprises, LLC for January 1, 2022 at the Sturbridge Host Hotel from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

**By: Selectmen Kaitbenski**

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

**All in Favor**

**Vote:5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the confirmation of the Appointment of Jen Schere as a voting member of the Sturbridge Trails Committee.**

Chair Blanchard stated Ms. Schere was appointed as a non-voting member to the committee and now a voting spot has opened.

**Motion: Confirm the appointment of Jen Schere as a voting member to the Sturbridge Trails Committee**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

**Consideration and possible action on the allocation of \$1,316.99 of matching grant funds from the Town Administrator's Budget to match a MIAA Grant for the purchase of Facilities Management Software.**

Robin Chrabaszcz, Facilities Manager stated every year MIAA offers a Risk Management Grant for up to \$10,000.00 per municipality. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated we have applied for the past two years and have received equipment for both the Department of Public Works and Facilities for emergency response and safety needs. This year we are proposing to use the Risk Management Grant money for Facilities Management Software, which would include Asset Management, work order tracking, as well as several other features. Ms. Chrabaszcz stated the onboarding cost of the software is \$11,316.96 and she is requesting a matching fund to cover the gap from the Risk Management Grant and the software onboarding cost.

Mr. Bridges stated that Dude Solutions is a nationwide product with tremendous support capabilities. "I feel good about the ongoing support for this product"

Chair Blanchard asked Ms. Chrabaszcz if she does get the Risk Management Grant the second year costs for the proposed software will be approximately \$7,400.00.

Ms. Chrabaszcz stated yes the costs would be \$7,500.00 per year.

Chair Blanchard asked is that a cost the Town of Sturbridge will be responsible to pay.

Ms. Chrabaszcz replied yes this cost will go into the IT Software Budget.

**Motion: To approve the allocation of \$1,316.96 of grant matching funds toward the purchase of Dude Solutions Software and authorize the purchase.**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

**Old Business:**

**COVID-19 Update**

Mr. Bridges stated the survey for the use of ARPA funds is on line. Mr. Bridges stated we have received approximately two dozen responses to date. Mr. Bridges asked the Board how long we should keep the survey on line. The Board stated the middle of December should be an adequate amount of time.

Mr. Bridges stated the Board approved \$3,000.00, for each member of the Police Collective Bargaining Unit for premium pay for the Police Department. Mr. Bridges stated he is requesting

the same for the non-union members of the department the Chief and two Lieutenants be awarded the same \$3,000.00 from the ARPA Funds for working through Covid.

**Motion: To award \$3,000.00 of ARPA Funds for the Chief of Police and two Lieutenants that are not included in the Collective Bargaining Unit agreement.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

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

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

#### **Parking Lot at 501 Main Street**

Mr. Bridges stated the approved plans and the costs estimates are on the diesis. He stated the \$50,000.00 from Senator Gobi's Office is still available. Mr. Bridges stated looking at the numbers there is a contingency in there. Some of the problem is the buffer from the river to the parking lot. There needs to be a collection system and treatment system for the water that comes off the parking lot so that it does not get into the river per the Conservation Commission. He stated the signage, lighting, hardware, etc., all of which is included in the total amount.

Chair Blanchard stated the monies for the project would come from free cash there will be no additional costs on the taxpayers.

Vice Chair Dowling stated that the studies that the Town of Sturbridge has had completed more than once have stated that there is not an adequate amount of parking for the business district.

#### **Charter Review Committee**

Chair Blanchard stated we originally had six applicants however; one person is no longer interested.

Mr. Bridges stated Mr. Menard is no longer interested.

Chair Blanchard announced the applicants Bill Haggerty of 18 Westwood Drive, Sturbridge, Kristie Pecci of 138 McGilpin Road, Sturbridge, Steve Sexton of 51 Seneca Lane, Sturbridge, Priscilla Gimas of 38 Farquhar Road, Sturbridge and Lawrence Morrison 66 Old Farm Road, Sturbridge.

**Motion: To accept all five applicants to the Charter Review Committee.**

**By: Selectmen Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard stated in old business as the Board voted to move forward with the Senior Center this will have to go on a Special Election are we moving forward with that.

Mr. Bridges stated yes we are in the process of finding a location and we anticipate sometime in January 2022.

Chair Blanchard stated the Special Election would have to be in January 2022; otherwise, we will have to have another Town Meeting and re-vote.

### **New Business**

#### **Heating and Cooling Systems Project for the Joshua Hyde Public Library**

Robyn Chrabascz, Facilities Manager stated she has been working with the leadership of the Public Library on the project. Ms. Chrabascz stated that in 2017 the Joshua Hyde Library has hired an engineer to complete a HVAC study. She stated this study was never fully completed into something that could be finished at that time. In 2021 we hired Van Zelm Engineering to update that study.

Ms. Chrabascz stated the most important take away for Van Zelm's study was in order to resolve the heating and cooling issues at the Joshua Hyde Library the estimated project costs for any of the options provided as well as the preferred option was \$450,000.00. She stated that cost has triggered additional Massachusetts code requirements for accessibility as well as bidding requirements due to it being over \$300,000.00 is placed us under the Designer Selection Law?

Ms. Chrabascz stated the Board of Trustees has appointed a Committee and would like to move forward so that we can have a Designer on board with a proposed fee with a number to take to this year's Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Bridges stated so you are requesting the Board to delegate the selection of the Designer.

Ms. Chrabascz stated we are asking permission to allow the Committee to interview the Designers and the Board of Trustees and Board of Selectmen will have the final approval. She stated all of this of course would be pending funding.

Selectmen Goodwin asked to this spending is to fix the HVAC and bring the Library up to code.

Ms. Chrabascz stated the rooftop units are slowly failing. She stated that last year they had a belt break, which caused a smoke issue in the Library, and just the other day the Library was 58 degrees.

Ms. Chrabascz stated the HVAC portion is standard some other proposals are more energy efficient and another proposal mentions the use of propane. However, the third option will reuse some of the ductwork in the building and modifies the existing system, but also complements it.

**Motion: To have Committee proceed with the design process and bring the project back to the Board of Selectmen for final approval.**

**By: Selectmen Dunnigan**

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

**All in Favor**

**5-0-0**

### **Interim Town Administrator**

Chair Blanchard stated in correspondence the Board received a notice and a letter of Resignation from Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator on December 21, 2021.

**Motion: To accept the Resignation of Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator, with regret**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**All in Favor**

**5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard stated we usually advertise through Massachusetts Municipal Association. The Board conducts the interviews and the Board will make the selection.

Chair Blanchard asked the Board if they had any questions or comments. No comments and/or questions from the Board.

Chair Blanchard stated the Charter was revised to extend the Interim Town Administrators term an additional 3 months if needed.

Selectmen Dunnigan asked who would make up the Committee to appoint a new Town Administrator.

Chair Blanchard stated for the Interim the Board will make the selection. She stated for the full time Town Administrator it is specified in the Charter.

Vice Chair Dowling stated the Committee to appoint a new Town Administrator is made up of a Board of Selectmen representative, Department Head and three residents.

### **Donation to the Sturbridge Senior Center**

Chair Blanchard stated a donation of six frozen turkeys, six frozen turkey breasts and six \$25.00 gift cards to Shaw's Market from Don Taft and the QCCC Group. She stated also the donation of \$2,000.00 from Country Bank.



**Motion: To accept with gratitude the donation of frozen turkeys, turkey breast, \$25.00 gift card from Don Taft and the QCCC Group and \$2,000.00 from Country Bank**

**By: Selectmen Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard read the resignation letter from Ken Benson from the Council on Aging.

**Motion: To accept resignation of Ken Benson from the Council on Aging**

**By: Selectmen Kaitbenski**

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

**All in Favor**

**5-0-0**

Chair Blanchard read the application for a Transient Vendor License for Country Folk Art Show

**Motion: To approve the Transient Vendor License for Country Folk Art Show at the Sturbridge Host Hotel on November 26, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00p.m., November 27, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and November 28, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., contingent payment received and approval from the Chief of Police.**

**By: Selectmen Kaitbenski**

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

**All in Favor**

**5-0-0**

Mr. Bridges stated under that Leslie Wong, Senior Center Director, had advised the Board of Health has confirmed that the mobile unit will be at the Senior Center on Friday, November 19, 2021, doing booster shots Pfizer and Johnson and Johnson.

### **Correspondence**

Selectmen Kaitbenski read the correspondence.

### **Approval of Minutes: November 1, 2021**

Vice Chair Dowling stated she had a few corrections on page 266 the first full paragraph "she had intended to bring it up as well" she would like a period at the end of that sentence. She said delete everything from "but to the quote down to the middle" and replace with "she stated that the application letter did not indicate it was a split board nor did it state that the approval had to conditions the first condition was approval of the overlay district and the second was an executed host agreement".

Vice Chair Dowling stated to delete everything after the direct quote that states conditions.

Then the next sentence starts "it should have gone to our attorney" insert the word but then sentence will continue, "He indicated he hadn't seen it until after it was filed". She would also delete the very last sentence.

**Motion: To approve the minutes of November 1, 2021 as amended.**

**By: Selectmen Kaitbenski**

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

**All in Favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

### **Citizen's Forum**

Chief Dessert stated he wanted to let the public know we are still having cars broken into at the Trail Heads while people are hiking. Chief Dessert wanted to remind the public not to leave keys inside their vehicles.

Susan Shea 170 Lake Road, Fiskdale stated she had a few questions on the Parking Lot at 501 Main Street. Ms. Shea would like to know if this will come back to the Town for a vote or will the project just proceed?

Chair Blanchard stated this would go back to the Town for a vote.

Ms. Shea asked, "When I park my car where am I going to go? I know I'm not going to walk down to Yankee Candle if I park my car down by the American Legion". Ms. Shea also asked do the restaurants in the area already have ample parking.

Chair Blanchard stated no several small business in the area do not have ample parking at all.

Mr. Bridges stated that Sturbridge has a meal tax and that money goes into the general fund and its one way to reinvest the money back into the Town. The parking lot accesses the Trails and River Lands so parking can also be used for that purpose.

Robyn Chrabascz, Facilities Manager stated she would post a copy of the approved site plan the notice of conditions and the cost estimate on the facilities home page for residents to view.

**Adjourn:**

**Motion to adjourn**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

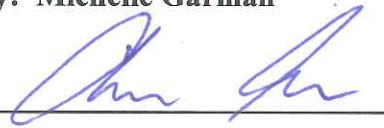
**All in Favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

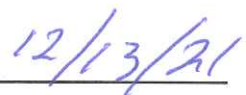
**The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.**

**Minutes prepared by: Michelle Garman**

**Clerk of the Board:**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Michelle Garman', written over a horizontal line.

**Date signed:**

A handwritten date '12/13/21' in blue ink, written over a horizontal line.