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**October 18, 2021**

**Town Hall**

**5:00 p.m.**

**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

**Chair Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.**

**Chair Blanchard read the agenda.**

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

**Public Service Announcements**

Town Administrator Jeff Bridges stated that Council on Aging will be having an open house for any resident to address questions in relation to the proposed renovation / addition project for the Senior Center. The open house will be held on October 23, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Light refreshments will be served.

Vice Chair Dowling stated that there are two road races this fall. The first is hosted by the Sturbridge Rotary Club and will be on the morning of Halloween. There will a costume contest at 9:00 a.m. and one (1) mile run for children and a 5K. This is fund raiser for the Rotary and the funds goes towards scholarships for local students.

The second is the Town's Home of the Brave Race held on the Saturday after Veterans Day. The proceeds of the Home of the Brave Race goes towards helping local veterans. Vice-Chair Dowling further stated that this year, the Town has a special fund set up to receive the monies.

Both races can be walked if you do not want to run them.

**Moment of Silence**

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

**Review of the Host Community Agreement between the Town of Sturbridge and the Sturbridge Equine and Agricultural, LLC**

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Chair Blanchard started the conversation by saying that there are statements in the community that this meeting was set secretly to discuss the Host Community Agreement. Chair Blanchard went on to say that this meeting on the host agreement was set in the public meeting two weeks ago. The Board does not set meetings in secret.

Chair Blanchard asked the Town Administrator to get the discussion started.

Jeff Bridges Town Administrator introduced Jonathan Silverstein of K-P Law, Town Counsel, and Will Cummings who is the Town's gaming consultant on the negotiations of the Host Community Agreement. Mr. Bridges asked Mr. Silverstein to review the Host Community Agreement with the Board.

Mr. Silverstein introduced himself and Mr. Cummings and thanked the Chair for the opportunity to address the Board. He stated that There's a document in front of you that has been negotiated between town Staff, Town council, and our consultant will cummings and the representatives of this Sturbridge Equine and Agricultural Center LLC. Mr. Silverstein had prepared a memo for the Board and his comments were as follows:

A. FINANCIAL TERMS

- a. *Annual Community Impact Fee*—1.5% of simulcast revenue (estimated at \$240,000 per year)
- b. *Initial Community Benefit Payment*—\$300,000, paid within 30 days of receipt of licenses and permits
- c. *Sports Wagering Community Impact Fee*—An increasing percentage of sports wagering revenue (estimated at \$17.5 Million to \$35 Million per year)
  - i. 0.5% or approximately \$87,500 - \$175,000 per year (years 1-5)
  - ii. .75% or approximately \$131,250 - \$262,500 per year (years 6-10)
  - iii. 1.0% or approximately \$175,000 - \$350,000 per year (beginning year 11 and for the duration of the operation)
- d. *Permit and Connection Fees*—Building fee is estimated to be in excess of \$100,000
- e. *Permit and Consulting Fees*—any consultants, engineers, traffic experts, etc. required by the Town will be paid for by the developer
- f. *Meals and Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes*
- g. *Real estate taxes*—approximately \$483,428 per year
- h. *Charitable Donations*—At least \$25,000 per year
- i. *Athletic Field Capital Maintenance Payment*—\$25,000 per year

B. PUBIC AMENITIES

- a. *Athletic Fields*—Developer will construct four athletic fields (one adult baseball, one little league and two multipurpose) on its land, to the Town's specifications, and donate the fields to the Town. The Town may elect instead to have the fields constructed on its land or to accept a payment in lieu of \$3 Million.
- b. *Community Gardens*—designed and constructed in coordination with the Town and at the applicant's expense for use by Town residents.
- c. *Nature Trails*—designed and constructed in coordination with the Town and at the applicant's expense for use by the public.

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- d. *Outdoor Senior Exercise Equipment*—designed and constructed in coordination with the Town and at the applicant's expense for use by the public.
- e. *Horse Shows and Community Event*

C. MITIGATION/OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS

- a. *Access*—required to be from a new I-84 Interchange.
- b. *Transportation Management Plan*—updated annually and subject to approval by Board of Selectmen (and peer review) for the first 5 years of operation
- c. *Public Safety*—Developer will construct a new fire and police substation at the Facility and will pay for details necessary to staff the substation during race days and events at the Facility
- d. *Special Permit Review*—the special permit granting authority (Planning Board) will have the authority to hire additional consultants and peer reviewers and impose conditions of approval as it deems appropriate. These conditions (and any other local licenses and permits) will be made part of the HCA and will be enforceable in contract, in addition to any other enforcement mechanisms available to the Town
- e. *Limitation on Race Days*—no more than 10 live racing days per year
- f. *Treatment of Horses*—Developer will establish a Racing Oversight Board charged with establishing and ensuring compliance with best in trade management practices to ensure the highest possible level of care, treatment and protection of horses.

D. LOCAL VENDORS AND EMPLOYMENT

- a. Preferences for local businesses and individuals in vendor selection and employment
- b. Prominent display within the Facility and on its website to promote Sturbridge businesses.

Mr. Silverstein asked Mr. Cummings if he had any comments at this time.

Mr. Cummings stated that he has been involved in all aspects of the economics of gaming throughout his career. He has a degree from MIT in management and spent his career consulting for primarily racing and other gaming entities including work on many racetracks.

Mr. Cummings stated that many states already have online sports betting and it is a growing business. He has reviewed the data provided by the applicant on their business model and revenue estimates and concurs with the applicant's findings. The study found that there is approximately 300 million dollars' potential revenue state-wide for online sports betting. However, in the market place this particular operator will be a small player with 5-10% of the market.

Chair Blanchard then asked the Board Members if they had comments or questions.

Selectmen Goodwin began his questions with the economics of the project and asked the consultant if since the legislation has not passed at the state level for sports betting, how can there be confidence in the estimates provided.

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Mr. Cummings stated that there are many states with sports betting and that the estimates are consistent with what is happening in other states with their gaming and what makes it work or not work.

Selectman Goodwin continued with his questions. He asked on page 3 paragraph 1 of the draft agreement what is meant by simulcast revenue; what are we saying.

Mr. Cummings stated that this type of revenue on race wagering is called the "handle". That is the amount of all the bets placed. This is the amount of money people bet. The Town will get 1.5% of that revenue.

Mr. Goodwin that asked what is considered sports wagering.

Mr Cummings stated that this means the money after the winners get paid. This represents about 20% of the wagers placed.

Mr. Cummings stated that the way to look at this is that there are two pots of money, the simulcast betting on racing and the money from the sports wagering are in the same ballpark in terms benefit to the Town.

Mr. Cummings went onto say that his role in the negotiations were to advise the Town's negotiators on the economics and review the economic information provided by the applicant's consultant.

Selectmen Goodwin then asked what if horse racing is made illegal in the Commonwealth?

Mr. Silverstein stated that there is a "savings" clause if there were an event that would force the horse racing facility to close then that revenue to stop unless there is still simulcasting, but if all simulcasting revenue went away, they would still be responsible for the sports wagering revenue to the Town. If they lose their racing license, they may lose their wagering license.

Mr. Silverstein went onto say that there is a lot of legislative subsidies of horse racing.

Selectman Goodwin stated that he would want a re-opener if the event the horse racing ceased.

There was some discussion about the pros and cons of a re-openers of the contract.

Selectman Goodwin then asked if there were any indications of approval of the I84 interchange from the Commonwealth.

Mr. Silverstein stated that he has no knowledge and the applicant may have an update but if they do not get it approved then we can say that is an exercise that won't result in an approval.

Vice Chair Dowling then began her comments. Her overview of the contract was that it lacks specificity.

Vice Chair Dowling said she reviewed the host agreements for the casinos and she found those to be more detailed and specific. She felt the Town should have ordered the necessary studies before negotiating the agreement. Without those studies the Town lacks the data to mitigate impacts.

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Mr. Silverstein stated that he negotiated two of the three casino host agreements in the Commonwealth. These casino facilities were a one-hundred times bigger in terms of investment than the proposed equestrian center.

Vice Chair Dowling felt that the impacts would be felt more in a smaller community than in a larger community. The due diligence should be done before a contract is signed.

Other comments by Vice-Chair Dowling were: events of default, also lacks specificity and detail as to access other agreements were more specific on access, the financial aspects were not sufficient in terms of percentages as compared to the percentages of the revenues from the casinos which are 2.0% and 2.5% of revenue. The proposed percentages are much lower in the host agreement being negotiated. She would like to start at 1.5% and then increase to 2.5%. The initial payment of \$300,000 is also very low. She also indicate there were no terms about commence dates for construction.

Vice-Chair Dowling was also concerned about how the Town would get out of the agreement other than the 48-months clause that it is in the contract. If the bylaw fails, the applicant can come back and try again under this host agreement if it is approved in its current form. Additionally, other agreements had provisions to compensate residents who are adversely impacted by the project.

Mr. Silverstein responded that in regards to the events of default, the agreements Vice-Chair Dowling were referencing were written by the same attorney. In his opinion, the agreements Vice Chair Dowling is referring to, are very long, at the law firm charge over a million dollars in each instance for the agreement. That approach did not make sense in this instance with a much smaller project. Also, in this agreement the developer would have to pay the Town's legal bills in the event of default which those other agreement do not have

Mr. Silverstein went on to say that you cannot compare the percentages of revenue from a casino to the percentage of gross gaming revenue for the sports book. The sports book will be paying the bills for the construction of the facility. The economics of a casino are very different and more profitable. None of the other players in the sports book market will be paying anything to the host community.

Selectman Dunnigan asked how this operator plans to compete against larger sports book operators such as Fan Duel?

Mr. Silverstein stated that he did not want to speak to for the applicant but this particular operation will be for a more niche market.

Vice Chair Dowling reiterated her position that the percentages of the revenues provided to the Town in the current form of the agreement were not sufficient particularly when compared to the host community agreements for communities with casinos.

Selectmen Kaitbenski had a question on the recreational fields. The question was the "either or" construction vs. payment for the fields. Mr. Silverstein stated that is the Town's choice not the developer's.

Selectman Kaitbenski asked about the impacts particularly to the police. Mr. Silverstein stated that if the facility asked for a police detail, the track would pay for that separately.

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Selectmen Dunnigan asked about the fire / police substation. He inquired if equipment was part of that substation. Mr. Silverstein stated that probably not a truck but basic equipment that would have to be determined.

Selectmen Dunnigan also asked about the hours of operation, would they be the same as the hours provided for a liquor permit? Mr. Silverstein stated yes.

There was no consensus from the Board to close the discussion on the agreement.

Vice Chair Dowling stated that is important for them to make the agreement as strong as it can be. It was her recommendation to get a second opinion, paid for by the applicant, of another gaming attorney on the host agreement.

Chair Blanchard asked if the proponent had any comments at this time.

The proponents did not.

Chair Blanchard then stated that this is not a public hearing but if there are people in the audience with questions on the host agreement please ask.

Joanna Shapiro, 50 Westwood Drive, asked if this agreement could be changed by the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Silverstein stated that any contract can be amended by agreement of both parties. However, if the provisions to be amended were also a requirement of the Planning Board or another Board, that other Board would have to agree as well.

Mr. Silverstein stated that the current version of the bylaw requires six races over eighteen months.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked who inserted that provision.

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator said he did. The intent was not to have simply race one day a year and have this be a subterfuge and build a commercial facility on agricultural property. Ms. Shapiro said she sees that as a fatal flaw in the bylaw. She also refuted that the impacts will not be limited to the ten race days, but every day.

Mr. Silverstein clarified his stated as far as the impacts of this facility versus the impacts of a casino. A large piece of the revenues for the proposed facility will be generated by people who never come to the facility, versus a casino where all the revenue is generated by people actually visiting the site.

Mr. Shapiro also asked about the correlation between organized crime and the racetrack as compared to a casino.

Mr. Cummings stated that this operation is very regulated and the crime is not an issue.

Vice Chair Dowling stated that there is an article on Forbes.com regarding sports betting and organized crime.

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Don Miller, 501 Leadmine Road. He had questions about the negotiating process.

Chair Blanchard stated the negotiators for the Town are Jonathan Silverstein, Town Counsel, Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator, Jean Bubon, Town Planner and Will Cummings, consultant.

Mr. Miller went onto say the host agreement should clearly state what is to be expected of the developer and the time line for those items, in particular the construction of the recreation fields.

Mr. Silverstein stated that in the current form of the agreement the owner cannot get a certificate of occupancy unless the recreation fields are complete. He read that section of the draft host community agreement.

Mr. Miller then asked what happens if the agreement says 10 racing days a year and the state 60 racing days a year, who prevails?

Mr. Silverstein stated that the agreement will govern unless the Board of Selectmen want to change it. They have to comply with the host agreement and if it costs them their license to operate that is what will happen. Mr. Silverstein also said that he has never known a racing commission to race more days than a facility wants them too.

Mr. Cummings concurred with Mr. Silverstein's statement.

There was then a question from the audience regarding access. Mr. Silverstein read the section from the draft agreement that required access to be from I84.

Bob George from George and Davis, representing the applicant spoke. He stated the originally draft did not include many of elements beneficial to the community, but the one under review this evening is the product of a lot of conversations, has a lot of financial benefits to the Town, and is very good for the Town. He asked for vote of the Board of Selectmen on the agreement this evening to solidify the commitment the Equestrian Center is making to the Sturbridge Community.

Selectmen Dunnigan stated that he has supported this project since day one, but there is no way we are voting on something the residents have not seen.

Vice Chair Dowling then asked to spell out, in the agreement what the term "best practices" mean as it relates to the treatment of horses and what happens if horses are doped. Also there needs to be a cease and desist provisions if horses are dying on the track, the limit on the number of horse deaths per year. These issues have not been addressed in the document.

**Motion: request a second opinion of the host agreement presented tonight but another gaming attorney and request the applicant to pay for this consultant given that we have not engaged in due diligence.**

**By: Vice Chair Dowling**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectmen Goodwin (he requested as part of his second that the draft goes out to the community and feedback is received).**

**Vice Chair Dowling added to her motion that the agreement is released to the public and the Board receives feedback and that the Town engages a second opinion for the host agreement.**

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Chair Blanchard stated that she does not support that motion since we have Town Counsel, a Town Administrator, and a Town Planner who all have the best interests of the Town. What should happen is that they take the comments from this evening and go back and negotiate changes in the agreement. She also said she agrees with putting the agreement out to the public for feedback.

Selectman Kaitbenski stated that he thinks these gentlemen (Mr. Silverstein and Mr. Cummings) and thinks they did a great job but does not see where a second opinion would hurt so he will be voting in favor of a second opinion.

Selectman Dunnigan thought the process would involve more public input and have that the next time we discuss the agreement.

**Voted: 3-2 (Blanchard and Dunnigan voting no)**

Vice Chair Dowling then asked when they can get a hard copy of the racing application? The Board was told they would get one, but she has not seen it yet. She also said for the record, that during the public hearing at the Publick House she asked if the Board would have an opportunity to review the application before it is filed with the Commission and she was told that the Board would have that opportunity. However, the application was filed before the Board got a copy. Also, they did not see the Chair's letter until several days later and she considers that a real ethical problem. Ms. Dowling went onto to say when they did get the application it was in an email from the Town Administrator and the email said that Town Counsel had reviewed it. She considers that promise number one broken by, not so much by the applicant but by Town Counsel.

Mr. Silverstein responded that he did not remember the conversation Vice Chair Dowling was referring to. Also he did not receive a copy of the application before it went out. What we did have was a ZOOM conference with the applicant at which the applicant reviewed certain sections of the application that were relevant to the Town. Mr. Cummings and Mr. Bridges were on that call. The applicant did not want to provide a copy of the application so to create a public record. If he had been conscious of the fact that the Board's reviewing the applicant's submittal to the Gaming Commission something the members of the Board wanted he would have sent that to the Board if he had a copy. He does not control the applicant and did not get a copy until the Board did. He also did not have a copy of that letter until the Board had it; he did not draft it. He did not draft the letter in question nor did he review it.

Mr. Bridges stated the application was reviewed on the ZOOM call. That is what he meant in the email.

Mr. Silverstein stated that he did not have a copy that he could have forwarded to members of the Board.

Vice Chair Dowling reiterated her point that they were promised copies and they have not gotten those.

Mr. Bridges then asked the Board what was the process in selecting an attorney to give a second opinion?



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Chair Blanchard stated that the Board should be provided a list of qualified attorneys, pricing included, and then it would be up to the Board to make a decision.

**Public Hearing: National Grid requests to relocate one (1) Jointly Owned (JO) pole on Farquhar Road beginning at a point approximately 315 feet east of the centerline of the intersection of Farquhar Road and continuing approximately 30 feet in a north direction. National Grid also requests to relocate pole 24 to the opposite side of Farquhar Road to accommodate the Grand Trunk Trail Project.**

Connor Reynolds represented National Grid and Thomas Chamberland represented the Sturbridge Trails Committee on the issue.

Mr. Chamberland stated that this pole is being relocated to accommodate the construction of the Westville to River Road section of the Grand Trunk Trail. The pole is being moved from one side the of the street to the other to remove it from the designed path of the trail. An easement from an abutter has been obtained for the location of the pole.

**Motion: Close the public hearing.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

**Motion: Approve the pole location as requested.**

**By: Selectmen Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0-0**

### **Department Reports:**

#### **Building Department:**

Building Inspector Nelson Burlingame appeared before the Board to review his departmental reports for June, July, August, and September of 2021. The Board welcomed him back after his recent absence.

Mr. Burligame provided the highlights of his report:

One-going commercial projects:

- 1) Day's Inn Waiting on sign off from fire to install attic sprinklers to be able to start work on remodel
- 2) 9 Holland Rd (old Mill) Board up waiting on owner to give plans on how plan to board up.
- 3) 6 Picker Cold Storage Building
- 4) 90 Charlton Rd Cold Storage
- 5) 69 Hall Rd, new eight treatment rooms for dental office
- 6) Rapscallion, waiting on Food source to open
- 7) Fit-up at 198 Charlton Rd, 3473 insurance brokerage office, 1st floor

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- 8) 40 Main Edward's gas, Remodeling outside new façade and redoing inside to convenient store.
- 9) Corner Stone Bank, New Façade and reconfigured inside to be more user friendly.
- 10) 413 Main Old Jimmy D's New Deli

Completed commercial projects:

- 1) The Stage loft theater now Church
- 2) Granite Group (Old Poletti's) Commercial Plumbing supply house
- 3) Added 7th Grade to charter school in Wight Tavern
- 4) 120 Main Dunkin Donuts, interior remodel.

Upcoming commercial projects:

- 1) D'Errico's Market
- 2) 80 main Wicked Licks, Old Travel Center
- 3) 178 Main, Old JC Penny's space divided three areas.
- 4) Noble Energy, Old Ford Truck stop.
- 5) 150 Charlton Rd. interstate towing, next to Corner Stone Bank, no submitted plans yet.
- 6) Old Friendly's, Burger restaurant.
- 7) 55+ manufactured Housing Community at 30 Main and 20 Fisk Hill. 71 combination single and doublewide homes. Had recent approval of Matt Sosik's proposed subdivision road at same address. How Planning moving forward with design process
- 8) 308 Main Deep Roots Whiskey Distillery (Mill yard Market Place) street right side.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked about the signs at the Lucky-Mart. It appears they are not consistent with the zoning bylaw.

Mr. Burlingame said they are not; he had felt bad for them with the issues they have had during their renovations and has not taken action. He will address the issue.

Chair Blanchard stated that this is an ongoing issue in Town for the Building Department and would all these issues addressed.

#### **Department of Public Works:**

Butch Jackson presented the Department of Public Works reports for August and September of 2021.

Mr. Jackson stated that are finishing up milling and paving for the year, backfilling seeding and adding the curbing to the repaved areas. They are also completing painting the lines. Finally he stated that they are beginning to prepare for snow and ice season.

Chair Blanchard stated that the winter parking ban will go into effect in November.

Mr. Jackson stated that they will post that on social media to remind the public.

Mr. Jackson had questions related to the Sun Shade project for the recreational field. He stated that originally, the DPW was to install the Sun Shade, but it was more complex than originally anticipated. Therefore, they are now hiring the manufacture of the device to install it. The

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DPW was awarded a reserve fund transfer from the Finance Committee for the costs of the installation.

**Town Administrator**

Jeff Bridges reviewed his report which included the fact that due to state redistricting, Senator Anne Gobi will no longer represent the Town of Sturbridge. Sturbridge will be represented by Senator Fattman.

He also asked that three additional items be added to new business on the agenda. Those being:

- Request for wavier of building permits fees for 12 Woodlawn Drive due to the need to repair a crumbling concrete foundation on the home.
- Heal Sturbridge, Inc. change of manager.
- Selection of a representative from the Board of Selectmen to be the liaison to the School Committee for budget purposes.

Finally, Mr. Bridges stated that the state has certified the amount of free cash the Town has. The certified number is \$6,221,006.00. Mr. Bridges provided a report developed by the Finance Department on how the free cash amount was determined and the sources of the increase of the free cash. Mr. Bridges stated that he is working with the Finance Department on monthly reports that will provide additional information on revenues and expenditures through the year to better track these trends.

**Consideration and possible action on a change of officers / directors / LLC managers on their liquor license for Uno's Restaurant LLC.**

Anita Dempsey appeared for Uno's Restaurant. Ms. Dempsey stated that there have been some changes at the management level of the Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officers of the corporation and they need to amend their license.

**Motion: Approve the change in officers / directors / LLC Mangers for Uno's Restaurant.**  
**By: Selectman Goodwin**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>: Selectman Kaitbenski**  
**All in favor**  
**Vote: 5-0-0.**

**Consideration and possible action on a Farmer's Pouring Permit for Deep Roots Distillery USA**

Deep Roots Distillery was represented by Erica DeVarenne, Keith DeVarenne and Thomas Cane. The proposed location is at 559 Main Street, Unit 209, Fiskdale.

They will be distilling their own spirits and providing samples on site.

The Distillery will be partnering with other local businesses for produce that are used, in our unique flavoring process. "Our plan is to highlight local and support as many small businesses as we can. We will have a manufacturing side that will highlight our process and be toured by

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our customers by appointment. There will also be the opportunity for our customer to taste small samples take part in our seasonal cocktail menu that uses our spirits”.

Ms. DeVarenne reviewed the status of her other necessary permits with the Board.

**Motion: To approve the Farmer’s Pouring Permit for Deep Roots Distillery USA contingent upon a public hearing if necessary.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on salt bids for winter 2021-2022**

Department of Public Works Director Butch Jackson presented the results of the salt bids to the Board of Selectmen.

**Motion: To accept the bid of Morton Salt for \$62.50 per ton, to accept the bid of Eastern Salt as a secondary vendor for \$64.50 per ton and to accept the bid of Morton Salt for \$74.85 per ton for very treated salt.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0**

**Consideration and possible action on establishing rates for private contractors performing plowing for winter 2021-2022.**

Department of Public Works Director Butch Jackson presented this item. Mr. Jackson stated that rather bid out the plowing work, this year he is setting rates and contracting with private firms to supplement the Town’s plow drivers. This is the common practice amongst the adjoining towns.

**Motion: to approve the rates for slow plowing services as recommended by Director Jackson for the winter of 2021-2022.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0.**

Consideration and possible action on the promotion of Andrew McDermott of the Department of Public Works to Heavy Equipment Operator.

Butch Jackson, Director of Public Works presented this item. Mr. Jackson stated that Mr. McDermott been with us for three years, He's actually one of the two or three people that can drive a standard transmission truck nowadays, as well, everything they have this automatic. He also has all the necessary licenses and he's working on getting a couple extra ones that we'd like to get.

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**Motion: to confirm the promotion of Andrew McDermott as a Heavy Equipment Operator in the Department of Public Works effective October 19, 2021 at a rate of \$26.91 per hour.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor.**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Consider and possible action on the acceptance of an anonymous donation of a \$50.00 Dunkin Donuts Gift Card to the Department of Public Works.**

Butch Jackson, Director of Public Works presented this item. He stated that a gentleman showed up at the DPW garage one day and handed him the gift card and thanked them for all the great work they did.

**Motion: to accept the anonymous donation of a \$50.00 Dunkin Donuts gift card to the Department of Public Works and authorize the use thereof.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor.**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Consideration and possible action on the confirmation of the appointment of Michelle Garman as Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator.**

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator presented this issue. Ms. Garman is being appointed to the vacancy created with the departure of Alexandra McConnon.

Ms. Garman was in the audience and introduced herself to the Board.

**Motion: To confirm the appointment of Michelle Garman as Executive Secretary to the Board of Selectmen and Town Administrator at a salary of \$20.85 contingent upon successful completion of pre-employment requirements.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor.**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Old Business**

**COVID-19**

Mr. Bridges stated that there is not an update for this meeting. Staff are still waiting on information on the availability of booster shots.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked about the status of coming up with a list of potential uses for the ARPA Funds.

Mr. Bridges responded that the department heads had submitted ideas and the staff are working on getting the community survey posted online.

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**Review of the Town Meeting Warrant for the October 28, 2021 Special Town Meeting**

Action by the Board on the warrant was not required. Mr. Bridges did inform the Board that the Finance Committee made no recommendation on the article for the improvements to the Cedar Lake Recreation Area.

**New Business**

**Discussion of a joint meeting between the Sturbridge Board of Selectmen and the Burgess School Committee to address the vacancy on the Burgess School Committee.**

Mr. Bridges stated that there has been interest from three residents to fill the vacancy and that their letters of interest and any supporting documents are included in your packet. Per the School Superintendent, the Burgess School Committee is available to meet with the Board of Selectmen on Monday, November 1, 2021 to review the candidates.

The Board agreed to meet with the School Committee and the candidates at their November 1, 2021 meeting.

**Change of Polling Location**

Town Clerk Lynne Girouard presented this item.

With the facility at Old Sturbridge Village unavailable for elections, the proposal is to move the polling stations to Sturbridge Worship Center located at 9 Mashapaugh Road in Sturbridge.

**Motion: To approve moving the polling location to Sturbridge Worship Center at 9 Mashapaugh Road in Sturbridge.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Approval of the 2020 Re-precincting Plan**

Town Clerk Lynne Girouard presented this item.

With the completion of the 2020 Census, the Town has to adopt a re-precincting plan. There were no changes from the prior plan.

**Motion: to approve the 2020 re-precincting plan.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Consideration and possible action on the waiving of building permit fees for 12 Woodlawn Drive due to the repair to a crumbling foundation.**

Bill and Kelly Emrich appeared before the Board of Selectmen on this issue. His home has the concrete that is crumbling due to a mineral contained in the mix that when exposed to

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moisture, breaks down the concrete. This is a very big issues for a lot of properties in northern Connecticut and now becoming more of an issue in Massachusetts.

**Motion: To waiver any building permit fees for the repairs or replacement for the crumbling foundation at 12 Woodlawn Drive in Sturbridge.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Vice-Chair Dowling**

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Selection of a School Committee Budget Liaison for the preparation of the FY 2023 Budget.**

Mr. Bridges stated that the School Superintendent has reached out to the Towns in the region asking for a liaison from each for the budget process.

Selectman Dunnigan said he would be interested in doing that.

**Motion: to appoint Selectman Dunnigan as the liaison to the School Committee for the FY 2023 budget process.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**Vote: 4-0-1 (Vice Chair Dowling abstained due to her currently working as a substitute teacher at the high school).**

**Consideration and possible action on the approval of the change in manager for Heal Sturbridge, Inc.**

Mr. Bridges stated that he had received an email from Trisha Faass, the owner of Heal Sturbridge, Inc. that they had changed managers due to internal promotions. The new manager is Kimberly Allevo.

**Motion: to approve Kimberly Allevo as the manager for Heal Sturbridge, Inc.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor**

**Vote: 5-0.**

**Correspondence**

Selectmen Kaitbenski read the correspondence.

Vice Chair Dowling asked that her and Selectman Goodwin's letter to the Gaming Commission regarding the application of the Sturbridge Equestrian Center be included in the correspondence.

Vice-Chair Dowling also asked that the anonymous letter the Board received from the people opposed to the equestrian center be included in the correspondence.

Chair Blanchard added comments regarding that letter. She stated that this flyer was mailed throughout the community. She stated that there is an anonymous flyer being mailed in the

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community that states her and husband, Charles Blanchard, Chairman of the Planning Board are being paid by developers, particularly those developing the equestrian center. She stated the letter makes no sense and it is simply not true. In addition, members of the Planning Board are not elected but appointed and Mr. Blanchard has not been elected to anything in 15 years.

**Minutes**

**Minutes of September 29, 2021**

Mary Blanchard stated that on page 179 Vice Chair Dowling was absent for the vote.

**Motion: to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2021 meeting as amended**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

**All in favor.**

**Voted: 5-0.**

**Minutes of October 4, 2021**

On pages 196 and 197 there were corrects made to names of those that spoke at the public forum.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked that a sentence be inserted on page 196 before the motion to rescind the appointment. That sentence should state: "Ms. Dowling stated that with regret she could not allow the appointment to move forward since it would be setting the applicant up for failure under the current circumstances".

Vice-Chair Dowling also asked for an addition on page 194 under Old Business regarding the application of the Equestrian Center for a racing license. She requested that the following be inserted "Selectman Goodwin stated that he would sign the letter as well".

Selectman Goodwin concurred with the amendment.

**Motion: to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2021 meeting as amended.**

**By: Selectman Dunnigan**

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

**All in favor**

**Voted: 5-0.**

**Minutes of September 13, 2021**

Vice-Chair Dowling requested the addition of the following sentence: "Vice-Dowling requested of the applicant to send the application for the gaming license to the Board of Selectmen before it is filed. The applicant agreed to do so".

**Motion: to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2021 meeting as amended.**

**By: Selectman Goodwin**

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

**All in favor**

**Voted: 5-0.**



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**Public Forum**

There were no speakers for the public forum.

Vice-Chair Dowling asked about a letter the Board had received from a resident of the Cedar Lake area asking to purchase a portion of the Cedar Lake Recreational Area from the Town.

This is to be discussed at a later meeting.

**Motion to adjourn.**

**By: Selectman Kaitbenski**

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

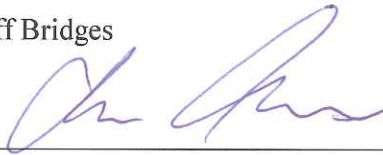
**All in favor**

**Voted 5-0.**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.**

Minutes prepared by: Jeff Bridges

Clerk of the Board: \_\_\_\_\_



Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

12/6/21