

**Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, April 13, 2021
Stow Town Building & Via Zoom**

Attending in the Warren Room in the Stow Town Building: Chair Thomas Ryan, Megan Birch-McMichael, and Ellen Sturgis. Attending remotely via Zoom: James Salvie, and Cortni Frecha.

Also present in the Warren Room: Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski.

Chairman Ryan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Public Input: Town Clerk Linda Hathaway reported that the ballots have arrived. Her office is getting ready to mail them out to those who submitted a vote by mail application. There is still time to submit the application, and the turnaround time is short. Voter registration ends this Friday, April 16, 2021 at 8 p.m.

Chairman's Comments: The Stow Independent will hold a virtual Candidates Night on Wednesday, April 14 at 7 p.m. in conjunction with Stow TV. Stow Clean-Up Day is Saturday, April 24 with registration from 8 a.m. to 12 noon at the Lower Common. More information can be found on Facebook at Stow Cleanup. The Chairman thanked Sandy Taft and Jennifer Henderson for coordinating this event.

Congratulations to Marilyn Zavorski for the recent publication of her book "Celebrating Stow's Women."

The Chairman made the following statement:

"Having served for over 10 years on the Board of Selectmen I understand and appreciate the time needed to provide the town with the level of service and support expected of the Selectmen and deserved by our residents. Over the past few weeks, regrettably, there have been some changes in my personal and professional life that have caused me to pause and evaluate the time that I will have going forward. I feel I will no longer be able to provide the level of service required as a Selectman and have made the difficult decision to withdraw my name from the Board of Selectmen's race for the upcoming Town Election. I would like to thank all the people who have supported me over the years as well as all the dedicated volunteers and employees of the Town that continue to make Stow a great place to live... Please show your support for all the folks who have stepped forward for elected office by voting either by mail or in person in the May Town Election...they should all be congratulated for stepping forward."

Selectwoman Sturgis thanked him for not only his 10 years on the Board and another decade on the Finance Committee, adding that he has done more than his share in helping the Town move forward.

Selectman Salvie echoed Selectwoman Sturgis' comments, and added that it was great serving with him for so long and getting to know him.

Appointments

Joseph Jacobs to the position of Veterans Services Officer.

Selectwoman Sturgis moved that the Board of Selectmen appoint Joseph Jacobs as the Town's Veterans' Services Officer, to fill a one-year term expiring on March 31, 2022. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Liz Beck to the Open Space Committee

Ms. Beck introduced herself; she recently moved to Stow. The Board thanked Liz for stepping forward. *Selectwoman Sturgis moved that the Board of Selectmen appoint Liz Beck to the Open Space Committee, to complete an unexpired three-year term expiring June 30, 2023. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

State FY 2022 Budget with Rep. Kate Hogan and Sen. Jamie Eldridge

Rep. Kate Hogan and Sen. Jamie Eldridge were present via Zoom.

Senator Eldridge began by saying he enjoyed serving with Chairman Ryan and thanked him for his service. There was a joint announcement from Senate President Karen Spilka and Speaker Ron Mariano on unrestricted local aid (“UGGA” or Unrestricted General Government Aid) and a commitment to a 1/6th implementation of the Student Opportunity Act. There is a 3.57% increase to local aid, which is an increase of \$462,670. Total education funding for Nashoba is \$7,867,000, which is an increase of \$593,000.

The Department of Public Health approved the Nashoba Associated Board of Health’s application for a regional vaccination clinic at Devens which should be available by mid-May.

The Next Generation Roadmap bill for Massachusetts climate policy was recently signed into law. The Senator feels this could not have passed without the support of advocacy at the local level, and Stow is one of the more active towns that he represents on the issue of climate change.

Regarding affordable housing, as it relates to the pandemic, they continue to advocate for money for rental assistance and prevention of evictions. He considers Stow a model for affordable housing.

Rep. Hogan extended her appreciation to Chairman Ryan for his decades of dedicated service and leadership. The new 192nd session began remotely and she is now Speaker Pro Tempore. In addition to a list of federal and state aid offered to Stow, Rep. Hogan secured \$10,000 for the Stow Food Pantry in the COVID-19 Relief Supplement Budget, and six Stow small businesses collectively received a total of \$275,000 in grants through the MA COVID Small Business Grant Program. For all veterans, spouses, and caregivers in the area, there is a COVID-19 vaccination clinic at the Hudson VFW on May 16th from 12-5 p.m. It is a drive-up, walk-in clinic with no registration required.

Selectman Salvie asked about the CPC match. (from the CPA Community Preservation Act). Sen. Eldridge said the Legislature increased the state match last session to approximately 27% and it will most likely stay at that rate for many years.

Selectman Salvie asked about the status of the MBTA service cuts. Sen. Eldridge said some cuts are being restored, but there is not a full restoration yet. Selectwoman Sturgis hopes the state will be pro-active with transportation that is not just going into Boston, especially as it relates to the climate change bill.

Police Department Promotions – Updated Policy

Chief Sallese was present via Zoom.

This policy is a change in how promotions to Sergeant will be done. The old system was a test-based system with no community input. The change to the evaluation process will include members of the public on the advisory board. It will take a few months as the Chief is also bringing in police chiefs from other areas. It is a better way to get the right leaders. The Sergeants are first-line supervisors.

Selectwoman Sturgis moved to approve the updated Sergeant Promotion Policy as presented and amended by Police Chief Michael Sallese. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Inter-Municipal Agreement for Animal Control Services

This is a renewal with the Town of Boxborough and has been reviewed by Town Administrator Demboski and the Board of Health. Selectwoman Sturgis asked if the reference to the Animal Inspector is to a different person. Town Clerk Hathaway said the Animal Inspector works with the Agricultural Department on Farm Reports. It is the same person, Phyllis Tower.

Selectwoman Sturgis moved that the Selectmen approve, and that the Selectmen and Town Administrator sign, the Inter-Municipal Agreement with the Town of Boxborough for Animal Control Services for the

period from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, as presented by the Board of Health. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Inter-Municipal Agreement for Making Connections Pilot Program (Go STOW!)

Town Planner Jesse Steadman worked to secure grants and regional agreements, and this one would utilize Lyft and Uber for Council On Aging off-transportation hours. The grant covers the cost of this transportation, at no cost to the Town of Stow. Sudbury spearheaded this and will manage it, with a portion of the grant going to Sudbury for this purpose. This will work with the other agreement we have with taxi services. The COA thinks this will be utilized and it supplements what is already provided. It is a pilot program and will be a great way to assess the demand for this type of service. It is not a “free-for-all.” It is for doctor appointments, vaccines, food shopping, etc., and is for financially vulnerable residents as a needs-based service.

Selectwoman Sturgis moved to approve and sign the Inter-Municipal Transportation Pilot Agreement known as “Making the Connections” as presented by the Planning Department. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Disposal of Surplus Goods and Equipment

Selectwoman Frecha wanted clarification that items not needed will be disposed of or recycled properly.

Selectwoman Sturgis moved to declare as surplus, the goods and equipment on the list provided by the Building Commissioner, valued at less than \$10,000 and belonging to the Town, and to authorize the disposal of these surplus items. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Selectwoman Sturgis moved to declare as surplus, the 1941 Buffalo Springfield Pressure Cylinder Scarifier as listed by the Building Commissioner, valued at more than \$10,000 and belonging to the Town, and to authorize the disposal of this surplus item in accordance with MGL Chapter 30B. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).

Town Meeting Discussion

Town Moderator David Walrath was present via Zoom.

Town Administrator Dembkoski and the Moderator agree that this year’s Town Meeting should be at the Center School. The Moderator would like to have it in one place. Outside is the obvious choice, but the two problems are weather and the logistics of shifting from outside to inside. Last year the Moderator didn’t allow any Powerpoint presentations as logistically we couldn’t get something outside, but this year we can have people come inside or have alternatives to a screen set up outside.

The Board agreed that it will need to be a combination of indoors and outdoors, and they are fine not having the Powerpoint presentations. Selectwoman Sturgis noted that last year it got windy and that affected the ability to hear clearly and the sound was not dependable. She said the tent was not utilized as it could have been. The Town Administrator said new equipment has been purchased. Adjustments will be made this year based on last year’s meeting.

The Annual Town Meeting will be 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 22, 2021 at the Center School.

The Town Administrator moved two items to the Consent Calendar: Article 43 Veterans’ Benefits and Article 48 Tax Title Proceedings. Other items have been moved to realign them with where they should be funded. The Moderator and the Board were in favor of the changes.

FY2022 Budget Discussion

The Chairman stated the Town Administrator prepared a letter highlighting the ‘heavy hitters’ and the budget is up 2.14% over FY 2021. The Town Administrator said we have the ability to do what she has

outlined because of the school assessment. Discussion ensued, and the Board is pleased overall with the budget, and in particular, the addition of an Assistant Town Administrator/HR Director and the budget letter. Selectman Salvie hopes that she will present a version of the letter at Town Meeting. In the future, Selectwoman Sturgis would like to see a facilities person dedicated to the Pompo Center.

The Town Administrator will be putting the letter and the individual department requests online.

The Finance Committee Public Hearing on the FY 2022 Budget is Tuesday, April 20, 2021.

Discussion of March 10, 2020 Executive Session Minutes

Items were voted on in the open session meeting of June 18, 2020 that referenced this Executive Session of which there is no record. The contracts mentioned have been signed and finalized and are available online. Selectman Salvie, Selectwoman Frecha and Chairman Ryan agreed that these minutes seem accurate.

Selectman Salvie moved to accept and release the meeting minutes of the March 10, 2020 Executive Session as drafted. Selectman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (3-0-2). Selectwomen Sturgis and Birch-McMichael abstained.

Town Administrator's Report

- The COA has a free food program and those in need should call the Center between 10-11 a.m. and you will be given a time to 'shop' for food. There are no age or income requirements.
- For Boards and Committees that want to use outdoor space (pavilions, gazebos, etc.) to have socially distanced meetings please schedule the space with Laura in Recreation.
- Sen. Eldridge discussed the 16-town Nashoba area vaccination clinic. It could provide up to 2000 vaccines per day. Logistics and resources are being discussed.
- The TA will be on vacation beginning Friday, April 23rd and will return to the office on Monday, May 3rd and will not be here for the next meeting on Tuesday, April 27, 2021. She will be available by email and telephone while she is away.
- The TA feels that in addition to seeing the Audit Report, a meeting with the auditors is important for the Board to be able to ask them any questions directly.

Liaison Reports

- Selectwoman Frecha – no report
- Selectman Salvie – The Finance Committee Public Hearing is next week. The Capital Planning Committee has finished its review of items.
- Selectwoman Birch-McMichael – The Planning Board is finalizing warrant articles. The Town Hall Restoration Committee has discussed a plan for moving forward now that no funds are being requested at Town Meeting. The Lake Boon Commission has questions about access to the lake.
- Selectwoman Sturgis – Minuteman's Dr. Bouquillon is retiring at the end of school year 2022. MAGIC (Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination) had a legislative breakfast. They are almost done with the annual perambulation; she will be doing a report at the next meeting. Recreation was hoping to add more spots to the Camp Stow enrollment.
- Chairman Ryan – Stow collected 1,200 pounds of food during the food drive and Project Wheat received a total of 3000 pounds of food. Our first meeting in May is a week or so before the Saturday Town Meeting; we could have an additional meeting if needed on May 18, 2021. On Saturday, May 22, 2021 we will have a BOS meeting before Town Meeting at 8 or 8:30 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

March 23, 2021: *Selectwoman Sturgis moved to accept the meeting minutes of March 23, 2021 as presented. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (5-0).*

July 8, 2020: *Selectwoman Sturgis moved to accept the meeting minutes of July 8, 2020 as presented. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (5-0).*

June 18, 2020: *Selectman Salvie moved to accept the meeting minutes of June 18, 2020 as presented. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it was approved 3-0-2. Selectwomen Sturgis and Birch-McMichael abstained.*

June 9, 2020: *Selectman Salvie moved to accept the meeting minutes of June 9, 2020 as presented. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it was approved 3-0-2. Selectwomen Sturgis and Birch-McMichael abstained.*

June 9, 2020 Executive Session: *Selectman Salvie moved to accept and release the meeting minutes of the June 9, 2020 Executive Session as presented. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it was approved 3-0-2. Selectwomen Sturgis and Birch-McMichael abstained.*

May 1, 2020 Executive Session: Town Administrator Dembkoski stated that she was not present in the May 1, 2020 Executive Session. That sentence needs to be removed.

Selectman Salvie moved to accept and release the meeting minutes of the May 1, 2020 Executive Session as amended. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it was approved 3-0-2. Selectwomen Sturgis and Birch-McMichael abstained.

Correspondence: The Board discussed the invitation from Maynard to attend their Founders Day Celebration on Monday, April 19, 2021. An email will be sent stating Board members will attend if their schedules allow.

Executive Session

At 9:14 p.m. Selectwoman Sturgis moved to convene in Executive Session, pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21(a) (2), to conduct contract negotiations with the Town Administrator, and to adjourn thereafter. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously on a roll call vote: Selectman Salvie-aye; Selectwoman Frecha-aye; Selectwoman Sturgis-aye; Selectwoman Birch-McMichael-aye; Chairman Ryan-aye.

Respectfully submitted,

Joyce Sampson

Executive Assistant

Documents used at this meeting:

- *Police Department Promotions Updated Policy*
- *Inter-Municipal Agreement for Animal Control Services*
- *Inter-Municipal Agreement for Making Connections Pilot Program (Go STOW!)*
- *List of Surplus Goods and Equipment*
- *FY2022 Budget*
- *Draft Minutes of the March 23, 2021, July 8, 2020, June 18, 2020, June 9, 2020, June 9, 2020 Executive Session, and May 1, 2020 Executive Session meetings.*
- *Correspondence*
- *These and additional documents can be found in the Selectmen's Office filed with meeting folder.*