

**Board of Selectmen's Meeting  
Wednesday, July 8, 2020  
Stow Town Building & Via Zoom**

Present at the meeting: Chair Thomas Ryan, James Salvie, Cortni Frecha, Megan Birch-McMichael, and Ellen Sturgis.

Also present: Town Administrator William Wrigley and Executive Assistant Maureen McKeon.

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

**Chairman's Comments:** The Chairman welcomed new members Ellen Sturgis and Megan Birch-McMichael to the Board. He thanked Brian Burke and Don Hawkes for their service, and Jim Salvie for being the chairman last year.

The Pine Bluffs Recreation Area is open to residents and their guests only. There is an attendant at the main gate from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. to collect a \$10 parking fee and verify residency. Parking is limited to 30 cars. Parents must stay with their children and are not allowed to just drop them off. Bathrooms will remain closed. The beach is not open and there is no lifeguard; swimming is at your own risk.

**Public Input:** Town Clerk Linda Hathaway reported that there will be in-person early voting for the September primary, and there will also be vote by mail. The Secretary of State's office is mailing out applications for vote by mail for the Primary and the November Election to all registered voters.

The 2020 Census is ongoing. Bolton leads the state with an 86% response and Stow is second at 85.6%. Nationwide, Bolton is tied for 135<sup>th</sup> place and Stow is tied for 166<sup>th</sup> place.

**Minutes:**

*Selectwoman Frecha moved to accept the meeting minutes of the June 6, 2020 meeting as drafted.*

*Selectman Salvie seconded the motion, and it passed 3-0-2 with Selectwoman Birch-McMichael and Selectwoman Sturgis abstaining.*

**Correspondence:** The Board discussed items that they would like to see on upcoming agendas.

**Sign BAN (Bond Anticipation Note) for Lower Village Construction Project**

Town Administrator Wrigley introduced Stow's new Treasurer/Collector, Brad Brightman.

Mr. Brightman presented a history of this Note, which was first issued on 12/16/2017. The Note is being renewed for \$420,000 at 0.95%. Town Administrator Wrigley said the original purpose of a BAN is for short-term temporary borrowing for a project that extends several years, and the permanent bond comes at the conclusion of the project. Mr. Brightman said it is an economical way to borrow money. Town Administrator Wrigley said the vote was taken by the previous Board to issue it and tonight the Board needs to sign the Note.

**Approve and Sign Contract for the New Town Administrator**

The Board decided that they did not need to convene in Executive Session.

Selectman Salvie wanted to clarify the work schedule, which is a full 40 hours between Monday and Thursday, with Friday being a half-day and offering flexibility. For the first 4 months Ms. Dembkoski will be finishing up in Groveland on Fridays. Chairman Ryan said that helping the transition in her former town is a good thing and shows professionalism. He appreciates the reciprocity in the inclusion of this provision if she were to leave Stow.

Selectwoman Sturgis asked about the cell phone allowance, and do we issue company cell phones to senior staff. Town Administrator Wrigley said the Chiefs are reimbursed for their work-related calls on their personal cell phones, and we have been doing it for many years with no issues.

*Selectwoman Frecha moved that the Selectmen approve and sign the contract for new Town Administrator Denise Dembkoski. Selectman Salvie seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

### **CARES Grant**

Fire Chief Joe Landry was present via Zoom.

The Chief had provided the Board with background information before the meeting and explained the parameters for submitting expenses related to COVID-19. Stow's allotment of the CARES Grant money is a maximum of \$636,042.00, which is sitting in the system waiting for requests for reimbursement. Each request must meet certain criteria as the grant will only fund things that you cannot get via other federal funding sources. Chairman Ryan added that this helps fund unbudgeted items (such as the tent for Town Meeting) that are absolutely necessary to keep a town functioning. The Chief has had conversations in which he asked do you really need this; if we didn't have the CARES money would you still do this. It does not replace lost revenues. If something is declined, then the Town has to find a way to fund it.

### **Annual Town Meeting Plans**

Moderator David Walrath was present via Zoom.

The Moderator said that weather is the primary issue. He asked the Board if the decision should be made to postpone Town Meeting, and if so, at what level of predicted bad weather do we postpone. He then asked if we do not have a resolution tonight, when would be a reasonable day and time to make a final decision. Highway Supervisor Steve Nadeau has a very accurate weather app that will be utilized. After much discussion, it was decided that the Moderator will make a decision no later than Friday morning. A rain date of Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> has been publicized. The tents will go up tomorrow and will stay up until next weekend. The Board agreed with the Moderator's request that Sunday July 12<sup>th</sup> also be considered as a rain date with a start time of 11:30 a.m. If Town Meeting is postponed, a reverse 911 call will go out and an update will be posted to the Town's website. The details for COVID-19 precautions were discussed.

The Board agreed that the Chair can coordinate directly with the Moderator and Mr. Nadeau on behalf of the Board.

### **Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles 4, 41, 44, 52, 58, 59, 60, 61 and Any Other Articles**

Town Administrator Wrigley discussed the current budget (Article 4—General Budget for Fiscal Year 2021) and the few changes that were made since the budget was first presented in March. The budget has been decreased by \$46,000. The budget was previously voted on with unanimous support by the Board.

Town Administrator Wrigley left the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

After some discussion, the Board agreed to revoke the prior Board's votes, then review those votes and discuss each article. The new Board would then recommend approval on the articles.

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board reconsider its recommendations on Articles 4, 41, 44, 59, 60 and 61. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board make favorable recommendations on Articles 4, 41, 44, 59, 60 and 61. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board reconsider its recommendation on Article 52. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board recommend approval on Article 52. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed 4-0-1 with Chairman Ryan abstaining.*

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board reconsider its recommendation on Article 58. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

*Selectman Salvie moved that the Board recommend approval on Article 58. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion for discussion.*

Selectman Salvie thinks it is a good idea but due to the coronavirus he feels we need to start saying ‘no’ to things that are a good idea, but just not enough of a good idea. He would not support it at this time.

Selectwoman Birch-McMichael feels it needs to get up to code, but if we don’t have a specific usage it is not a good idea to spend money on it.

Selectwoman Frecha said it is CPA funds which is money that is already put aside specifically for historic preservation and it can’t be used for other reasons. She is a member of the Town Hall Restoration Committee (THRC) and feels it is a small Feasibility Study that is needed to understand the full ramifications of the project.

Selectwoman Sturgis is against this and feels if we don’t have an absolute reason for the usage then we shouldn’t spend \$1 on design funds. When using design funds you are designing for a purpose. CPA funds are tax dollars and we have other historic places in town.

Selectwoman Frecha says the building was heavily used before; we are social animals and we will want to gather again. The usage declined as the building became less comfortable. It is part of what is cool about Stow and this is about making it a usable building for the future.

Chairman Ryan is also on the THRC and said they have talked about bringing it up to code. Its use is irrelevant as there are no major reconfigurations and they are not changing the main function hall area, just fixing it. An elevator may be added between the bottom floor and the main floor where the large hall is located. They want to save a historical building and improve it to make it more usable and energy efficient.

Selectwoman Birch-McMichael commented that we don’t know what a design would be in a post-covid world. Distance restrictions may be in place for a long time.

Selectwoman Frecha said we know how it has been used traditionally. The Community Center is getting heavy use. The conversation the Town will have is do we want free or inexpensive space for community use.

*Selectman Salvie moved to withdraw his previous motion and moved that the Board take no position on Article 58. Selectwoman Frecha seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

#### **Liaison Reports:**

- Selectwoman Sturgis asked about the upcoming Board of Health meeting and a permit for the lake.
- Selectwoman Birch-McMichael thought the Planning Board’s warrant article for outdoor dining should include a template from the BOH for how businesses doing so should behave.
- Selectwoman Frecha reported that the CPC received the timeline for the Pine Point Affordable Housing building with occupancy ready for August 2021.

#### **Adjournment**

*At 9:32 p.m. Selectwoman Birch-McMichael moved to adjourn. Selectman Salvie seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously (5-0).*

Respectfully submitted,

*Joyce Sampson*

Executive Assistant

#### **Documents used at this meeting:**

*Documents can be found in the Selectmen’s Office filed with the meeting folder.*