

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
December 8, 2020, 7 pm
Stow Town Building & Via Zoom

Physically present at this meeting in Stow Town Building were board members:

Thomas Ryan, Chair
Ellen Sturgis
Jim Salvie

Present virtually Via Zoom were board members: Cortni Frecha and Megan Birch McMichael

Also Denise Dembkoski, Town Administrator

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

Public Input: There were no comments.

Chairman's comments: Mr. Ryan said that the Stow Police wanted to remind everyone of the winter parking ban which begins December 1st and prohibits parking on streets between 1 am and 6 am. He noted that the Fire Department will be escorting Santa around Stow on December 13th, however due to the pandemic there would be no stops. The schedule is in the newspaper and live tracking will be available. Mr. Ryan noted that former Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen Susan McLaughlin had recently passed away. He concluded by noting that it has been a very difficult year for the Town and Board with the challenges of Covid-19, the retirement of the former Town Administrator and hiring of another, as well as a complex election, and a scandal involving the former police chief. He thanked his colleagues on the Board, the Town Administrator, and all employees and volunteers and thanked the residents for their patience. He said that he hoped for a better 2021. Other members of the Board also took the opportunity to thank the Town's many employees and volunteers .

Appointments:

1. Appointment of Greg Troxel as a Perambulation alternate: Ms. Sturgis encouraged the Board to appoint Greg Troxel as an alternate so that he can assist with perambulation. She noted that he has been helping with this since at least 2006.

Mr. Salvie moved to appoint Greg Troxel as Perambulation Alternate for the Selectmen's 2020-2021 perambulation of town boundaries, Ms. Sturgis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

2. Appointment of Gregory Boutwell to the position of per diem snow plow driver/laborer: Ms. Dembkoski said that the Superintendent of Streets has made the recommendation to appoint Gregory Boutwell which she supports. Ms. Sturgis suggested authorizing the Town Administrator to make this type of appointments. Ms. Dembkoski said that the charter states that the Selectmen appoint Highway

and Police. She said she thought the Board could authorize her to appoint per diems. In this case, however, the candidate is also being appointed as a laborer.

Mr. Salvie moved to appoint Gregory Boutwell to the position of per diem snow plow driver/laborer. Ms. Sturgis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Mr. Salvie moved to authorize the Town Administrator to hire a per diem laborers for the Town of Stow Highway Department on their behalf through the end of March 2021. Ms. Sturgis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Town Hall Restoration Committee: Discussion of a Possible Easement: Doug Hyde, Asst. Facilities Director, appeared on behalf of the Committee, noting that he had provided a packet of information to the Board for their review. He said the focus of the discussion is the Selectmen's opinion on granting an easement or entering into agreements for location of equipment for the HVAC systems. He noted the proximity of the Town Hall to the property lines and that an easement had already been granted by the abutting property for the accessibility ramp. It is unknown at this time exactly what pieces of equipment will be needed or where they will go. He noted that the Committee has more work to do on this and has not yet reached out to the abutting landowner, but they want to know if the Board is willing to enter into an easement request. Ms. Dembkoski showed photos of possible locations for the equipment. The Board clarified that the Committee was discussing a voluntary easement and not a taking. Mr. Hyde indicated that the easement might be approximately 20'x20'. There was consensus on the Board that discussions with the homeowner would be appropriate and agreement that a vote was not needed at this time.

New Common Victualler License: 29 Culinary, LLC d/b/a Nan's Market, 271 Great Road: Ms. Dembkoski noted that Nan's market has opened at 271 Great Road. There was some confusion about licensing and what was needed. The business owner has provided an application and meets the requirements. She recommends approving a license through December 31, 2021.

Mr. Salvie moved to approve a Common Victualer license for Nan's Market at 271 Great Road, for the remainder of 2020 and through December 31, 2021, Ms. Sturgis seconded and the vote was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Minuteman Athletic Complex School Debt Authorization request: Ms. Dembkoski noted that the Board needs to decide how to proceed with this. She said that the cost is expected to be about \$18k in the first year and will decrease over 10 years. In order to take negative action it would require a special town meeting in January. If the Board takes no action, the borrowing will approved by default. After discussion by the Board regarding the challenge of holding a special town meeting in winter during the pandemic, there was agreement to take no action and allow the borrowing to move forward.

2021 Liquor License Renewals: Mr. Ryan listed the names and addresses of all the licenses up for renewal. Ms. Dembkoski said that they have all met the requirements and passed required background checks. There was discussion of whether businesses are required to be TIPS certified.

Certification is required, but it is not a part of the license renewal process. It was suggested that this might be requested in the future. It was also suggested that the Town should formalize policies around issuance of liquor licenses, one day licenses, etc. as a future workplan item.

Mr. Salvie moved to renew the Town's 2021 Liquor Licenses for the following businesses, and approve the release of said licenses only upon a satisfactory inspection by the Building Department. Ms. Sturgis seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

1. Stow Food & Beverage LLC (Stow Acres), 58 Randall Rd – On-Premises – All Alcohol
2. J. Melone & Sons d/b/a Stowaway Golf, 121 White Pond Rd – On Premises – Wine & Malt
3. Nickrosz Spirits, Inc. d/b/a Colonial Spirits of Stow, 117 Great Rd – Package Store – All Alcohol
4. Ken's Liquor Shoppe, Inc, 8 Hudson St – Package Store – All Alcohol
5. Robert Page III LLC d/b/a Butternut Farm Golf Club, 115 Wheeler Rd – On-Premises – All Alcohol
6. Wedgewood Country Club of Stow Inc. d/b/a Wedgewood Pines Country Club, 215 Harvard Rd - On-Premises – All Alcohol
7. J. Salamone Enterprises, Inc. d/b/a Russell's Convenience Store of Stow, 390 Great Road – Package Store – Wine & Malt
8. The Air Field Café, Inc. d/b/a Nancy's Air Field Café, 302 Boxboro Rd - On-Premises – All Alcohol
9. Red River Rock, Inc. d/b/a Red Ginger Restaurant, 117 Great Road - On-Premises – All Alcohol

It was suggested by Ms. Sturgis that license fees might be reduced for businesses that had been required to close due to Covid-19. The matter was discussed briefly and it was agreed to bring this back at a meeting in January for further discussion and that whatever is done it should not be an administrative burden.

Presentation of the Finalists for the Chief of Police Position/Timeline/Public Interview Process: Ms. Dembkoski summarized the process of reviewing applications from the original 31 candidates to 13 who submitted written responses to questions. The Screening Committee interviewed five candidates and have agreed unanimously on 3 names to put forward to the Board. The Screening Committee did not rank the candidates but is presenting them in alphabetical order. They are:

- Richard Briggs - Lieutenant, Ashland Police Department
- Edward Lee - Former Chief, Hopkinton Police Department
- Michael Sallese - Acting Chief/Detective Sergeant, Stow Police Department

The Board discussed the process for interviewing finalists and agreed to hold a Saturday interview session on January 9th from 8 am-1 pm at the Community Center. Interviews will be 50 minutes each. Voting would occur at the subsequent meeting. Ms. Dembkoski will provide the questions asked previously. She suggested that the Board meet from 8-9 am prior to the interviews and discuss the questions. It was clarified that the interviews will be in open session for individuals that wish to listen on Zoom. There will be no public input, however residents can submit questions to Ms. Dembkoski. Ms. Dembkoski said she would try to schedule them in alphabetical order.

Education Incentive Program: Proposal to Grandfather Current Employees and Eliminate Incentive

Going Forward: Ms. Dembkoski presented a proposal to eliminate the Education Incentive for staff and grandfather all current employees working for the Town. She had distributed a copy of the list of employees and amounts to the Board and explained her rationale for making this change. She noted that the program was adopted by Town Meeting but can be changed by the Board of Selectmen. She feels that the position descriptions and compensation should reflect the educational levels that are required for each position and that this pay should be part of the base pay that each employee receives. As positions come open this would be evaluated, but existing employees would continue to receive the Educational Incentive. A larger discussion will be a review of the Compensation Study done by the Collins Center.

The Board discussed the origin and rationale for the program which began in 2001, and its initial connection to the incentives offered in the Quinn bill. Ms. Dembkoski noted that the Finance Committee is favor of this for transparency reasons.

Mr. Salvie moved to grandfather all current employees in the Town's Educational Incentive Program, and to eliminate this program going forward. Ms. Sturgis seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Executive/Administrative Assistant position: Ms. Dembkoski noted that Executive/Administrative position needs be filled. She said that she would like clarification of who supervises the person. She recommended that she supervise the new hire and he/she provide support to the Board through her. She would like to see more streamlining with regard to communication. She noted that the Board has a revised job description. She would like to post it tomorrow with the range in the Town Meeting warrant. It was clarified that the title changed to Executive Assistant in the last year. In response to questions by the Board she noted that the description includes a section on confidentiality which she will review again, and that she will confirm that it is an exempt position under Fair Labor Standards guidelines. She will also make sure that minutes is part of the job description, though she may have them do the minutes from the tape.

Mr. Salvie moved that the Selectmen support the recommendations of the Town Administrator and authorize her to post the Executive Assistant position as discussed and to assume supervisory and managerial responsibility for the Executive Assistant. Ms. Sturgis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.

Town Administrator's Report: Ms. Dembkoski said that Nan's market has had a hold up on their license. She is waiting to hear from the ABCC and if they approve it she would like them to move forward quickly. She asked the Board to sign with the caveat that the license will not be issued unless ABCC approves.

She noted that in the past the Board approved a handful of budgets – Town Reports, Property and Casualty, Workers Comp, Weights and Measures, She will fold these into her budget going forward.

She has been in touch with Senator Eldredge's office regarding the plan to tour Lower Village. It was agreed that a Monday would be best. She will follow up with the Senator and with Rep Hogan and try to schedule this in January.

She noted that there have been 25 COVID-19 cases in last 14 days in Stow. The state is rolling back to Phase 3, Step 1 as of next Sunday. She encouraged people to take note of these changes.

Finally, she asked the Board for guidance on correspondence. What should be included in the packets, what can be sent by email, and what is really desired? It was agreed that she should use her discretion. True correspondence (vs. agendas, meeting announcements, etc.) should be in the packet. She encouraged the Board to let her know if they want more information.

Liaison reports

- Ms. Frecha noted that the Community Preservation Committee met and is currently in the process of reviewing applications. They are meeting with the Community Preservation Coalition to discuss bonding. She thought it might be helpful at some point to talk about priorities with the Board.
- Ms. Birch McMichael said that the School Committee is meeting tomorrow and will be discussing a hybrid model for the high school depending on Covid numbers. Tri-Town is tomorrow. She and Denise will not be attending. The Town Hall Restoration Committee has presented a proposal to CPC. The Planning Board will be hearing a project at Stow House of Pizza next week.
- Ms. Sturgis noted that Minuteman has produced a great video tour. She will send around a link. Also, MAPC is sponsoring a training on pooled testing for large groups. Denise will be attending to learn more.
- Mr. Salvie noted that Complete Streets met this week and reviewed the initial conceptual designs for Track Road. He said that the Library Building Committee is working on an RFR and he has encouraged them to talk to Denise about procurement. He mentioned that he went to a 495 Metrowest Partnership meeting at which the MBTA made a presentation on their service reductions. He urged skepticism about a post-pandemic return to the prior level of service and noted the importance of a viable mass transit system.
- Mr. Ryan noted that the Fire Dept has been doing a lot of mutual aid. He noted that the Fire Dept did an after action report after a prior storm and that things worked better in the most recent storm. Highway is still cleaning up from the last storm. He wished Steve Nadeau a happy one year anniversary. The Police Dept is considering doing another Citizen's Police Academy via Zoom. The BOH meets Thursday.

Meeting Minutes - November 24, 2020: Ms. Sturgis said that she sent an email with a correction to make clear that Sen. Eldridge was trying lead the tour at Lower Village, not Rep. Hogan.

Ms. Dembkoski indicated that there are 8-9 meetings without approved minutes. They are working on that. Kathy Sferra has offered to do the minutes for meetings until the new Assistant is hired. Only two dept heads volunteered.

Mr. Salvie moved to accept the meeting minutes of the November 24, 2020 meeting with amendments. Ms. Sturgis seconded and the motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on roll call vote.

Ms. Sturgis noted the recent court decision regarding the former police chief. She wanted it on the agenda to express concern that he was let off too easily. She asked about doing a press release or letter. She felt that the Board should comment, as well as clarify that the Town doesn't have a say in his pension. It was agreed that residents who have questions should direct them to the Town Administrator who can prepare a response with regard to common themes and possibly post it to the website.

Correspondence: Ms. Birch McMichael brought up the letter from the Bolton Selectmen to the School Committee. She doesn't want to be in the middle but wants to acknowledge we have seen it.

Adjournment: *At 9:13 Mr. Salvie moved to adjourn, Ms. Sturgis seconded. The motion was approved unanimously (5-0) on a roll call vote.*

Respectfully submitted

Kathy Sferra

Materials Used at Meeting

Draft Minutes from 11-24-2020

Meeting Packet:

- Packet of Information regarding Ed Incentive Program
- Packet of Information regarding Police Chief Finalists
- Draft Executive/Administrative Assistant Job Description
- Packet of Information about Town Hall Project
- Application Information for Licenses