

Stockbridge Board of Selectmen -Draft

November 19, 2020 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting Info

+1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 826 6330 1897 **Passcode:** 221634Meeting

Present: Lee Ann Isaacson, Jim Shands, Mark Pelletier, Lori Scott, Jesse Bessett, Joanne Mills, Joe Havelka, Julie Maxfield, Tim Pratt, Beth Dawley, Katelynne McKinstry, Charity Colton, Karen Ruben, Regina Toolin, Irene Sinteff, Pat Harvey, Greg Piccarello.

Mark called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Minutes 11/5/2020: Mark read the minutes from the last meeting. Jim motioned to approve as written. Lee Ann seconded, and the minutes were approved.

School Budget and Issues: Joanne Mills reported that there is a group of Stockbridge residents who continually voice their disapproval of the school merger. They call into the school board meetings they are concerned that their voices are not heard. Their intention is to ask the Selectboard to have an open discussion to continue or dissolve the current school merger. Lee Ann reported that she had reached out the town's attorney to understand the process. The town's attorney shared that there is a process that needs to be followed: To start the process, the resident group must present a petition signed by 5% of the towns registered voters requesting this discussion. Katelynne McKinstry shared that in a dissolution vote, the requesting town would vote and if approved the other town would have to approve. Then the request would go to the Board of Education for approval. Currently if the requesting town had the resources and plan to educate the children, the BOE would have no reason to not approve the request. Katelynne reported that there is legislation in process now to change that. She indicated the sense of urgency to do this now rather than wait for and legislation change to be implemented. Charity Colton clarified that the group wishes to have the Selectboard call a special meeting to hold that vote sooner than the town meeting in March. Mark reminded the group that they would need to have the signed petition first, then all the normal warning timeframes would have to be followed. Lee Ann added that there are many concerns with holding any sort of meeting due to the COVID 19 considerations and requirements. Australian Ballot would most likely need to be the voting process with an informational meeting held in advance. Karen Ruben asked what would happen if both town's disagreed and one approved and one did not. Katelynne added that both towns would have to vote to dissolve. If there was not agreement, then the merger would stay intact. Jim suggested that the group not try to plan for what they think Rochester is going to do. If there is a ground swell of Stockbridge residents who feel strongly that there should be a dissolution, then we should proceed. Beth Dawley asked if there is a dissolution, would Stockbridge be able to exist as one tiny school? Would the state tell us that we would need to close our school? Mark shared that the State of Vermont has never closed a school in history. Charity confirmed that the state has not ever closed a school if the town can prove it can academically and financial support it. She reminded the group we need to get through this first step. She also indicated that if there was not agreement in the approval, it would go to litigation. Joanne reported that there is investment going on in Rochester to subdivide the two properties (Elementary and High Schools) They need to understand Stockbridge's intentions before investing more time and money. She also asked once the petition is in, would the Selectboard warn a special meeting or would this have to go to town meeting. Jim recommended it go to town meeting and Mark commented that it would likely run into town meeting anyway. There is a good deal of prep work needed by the group prior to any meeting.

Action Items:

- The town group needs to prepare and present the petition to the town.
- The Selectboard needs to figure out how to hold this vote.

- Lori to get the warning requirements.
- Lee Ann asked that the town group put together a bulleted list of why they want to move forward with the dissolution. Mark concurred because this would be the basis of the presentation for the town informational meeting.

Chalet Village Water System: Charity Colton reported that when she went to the area this week there were cars parked in the travel lane of the road. She needed to pull her vehicle into the ditch so that she could pass by. She also indicated that the area is water source protection area in the watershed system. She said there is debris all over the property and she is concerned that it will impact the water source. **Action Item:** Road commissioner needs to communicate to the property owner for the cars parked on the travel lane. Jim suggested that Charity reach out to the state for any contamination concern in the watershed area.

Road Commissioner Report: Dave did not have a report this week. Jim asked about mutual aid across towns and would like this added to the next meeting. The Selectboard asked that Dave attend the 12/3/2020 meeting.

October Financials: Selectboard reviewed the current financials and cash flow.

Interest and Penalty: Mark asked what the impacts of waiving the penalty were. **Action Item:** Lori to review the calculation with the Delinquent tax collector.

Firearms ordinance: A new resident sent in a question regarding rules about discharging firearms in town. Lee Ann responded that current regulation (noise ordinance) is no shooting between sunset and sunrise. Mark added that there was an addition that there cannot have or discharge a gun close to the school. Katelynne as what was considered close to the school. Mark said on school property. **Action Item:** need to find the updated regulation.

JP Election: Two top candidates declined. **Action Item:** Lori to reach out to the write in candidates in order of voting.

Town Meeting Planning: Guidance is coming out from the Secretary of State's office on how to hold town meeting this year. **Action Item:** Continue discussion at future meetings

Wood Chipping Business: Lee Ann continuing to determine ownership and Act 250 permitting. She will reach out to the property owner of the bulk of the property on the hill for insight.

Representative to WRVA: Jim moved to appoint Beth Dawley to the role, Mark seconded, Lee Ann agreed, and Beth was appointed. Beth accepted.

Orders were sent electronically to the board members and will be signed and scanned back to the town office.

The Selectboard did not move to executive session to review the personnel policy. Lee Ann asked to add to the next meeting.

Jim moved to adjourn, Mark seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.

Lori Scott, Town Clerk
