

Stockbridge Board of Selectmen -Draft

December 17, 2020 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting Info: +1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 863 3542 6911 Passcode: 362698

Present: Lee Ann Isaacson, Jim Shands, Mark Pelletier, Lori Scott, Dave Brown, Zach Cavacas, Jamie Kinnarney

Mark called the meeting called to order at 7:01pm

Lee Ann read the minutes from 12/3/2020. Lee Ann moved to accept with minor adjustments. Mark and Jim seconded.

Public Communication: First Constable, Zach Cavacas joined the meeting to discuss noise ordinances and his job description. Zach would like clarification on the town ordinances and an ID to show when he is asked for one. Jim stated that the Selectboard was looking into backup and more guidelines for the constable position. Zach agreed that would help. Lee Ann asked for a way to post the ordinance and directions for filing a noise complaint on the town website. Jim and Lee Ann agreed a job description was in order.

School Vote Planning and Timeline: Superintendent, Jamie Kinnarney joined the meeting. Jim voiced concern over financial implications of ending school merger. Jamie said he could use last year's numbers to separate expenses for Stockbridge per pupil. A tax sheet for both towns, expenditures and revenues will be available so the town can see the tax rate for just Stockbridge. Mark asked if additional costs would be coming in. Jamie said no. Jamie can have the data by Jan. 1. He said he will look at which students are tuition in Stockbridge and which are tuition in Rochester. Tuition revenues make a difference on per pupil spending and tax rates. He will also separate the consolidated federal grant for title monies.

Jim asked Jamie's thoughts on dis-merger. Jamie voiced concerns about sustainability and rising costs limiting options for schools and students. Lee Ann verified that he was concerned about Stockbridge being a stand-alone school. Jamie stated he was concerned about all districts and would be concerned if Stockbridge needed help.

Jim asked Jamie's thoughts on the high school building. Jamie stated that he believes the building is a liability and has advised the School Board of that. He believes the Board is working on solving the problem. He stated the two elementary schools are sufficient. Jim stated the town doesn't feel the Board was listening to its concerns about the merger and high school.

Jamie talked about the staff working well across schools and the possibility of structural changes in administration for efficiency next year. He believes as achievement among students increases the need for intervention will be reduced and so will cost. The new budget will be down. Jamie stated that the merger was in governance. No steps were taken to do business differently. He doesn't think the SU held the promise of more for students and lower cost with the mergers.

The Board stated that there was never enough clarity around the merger and the town felt forced and rushed on the vote. Lee Ann asked for how the costs look today, as a merged community school district, versus how it would look separated for information so the town can vote along with Jamie's comments on sustainability.

Jamie acknowledged the frustration and voiced his opinion that these conversations should have happened a year ago.

Road Commissioner's Report: Dave said the money budgeted for painting the garage was fine, but Mountain View Painting is booked up through next summer. He will try to hire them anyway. Dave got a quote for \$7795 on a EK System 2000 furnace from CV Oil. Water seems to be leaking from the current furnace. Discussion ensued over the efficiency/practicality of switching to propane. Mark thought it would be more expensive to switch and that the quoted furnace was very efficient.

Fletcher Brook needs a bigger culvert. Dave has five grants to submit. His priority is Hunger Mountain Rd. Dave and the Board expressed concern for the safety of those entering or exiting the road. The culvert for Fletcher Brook will be 95 inches wide and partially buried with additional road build up.

Abbott Rd. tree cutting is done. Whitcomb Rd. still needs to be done. Ditching is being done on Stony Brook Rd. Rochester has begun cutting trees on New Boston Rd.

Dave has talked with Bob Green and Tom Marquis about obtaining land at Applied Animations. Dave suggested Lee Ann be present at the next talk as Zoning administrator. Dave had told them he would present to the Board. Discussion began about cost and road maintenance. Mark stated the next step would be to look at land, find out the acreage, where the right of way/road is, and figure out fair market value. Jim said the property will need to be appraised. Board agreed to buy, rather than lease.

Action Item: Board will meet Dave at the property at 2:00 on 12/23.

Dave gave a truck update and talked about a problem with the warranty which has now been resolved.

Planning Commission Nominations and Chair Election: Lori stated that the Planning commission has nominated Regina Toolin to the Commission and Kevin Travis as Chair. Mark made a motion to appoint Regina and Kevin to the positions. Jim and Lee Ann seconded. Regina Toolin is appointed to the Planning Commission and Kevin Travis is appointed as Chair.

Other Business: Discussion ensued around informational meeting and voting. The informational meeting and town meeting would be warned together, and town meeting day would be for voting only. At present, ballots will not be mailed and must be requested by phone, email or online. We are awaiting legislation to determine if that will change and that ballots could be mailed to all voters. Voting in person will be on Mar. 2nd. The town book needs to be mailed out before informational meeting.

Lori stated she is working on an electronic file to send the book to the printer which will save time.

Action Item: Jim will write the Selectman's Report.

Lori let the Selectboard know that they need to make a motion to move town meeting to Australian Ballot for this year. People currently up for reelection need to be contacted to verify they are running again. There needs to be an attempt to fill empty slots. Candidates to elected positions need to be put on ballot. Discussion formed around the need for a moderator. Lori stated the Selectboard can run the informational meeting, but a moderator still needs to be elected. Jim made a motion that Lori manages Zoom and Kelly creates the minutes. Mark seconded.

Talk began about the process of notifying those in incumbent positions and those who may want to run. Lee Ann stated that the town needs to use any and all tools to get the word out about the informational meeting and the Australian Ballot, along with candidates and openings.

Lori gave the following timeline: the last petition for an article on the town meeting warning must be received by Jan. 14. All candidate's certificates must be received by the town clerk by Jan. 25. The warning must be posted by the Jan 31st. Mark verified that details on informational meeting and ballot would be in the book. Lori agreed. The book needs to be to the printer by Jan. 31. Mark asked about the auditors. Lori wants to give them the book by Jan. 8 for review. Lori has reached out to school vote petitioners for input.

Action Item: Jim will draft an article for the merger vote and Gaysville Bridge Replacement.

Jim asked for Lee Ann's perspective on petitioner's concerns. Lee Ann stated the concerns are the movement to spend money to subdivide the high school, from the regular school, at a large expense to Stockbridge, and the town didn't have any control over that expenditure. Another concern is that the town's School Board doesn't have a strong voice. Discussion began around the issue of the high school.

Mark made a motion to move the Town Meeting to Australian Ballot. Lee Ann seconded and the motion was approved

Mark wants Jamie to supply the amount spent on running the high school. Lee Ann pointed out the building was being prepped for sale now. The Board agreed that the financial info was key for a fact-based decision. **Action Item:** Jim will contact Jamie.

Budget: Jim asked if the budget was flat. Lori said yes, so far but the budget is still a draft. She advised that the fire truck was paid off in March which helped cover additional expenses. Questions arose around how to hold a budget discussion. Jim moved to go to Executive Session for a personnel/Payroll discussion. Lee Ann seconded. The board moved to Executive Session at 8:00pm.

Back from Executive Session, Lee Ann agreed with the orders. **Action Items:** Jim will send in. Lori will put a folder together with papers for Mark to sign. Mark will come in to sign.

Jim made a move to adjourn. Mark seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.

Kelly McDermott-Burns, Asst. Town Clerk
