

Stockbridge Board of Selectmen -Draft

April 1, 2021 7:00 PM

Zoom Meeting Info

+1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 811 8150 5452 Passcode: 223032

Present: Lee Ann Isaacson, Jim Shands, Zach Cavacas, Lori Scott, Dave Brown, Ethan Bowen, Jamie Kinnarney, Bill and Marilyn Edgerton

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Additions to Agenda: Lee Ann added Jamie Kinnarney and Ethan Bowen in order to address upcoming school business and possible confusion around the reconsideration vote and the budget vote. An email from Ray Mercon regarding a photographic drone project was added for discussion.

Minutes: Lee Ann read the minutes from March 18, 2021. Jim moved to accept with an amendment. Lee Ann seconded.

Public Communication: Lee Ann said there were concerns about the process for the town of Stockbridge revote and the School Board budget vote, timelines, and that Stockbridge will be mailing ballots and the RSUD will require people to request a ballot for the budget vote. She asked how to clearly communicate this so everyone understands the difference. Lee Ann said she has been contacted with questions about the accuracy of the budget. People are requesting a new informational meeting that includes the costs pre-merger and pre-COVID and how they would relate to merger post COVID and dissolution of merger post COVID. One of the questions was--what numbers were sent to the state to justify or verify the actual merger numbers? She said those numbers cannot be accessed.

Jamie Kinnarney responded that the numbers prior to the merger were from a chart that he did not have access to. Phantom students were used but are no longer. He said when the budgets for the towns were pulled apart regarding equalized pupils for this current year, those were the equalized pupil numbers from the AOE. Jamie said he worked on a new document—a standalone Stockbridge tax sheet and budget, taking the current small schools grant and splitting it in half, and adding it to the revenue. Jamie stated he would provide a document showing what the Stockbridge 2021 budget would look like if it included the small schools grant. He said that RSUD was held harmless by the AOE for students who left due to COVID and that it did not impact equalized pupils. The average daily membership (ADM) did not drop. He stated that saying the equalized pupils are such due to COVID is inaccurate. Jamie said that students lost to homeschool did not drop the ADM. Ethan asked if it was possible to supply a pre-Covid budget to Stockbridge. Jamie replied that all the budgets were in the annual reports since RSUD unified. He said the function codes are by building. Understanding the function code is the key to breaking apart the budget and seeing where money is being spent.

Jim asked if there was a way to account for and put the onus on each town for any capital improvements to their campus. Jamie replied that the merger created one entity—RSUD. The towns could not be billed separately. It would be RSUD's expense. He will verify with legal.

Ethan stated that people are concerned about the unknown amount of money required to do repairs on the Rochester Elementary building and the possibility of a huge bill. He said ventilation work has already been done along with other work using grants.

Jamie said there will be a presentation to RSUD next week from a firm that does a free audit of the buildings focusing on efficiency--windows, heating systems, insulation, etc. They guarantee a level of efficiency savings as a guaranteed resource. A bond is avoided by spreading the savings out over the life of paying off the project. He added that the ESSER 2 and 3 funds can be used on capital projects. **Action Item:** Jamie will send the Selectboard the budget with the small schools grant added in. He will also pull apart previous budgets for review.

Jamie stated that Jenny Austin created a clear informational mailer explaining how to request an absentee ballot which will be mailed by April 9th.

Lori presented the timeline. The petition was received on March 19th. The Selectboard has 60 days to schedule the vote. The school budget warning was completed on April 1st. The budget vote will be on May 4th and the reconsideration vote the week of May 19th. The polls will be open at the Town Office until 7pm both days. Lori shared her concern that there could be some confusion regarding obtaining ballots.

Marilyn Edgerton asked why the votes cannot be done on the same day. Lori replied that the required time for the warnings prohibited that. Lori is planning on mailing the reconsideration ballots on April 26th and 27th.

Lori asked when to expect the school ballot. Jamie said he expected it to be available shortly. He asked if Lori had received any candidate consent forms. She had not. Ethan said there are two board positions open in Stockbridge. The candidates will need to be written in. Discussion ensued on best ways to get the word to the Town that candidates are needed.

Bill Edgerton asked for clarification on the voting dates and methods. Lori responded that the school budget vote is on May 4th. Ballots must be requested from the Stockbridge Town Clerk. The reconsideration vote does not currently have a set date. Ballots will be automatically mailed to all registered Stockbridge voters. **Action Item:** Lori will verify the timeline for the reconsideration vote.

Road Commissioner's Report: Dave reported that he put up the sign prohibiting trucks from going over the Gaysville bridge. He was told by the inspection crew that he would have the recommendations by April 9th. Dave said they may recommend dropping the allowed weight. **Action Item:** Dave will call Jim about new signs.

Dave said the roads were not too muddy. They have been fixing the worst spots and grading the roads and they fixed the bump on Ranney Rd. He reported that there was a lot of tree debris on roads from the windstorms. People had been moving the trees out of the roads and he appreciated that. Dave stated that he had not yet connected with the person who does roadside mowing. It was decided to do the first mowing around June 1st, a week earlier, to control the chervil. The project on the end of Stony Brook is on hold until the road dries out. He and Luke will be doing road maintenance for the next couple of weeks.

Additions: Lee Ann received a request from Roy Mercon, who is doing a project that involves flying drones over towns to showcase Vermont. He is asking for permission from the Selectboard to fly over Stockbridge. It was decided that more research needed to be done by the Board and they voiced concern about privacy. It was agreed that individuals could agree to videoing their property. **Action Item:** Lee Ann will respond to the email.

Other Business: Lori gave an update on the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF). She said that because the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan has expired, the Town would be penalized with lower grant payouts. Two Rivers is interested in doing the update. Lee Ann will be taking training in Local Emergency Management Planning but will not be able to sign off on the plan until the Town has filled the first and second constable positions. Jim made the motion to have Lori send out the Request for Proposal (RFP). Zach seconded. **Action Item:** Lori will send out the RFP. There was discussion about possible candidates for the constable positions and the timeline to submit the plan. **Action Item:** Lori will find out if the plan can be submitted while the search is on.

Review and Sign Orders: No changes.

Noise Ordinance: Lee Ann said she has not heard back from the lawyer's office.

Action Item: Lee Ann will follow up with the lawyer.

Tax Anticipation Notice: Lori said everything was in place with the bank. Arrangements were made to have everyone sign and move forward with the process.

Jim moved to go to Executive Session at 8:07 pm. Lee Ann and Zach agreed.

The board came back from Executive session at 8:35pm and adjourned at 8:36pm

Kelly McDermott-Burns, Asst. Town Clerk
