

## Stockbridge Board of Selectmen -Draft

March 18, 2021 7:00 PM

### Zoom Meeting Info

**+1 929 205 6099 Meeting ID: 865 0149 8826 Passcode: 863224**

**Present:** Lee Ann Isaacson, Jim Shands, Zach Cavacas, Lori Scott, Dave Brown, Kirk White. Susan Pelletier, Jesse Bessett, Lindsay Silvia, Kevin Travis, Beth Dawley, Pat Harvey, Charity Colton, Joanne Mills, Hattie Gifford, Joe Havelka, Leslie Rogers, Karen Ruben, Katelynn McKinstry, Irene Sinteff, Greg Picarello, and Keith Szpulecki

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm.

Lee Ann asked for additions to the agenda. No additions.

**Public Communication:** Rep. Kirk White gave an update from Montpelier. Some bills Kirk talked about were a bill for when an elected official declines the office leaving a vacancy, a farm bill for selling unpasteurized milk, and a bill to help people who had just started businesses when the shutdown occurred. He also gave an update on the permit issue diverting traffic in Woodstock. He is awaiting a response from Senator Allison Clarkson.

An attendee asked about the lack of good internet service out to South Hill Rd. Kirk talked about the big bill in the house to get broadband to customers further out. Kirk verified that he was pursuing the issue to the best of his ability.

**Meeting Minutes:** Jim made a motion to accept the Feb 25 Informational Meeting minutes as written. Zach seconded. The minutes were accepted as written. Zach read the minutes from the March 4<sup>th</sup> Selectboard meeting. Jim motioned to accept the minutes as written. Lee Ann seconded. March 4<sup>th</sup> minutes were accepted as written. Lee Ann read the minutes from the March 10<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the Selectboard. Jim moved to accept the minutes. Lee Ann seconded. The March 10<sup>th</sup> minutes were accepted.

**Road Commissioner:** Dave reported that the hole was patched on the Gaysville Bridge and a structural inspection was being done. Jim wanted to know if this was a yearly inspection. Dave said no. This was to prepare for replacing it. Dave said the road posting signs are up. Dave stated that Bill Edgerton told him there might be money available from a covid relief fund that could be used to move the Town Garage. Dave also said they have been cleaning up debris and maintain the vehicles. Jim asked about the sand and salt supply. Dave said there is plenty. He said there are not many mud problems.

**Additional Public Communications:** Lee Ann stated that it was the Selectboard's understanding that a new petition was coming in. The town's attorney advised that according to the statute, the Selectboard must go through the same process as with the first petition. If the petition is received the Selectboard will move forward with it.

Leslie Rogers asked for clarification on the process. Lori stated that the Selectboard will have to respond to the petition if 5% of registered voters are requesting a revote.

Jim responded that the Selectboard did not throw out the vote and that the Vermont Statute allows for a revote. The Selectboard is following a specific process laid out by the state for a revote. Once there is a revote, the issue cannot be revoted for another 12 months.

Leslie said the petition at the school and the headline in the paper said the school would close. The Selectboard said they did not write the headline. Leslie stated that there should be people from both sides at the informational meeting. Lee Ann replied that there was an extensive panel at the informational meeting and that everybody was invited to speak. There were 20 people in attendance and 221 voted. The full meeting is on the Town website.

Charity Colton said she wants more information available and thinks another Informational meeting is necessary for any new questions that are arising.

Katelynne McKinstry asked if the board would consider attempting to renegotiate the merger with Rochester? Jim replied that the governing body for the school is the School Board. Katelynne stated that the School Board favors Rochester, and the merger is unequal. She said the statement on the new petition is false.

Lee Ann reiterated that the meeting was not the format for a decision and that the Selectboard must move on a petition that comes before them.

Katelynne stated that the Selectboard is responsible for the Town's decision. Jim disagreed and stated that their only job is to bring the information to the Town. Katelynne asked if a petition were brought to vote on taking legal action to get out of the merger, would the Selectboard follow up with that if it was a positive vote to do so? Jim replied that it would have to be reviewed by counsel and that the law may require a 12 month wait.

Susan Pelletier stated her belief that the school can stay open without Rochester.

Lee Ann reminded everyone that all information can be found on the Town website.

Keith Szpulecki asked what prompted the letter to the Herald. Jim said that after discussions it was the consensus of the Board. Keith said the title was alarmist. Lee Ann said they did not write it. Keith stated that the Selectboard should ask for a retraction because the headline gives the impression that if Stockbridge dissolves the merger the school will close and that is a disservice to the community.

**Action Item:** Jim will send another letter to the editor.

Keith asked if the petition is brought to the Selectboard and the petition says, "Do you want to save the Stockbridge school?" Will you accept that petition, or will you tell them that petition is invalid because of the slant that it takes? Lee Ann replied that when the petition is submitted, if they have any questions regarding the format, they will take it to legal counsel. Lee Ann invited everyone to get involved in getting the correct information out to the Town should there be a revote.

Katelynne asked if there is another way to get information without depending on the Supervisory Union? Lee Ann said it was public record.

Karen Ruben asked what the deadline is on the petition currently in process and how will the Town be notified? Lori replied that the petitioners have 30 days after the vote to submit their petition. April 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline. The Selectboard has 60 days after receipt to post the warning. The warning will be posted on the website as well as both Post Offices and the Town Office.

Joanne Mills stated she believes the Rochester Selectboard is interested in Stockbridge's decision because of the high school building. Lee Ann responded that although she understood the concern, the Selectboard did not have answers to those questions.

Susan Pelletier gave an update on delinquent taxes. She said there is approximately \$60,000 due in unpaid taxes. She said there are several properties that people have walked away from. She will put a lien on the properties that have been on the list for several years and if that does not work will take them to small claims court. Several of the properties are in Timberhawk where there is a moratorium on new building. The Rod Andrews' property is on the list and there is a lien against his Killington home. There is a possibility of payment to Stockbridge when that is resolved. Susie asked the Selectboard if they would pay the fees for the small claims court. Jim asked her to write up a document and submit it to the Board. **Action Item:** Susie will create the document.

Pat Harvey wanted the Selectboard to know that the Hawk Corporation on the delinquent tax list is not her. She is Hawk North. She confirmed that building in Timberhawk was no longer an option.

Jesse Bessett wanted to know the Town's stance on dilapidated properties that are for sale. Jim responded that if the taxes are paid there is not anything the Selectboard can do. Lee Ann stated that there are guidelines within the bylaws that require people to not create a hazardous environment or one that impedes the expected comfortable rural life of neighboring properties. She said once she gets a formal complaint, she can start the process to try to get the property cleaned up.

**Local Hazard Mitigation Plan:** The plan sets the cost share in case of a FEMA type event. Our plan is currently out of date and needs to be updated to get a higher percentage cost share. Discussion ensued around updating the plan. Jim moved to table discussion until the next meeting.

**Local Emergency Management Plan:** Lori said the plan needed to have both Constable positions filled and the Selectboard would then vote to adopt it. It is due by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Zach updated the Board on a search for candidates to fill the Constable positions. He said he has someone in mind and will reach out and that the Second Constable rarely gets called.

**Bonding Requirement:** Lori spoke with the insurance company. They have employee theft and faithful performance in our crime coverage. Okay. They have a \$500,000 limit for occurrence for all employees, all elected and appointed officials and all volunteers. Lori said this standard coverage, which all towns have. If the Board decides that they want higher coverage on a particular position that can be done with an application.

The Selectboard reviewed and approved the orders.

Lee Ann spoke with the group at Advanced Animations about property for the sand shed. They will reschedule the visit to the property for May.

Lee Ann has received the Personnel Policy from the lawyer's office but not the Noise Ordinance. The personnel policy needs to have the Drug and Alcohol Policy adjusted. It was agreed to table additional discussion to the next meeting.

Lori went over the cash flow. She shared her concern that there could be another delay with the tax rate. If so, she will issue tax bills on time and estimate on last year's rate if necessary, then reissue a

revised tax bill once the actual rate is available. This will avoid confusion and keep money coming in. Charity stated that she would rather see an estimated bill.

Lori asked for approval on the Tax Anticipation Note. The Selectboard agreed to \$500,000.

**Action Item:** Lori will speak with the lawyer to get the legal opinion letter.

Lori asked for approval to have the ballot mailing envelopes, should there be another vote, printed with the name and address of all registered voters at the cost of \$160. This would be a lot less than having people come to the office to label them. The Board approved.

Jim moved to adjourn the meeting. Zach seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Kelly McDermott-Burns, Asst. Town Clerk

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