

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting  
Monday June 20, 2022**

Present:

Selectboard Members: William Adams, Nick Donza, Jo Sabel Courtney, Lisa Hagerty

In Person attendees: Scott Reeves, Cindy Fuller, Harry Shepard, Jonathan Thereault, Donald Hull

There were 6 participants on Zoom.

**Call to Order**

Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 5:31pm.

**Approve the Agenda**

On a motion by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hagerty, the Board approved the agenda with the addition of one item to the Liquor Consent Items.

**Consent Agenda**

1. 5/23/22 Selectboard Minutes
2. Special Event Applications
3. LCPC Representative Reappointments
4. Liquor Consent Items
5. Bridge 48 & 53 Capital Contribution Reduction

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as presented, with the one additional item in the Liquor Consent Items.

**Stowe Firefighter Donation Offer**

Town Manager Charles Safford provided a staffing update for the Stowe Fire Department, noting that interim Chief Scott Reeves has agreed to continue serving in this role until 6/30/23. In the FY'23 Fire Department Budget the Town included two full-time equivalent positions and increased volunteer pay. In FY'22 the Fire Department started using on-call shift pay to help ensure a minimum four person crew is available from 6am-6pm Monday through Friday, although even with the on-call and shift-pay we have not been able to ensure full crews on all shifts. On-call pay is also used to ensure adequate response during nights and weekends. The on-call pay and shift-pay was not budgeted for in the FY'23 budget, but is deemed necessary to continue surety of service. The budget will be short by an estimated \$50,000. The Stowe Volunteer Firefighters Inc non-profit has offered a one-time donation of \$50,000 to cover this additional labor cost in FY'23. It was also discussed that there will be additional budget needs for more paid firefighters in FY'24 as they are currently not able to fully cover all shifts even with two full-time firefighters and on-call and shift-pay incentives.

The Board discussed the intent of donations made to the Stowe Volunteer Firefighters and if this would be an appropriate use of the funds. Chief Reeves explained that the SVF is a non-profit to support the Stowe Fire Department and the volunteers, and in the past they have helped to purchase equipment as well as donated funds to help with the training site on Moscow Road. Chief Reeves noted that the SVF gets donations to support the mission of the SVF, and the association is given authority to determine how to spend those funds. He said that the SVF Board felt this was an appropriate use of the funds, and the membership voted in approval. It was noted that having staff available to provide surety of service and leadership to respond to emergencies is helpful to all volunteers.

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board accepted the one-time donation of \$50,000 from the Stowe Volunteer Firefighters, Inc to help fund fire personnel costs.

**Video Surveillance Systems Policy**

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The Voters approved \$70,000 in FY'23 to install video surveillance cameras on Town buildings. IT Director Jonathan Thereault has drafted a Video Surveillance Systems Policy which provides guidance for placement and access to live monitoring of video surveillance equipment as well as the access, storage, retention and release of the recorded data. This policy has been reviewed by legal counsel and they found no issues. The policy will be to retain video for 45 days. It was noted that any issue that may require video review should come to light within 1.5 months. Specified clips can be retained longer if necessary.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved the Video Surveillance Systems Policy as proposed.

### **FY'23 Water & Sewer Budgets**

Town Manager Mr. Charles Safford presented the Selectboard with proposed FY'23 Water & Sewer Budgets and Rate Schedules. He noted that the Town is seeing substantial increases in Water and Wastewater usage post-COVID, and that this increase in revenues is allowing for a decrease in Water rates by 5% and level rates for Wastewater. It was noted that both Water and Wastewater funds have positive balances, but both also have rather large capital projects coming in the next few years, including the potential expansion of the Village Green Water Plant and engineering evaluation of the Wastewater Treatment Facility, which may result in the need for further capital investments in that facility. The Board discussed the ongoing growth in Town and asked for more information related to capacity at both the Water and Wastewater plants. Mr. Safford indicated he would discuss with the Public Works Director.

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board moved to warn a public hearing on the FY'23 Water & Sewer Budgets, Rate and Capital Projects for June 27, 2022.

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Safford reported that the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Local Option Taxes were up 64% from last year, for a total of \$483,886. This is the highest 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter in Stowe's history. Using last years 4<sup>th</sup> quarter as an estimate, Stowe will end the FY'22 year with over \$1.4M in LOT, which had been previously estimated at \$1M. Mr. Safford also shared a graph from Stowe Area Association indicated that in FY'21, Stowe's Rooms, Meals & Alcohol Taxable Receipts surpassed South Burlington, coming in second in the State with \$95M. He also noted that while the Town of Stowe gets a 1% tax, the State is also assessing a 9% tax.

Mr. Safford requested the Selectboard schedule a Special Meeting for Wednesday July 6<sup>th</sup> at 7:30am to set the FY'23 tax rate, which the Selectboard was agreeable to.

Mr. Safford notified the Board that Stowe Electric Department has indicated that they will be requesting a rate increase of 13% from the Public Utility Commission.

Mr. Safford also notified the Board that the Governor has signed into law H727 which will allow the Stowe Schools to withdraw from the LSUU without further legal action.

Finally, Mr. Safford provided updated Year-to-Date financials for the General Fund, Water and Sewer Funds noting that despite inflationary pressures, they are coming in on-line.

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board went into Executive Session at 6:48pm to discuss contracts.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 7:15pm

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There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:15pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Sweetser.