

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting
Monday July 25, 2022**

Present:

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

In Person attendees: Rachel Moore, David Rugh, Charleen McFarlane

There were 9 participant on Zoom

Call to Order

Chair Billy Adams called the meeting to order at 5:29pm.

Approve the Agenda

On a motion by Ms. Lisa Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, the Board approved the agenda, with the addition of item B, Introduction of HR Director and pulling Item A-8, SED Bond Validation Resolution, Resolution Certificate and Associated Documents, and making it Business item B-5.

Consent Agenda

1. 7/11/22 Selectboard Minutes
2. IBEW Agreement
3. VCDP Municipal Policies and Codes
4. Water/Sewer Allocation: Spruce Peak Realty/Treehouse Parking Garage
5. Sewer Allocation: Weeks Hill Road - Chapman
6. Water/Sewer Allocation: 109 Main Street
7. Water/Sewer Allocation: 57 Meadow Lane
8. PULLED TO BUSINESS ITEM B-5
9. Liquor Consent Items

On a motion by Mr. Nick Donza seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved the Consent Agenda with Item A-8 being pulled to Business. Ms. Courtney abstained from voting.

Introduction of new HR Director

Town Manager Charles Safford introduced Ms. Charleen McFarlane, who will be serving as the Town of Stowe's first Human Resources Director. She comes from the Lamoille North Supervisory Union where she was also in an HR Director role. Ms. McFarlane stated that she grew up in Stowe and was happy to be serving her hometown. The Selectboard welcomed her to the team.

Mayo Farm Knotweed Removal Trial

Jeff Carpenter of Zach Woods Herb Farm in Hyde Park has proposed to the Town that they will conduct a pilot harvest of knotweed on a portion of Mayo Farm property, approximately 5,000-10,000 square feet between fields F and I. Mayo Farm is owned by the Town of Stowe and has a conservation easement held by Stowe Land Trust. Knotweed is an invasive species that has spread in Stowe and this project has the support of the Stowe Conservation Commission. Stowe Land Trust has indicated that this proposal is in conformance with the conservation easement and Mayo Farm Management Plan. Mr. Carpenter spoke with the Board about his request, stating that this is like a research project on knocking down the invasive species, but he does not believe it will eradicate it in that area. Mr. Carpenter will work with the Conservation Commission on what plants to replace the area with that might compete with the regrowth of the knotweed. Mr. Carpenter explained that they will harvest approximately 5,000lbs of the knotweed root using a tractor, and will use it as a medicinal herb for the treatment of Lyme Disease. He indicated he would have a team of four people conducting the harvest, and that all root would be bagged for transportation and vehicles inspected prior to leaving the site to ensure no contamination or spread of the

knotweed due to this project. He also indicated that once completed, he would grade the land and plant a cover crop, working to leave the land in better shape than they found it. Mr. Carpenter indicated that he has worked with other municipalities as well as local farmers here in Stowe. It was noted that Mr. Carpenter might be interested in other areas for knotweed removal, but they would need to be accessible sites that are fairly level and not riparian areas.

Ms. Christine McGowan, chair of the Conservation Commission, spoke in favor of the project and indicated that she would like to also conduct a speaker series around the harvest, including an invasive plant expert.

This work is anticipated to begin in mid-to-late August. Zach Woods Herb Farm had offered to pay the Town of Stowe a \$500 fee for the collection of the knotweed roots. The Selectboard chose to waive this fee.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved the 2022 trial knotweed harvest as proposed in Zach Woods Herb Farm's letter dated 7/12/22 and as outlined in their proposal to Harvest Knotweed from Mayo Farm dated 3/16/22 and to waive the \$500 fee.

The Current Exposed Exhibit

The Current has proposed a number of sculptures to be placed on private and public property as part of their annual Exposed Exhibit. The Selectboard has jurisdiction over public property including the public right-of-way. The sculptures were presented to the Board and Public Works has reviewed for structural considerations and with anchorage on concrete bases, they do not have any concerns at this time.

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the sculptures on public property as requested, with the understanding that the sculptures will be supported to the satisfaction of the Public Works Director and any work on public property coordinated with him or his designee.

Motor Vehicle Ordinance Amendments: High Farms Road, Pinnacle Road and Upper Pinnacle Road

The Town of Stowe has received a request from a resident on High Farms Road, a dead-end Class 3 Town Highway with a current speed limit of 35MPH to lower the speed limit. Public Works conducted an engineering study on this road, which included a speed study. The conclusion of this study was that the 85th percentile speed for that road was 27.1 MPH, and MUTCD guidelines indicate that the speed limit should be within 5MPH of the 85th percentile. The engineering study supports lowering the speed limit on High Farms Road to 25MPH.

The Town of Stowe has also received a request for reduction of the speed limit on Pinnacle Road and Upper Pinnacle Road, both roads are dead-end Class 3 roads currently posted for 35MPH. An engineering study including a speed study was conducted for these roads, which found an 85th percentile speed of 34.2MPH. However it was noted that the section of road where the speed study was conducted was a straight away, but that this road includes several hairpin turns and steep slopes which make it unsafe to navigate at 35MPH in its entirety.

The Board discussed concerns about the discrepancy in the 85th percentile speed on Upper Pinnacle Road and the recommendation from the Engineering Study, however they felt that it was still prudent to advance these requests to a public hearing.

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On a motion by Mr. Paco Aumand, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board moved to warn a public hearing for the August 8th Selectboard Meeting to amend the Traffic and Motor Vehicle Ordinance to reflect the recommended changes to posted speed limits on High Farms, Pinnacle and Upper Pinnacle Roads.

Personnel Rules Amendments

Mr. Safford presented the Board with amendments to the Personnel Rules to mirror those from the IBEW Agreement, which includes the recognition of Juneteenth as a paid Town Holiday. He also noted additional changes which are to provide part-time employees with holiday pay (time and a half) for hours worked on holidays, to induce them to work the holidays rather having to rely only on full-time employees. All part-time employees fall under the Personnel Rules, not any union agreement. The Personnel Rules also included a change to make the Fire Department a bi-weekly payroll, which would allow for more scheduling flexibility with 12-hour shifts. This change will include some built-in overtime each pay period, estimated to cost \$6,000 over the year.

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Mr. Paco Aumand, the Board adopted the proposed Personnel Rules as amended with the understanding that the time and a half for irregular (part-time) employees working on holidays will be retroactive to 7/1/22.

SED Bond Validation Resolution, Resolution Certificate and Associated Documents

At Annual Meeting, the Voters approved a general obligation bond in the amount not to exceed \$4,000,000 for the purpose of acquiring, replacing or constructing municipal electric plant improvements, namely substation transformers and related equipment. However, the Stowe Reporter inadvertently neglected to run the warning in the legal ad section the requisite number of times, so the Selectboard has been asked to sign a Bond Validation Resolution and Resolution Certificate, as well as other bond documents. The bond will be paid for out of SED revenues but is backed by the full faith and credit of the Town of Stowe Grand List.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the Bond Validation Resolution, Resolution Certificate and other related documents.

Manager's Report

Mr. Safford provided the Board with a notice from the Vermont Department of Taxes notifying the Town of Stowe that it is required to reappraise its education grand list properties due to the Common Level of Appraisal falling below 85%. Stowe's CLA is currently 78.35%.

Mr. Safford also noted that he would be on vacation out of the state from July 27th to July 29th.

Mr. Safford noted that the Cady Hill Forest is having its 10th anniversary, and that a week full of events has been planned to celebrate, organized by Stowe Land Trust and Stowe Trails Partnership in conjunction with the Stowe Conservation Commission. The Selectboard did note that this recreation area has become quite popular and that parking can be quite challenging in that area, and people may need to be directed to alternate parking locations in the future.

Finally, Mr. Safford provided the VTDEC Sanitary Survey which the Public Works Department has completed. They do require that 2 of our smaller pump stations include generator power, which will be proposed as FY'24 Capital Projects.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board finds that premature public knowledge of pending litigation will place the municipality in jeopardy if it was subject to public

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disclosure due to attorney/client privileged information, and went into Executive Session to receive legal advice and discuss pending litigation at 6:30pm and invited Town Manager Charles Safford and Town Legal Counsel David Rugh to join them.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board came out of Executive Session at 7:41pm.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved \$20,000 from the Capital Fund to be utilized for a traffic study and planning.

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 7:44pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Sweetser.

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