

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting
Monday December 12, 2022**

Present:

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

In Person attendees: Paul Sakash, Matt Frazee

There were 8 participants on Zoom

Call to Order

Vice Chair Lisa Hagerty called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

Approve the Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Nick Donza, seconded by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney the Board approved the agenda with the addition of one liquor consent item.

Executive Session

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss personnel at 5:04pm.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 5:32pm.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Paco Aumand, the Board appointed Sebastian Sweatman to fill a vacant seat on the Conservation Commission.

Consent Agenda

1. 11/28/22 Selectboard Minutes
2. FY'22 Audit Contract
3. Liquor Consent Items

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the Consent Agenda with the additional liquor consent item.

AT&T Wireless Communication Facility Near 57 Depot Street

Town Manager Mr. Charles Safford informed the Board that the Town of Stowe had received notice by AT&T of their request to the Vermont Public Utility Commission to issue a certificate of public good to permit them to install a wireless telecommunications facility on a replacement utility pole. Originally, AT&T had proposed to replace the existing pole on the corner of Depot Street and -Pond Street but the Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission and property owner (Ampersand) expressed concerns over the visibility of the pole and its impact on the aesthetics of the historic village. AT&T has indicated that they did not have a suitable flat roof in the area but proposed to relocate the pole further up Park Place, adjacent to the property line at 57 Depot Street. The property owner was amenable to this location.

However, the Planning Commission still has concerns about this pole location in the village and has drafted a letter to the Public Utility Commission which indicates that they would like AT&T to work to meet the standards of the Town Plan for location of cell phone towers in the historic village. It was noted that by statute, the Planning Commission is an interested party in the PUC hearing, as is the Selectboard. While the PUC will have final decision authority, they do give deference to the Planning Commission and Town Plan at their hearing if they find sufficient cause to have one.

Ms. Mila Lonetto, chair of the Planning Commission, stated that they felt that AT&T didn't listen to their concerns enough and with the village recently undergoing major efforts to underground utilities, adding another pole was damaging to the aesthetic and historic nature.

It was noted that the Town Plan also aims to improve communications in Stowe, and that AT&T has indicated that there may be no other suitable alternative location for their needs. While these are competing goals in the Town Plan, it was noted that there is concern that this is a new trend of installing smaller communications towers on utility poles rather than in less visible locations. -The Board indicated that they were concerned about this trend and setting a precedence by not speaking up about additional poles being added in the village historic district.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board agreed to sign on to the Planning Commission letter to the Vermont Public Utility Commission to work with AT&T to take into consideration current Town Plan and policies on cell phone tower citing.

Proposed Amendments to Planning & Zoning Fee Policy & Fee Schedule

Planning & Zoning Director Ms. Sarah McShane has proposed amendments to the Planning & Zoning Fee Policy and Fee Schedule. The Policy is intended to establish rules and procedures related to the Fee Schedule and calculation of zoning application fees. The proposed amendments to the policy are generally minor and intended to clarify current administrative procedures, as well as the merger of the Planning & Zoning Departments. Ms. McShane also proposed an update to the Fee Schedule, the first time these fees have been raised in seven years. In determining how to set the fee schedule, Ms. McShane compared other municipalities fee schedules as well as taking into account the increasing complexity of zoning applications received, which often require consultation and review with Fire, Electric, and Public Works departments.

These fees will go into effect on January 1, 2023, with notice being given to local contractors prior to them going into effect.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the proposed Planning & Zoning Fee Policy amendments and proposed Fee Schedule amendments to be effective January 1, 2023.

Stowe Arena Fees

The Stowe Arena is facing rising costs and expenses, particularly related to staffing and utilities, as well as anticipated maintenance cost increases as the building is now 10 years old.

The Recreation Commission has recommended that the Selectboard raise ice and turf rental fees by \$20 per hour and increase the Youth Resident Organization discount to \$25 per hour. These changes would go into effect September 1, 2023 for ice and in the spring of 2024 for turf. These increases are in line with what is being charged at other arenas in the area.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the proposed fee increases as recommended by the Recreation Commission to be effective September 1, 2023 for ice and spring 2024 for turf.

Summer Camp Fees

The Stowe Parks & Recreation Summer Camp program has seen increased popularity in recent years, but also an increased in costs caused by staffing and inflationary costs such as transportation. The goal of this program is to "break even" with fees and costs of running the program. In order to maintain that, the Recreation Commission has recommended a fee increase of \$100 for full camp (8 week) enrollment and \$10 per week for weekly registrations.

Selectboard Meeting 12/12/22

It was noted that the current scholarship cap of \$500 per household may need to be increased to compensate for the increase in fees.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board approved the Summer Camp Fees as recommended by the Recreation Commission.

Field Rental Rates

The Recreation Commission has recommended the Selectboard raise the field rental fees for Town of Stowe municipal fields as a reflection of increasing maintenance costs. These fees were last adjusted in 2015. The field rental fee is structured by Large Events (over 300 people), small events (under 300 people), youth sports seasonal rentals, adult sports seasonal rentals and single use rentals. By ordinance, the Events Field is limited to 8 large events per year. It was noted that there are not many municipalities that rent their fields for events for comparison, however private complexes that rent fields for large events indicated that they charge \$1,500-\$5,000 per day. The Recreation Commission has recommended that the Large Event fee increase from \$700 per day per field to \$1,500, auxiliary field usage increase from \$100/day to \$250, and set up and tear down time be increased from \$100/day to \$250/day. Small Event fees would increase from \$300/field per day to \$500, with parking and set up fees increasing consistent with Large Events. They also proposed a 25% discount for non-profit organizations who use the fields. Youth seasonal rentals are proposed to increase from \$250 per season to \$300, and adult seasonal rentals are proposed to increase from \$250 per season to \$350. There are also proposed increases in Sports Camps & Special Activities fees from \$50 per field per day to \$100 and one-time athletic use will increase from \$25 per hour to \$35 per hour.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board approved the Field Rental Rates as recommended by the Recreation Commission effective January 1, 2023.

Equipment Reserve Fund Policy Amendments

Mr. Safford has proposed amendments to the Equipment Reserve Fund which updates equipment replacement cycles to reflect current practices approved by the Selectboard over the years through the budget process, general clean up of language in the policy, and clarifies that only the Selectboard can amend the Equipment Fund. There is also the addition of allowing the Town Manager to pre-order equipment prior to Annual Meeting provided there is a non-appropriation clause should the budget not be approved. The Selectboard would be able to order equipment prior to Annual Meeting even if there was not a non-appropriation clause. This is proposed in response to supply chain issues which have been delaying the Town's ability to obtain vehicles in a timely manner. The Board did discuss conversion to electric vehicles in the future, but it was noted that it can be a challenge to digest the higher costs of electric vehicles, particularly in the current budget year when inflationary challenges already exist.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the Equipment Reserve Fund Policy amendments as presented.

General Fund Capital Fund Reserve Policy Amendments

Mr. Safford has proposed amendments to the General Fund Capital Fund Reserve Policy. Many of the changes are general language clean up, but also includes that planning studies are eligible for capital funding. The general purpose of this fund is to fund one-time projects over \$10,000.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the General Fund Capital Reserve Fund Policy amendments as presented.

Manager's Report

Mr. Safford presented the Board with a proposed meeting schedule to plan for FY24 budgeting, noting budget presentations would take place on Tuesday December 27th (due to Monday being the observed holiday), Monday January 9th would be to hear from non-profits requesting new or increased funding from the Town, a special meeting on Tuesday January 17th (due to Monday being a holiday) for further budget deliberations, and Monday January 23rd being a public hearing to adopt the budget and Annual Meeting warnings. It was noted that Tuesday January 17th would conflict with a scheduled Development Review Board meeting, and determined that meeting would be moved to Wednesday January 18th.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board went into Executive Session at 7:03pm to discuss personnel.

The Board came out of executive session at 7:20pm.

There being no further business, Vice Chair Hagerty adjourned the meeting at 7:21pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Sweetser.