

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting  
Monday January 23, 2023**

Present:

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

In Person attendees: Harry Shepard, Cindy Fuller, Bobby Murphy

There were 5 participants on Zoom

**Call to Order**

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

**Approve the Agenda**

On a motion by Mr. Paco Aumand, seconded by Ms. Lisa Hagerty, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

**Consent Agenda**

1. 1/18/23 Selectboard Minutes
2. Municipal Roads General Permit; Update and Renewal
3. Water/Sewer Allocation – 706 Mountain Road
4. Annual Certificate of Highway Milage
5. Social, Community & Economic Service Appropriations Police Amendment
6. Parks UTV Bid Award
7. Stowe Derby Special Event Permit
8. Liquor Consent Items

On a motion by Ms. Hagerty, seconded by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, the Board approved the Consent Agenda.

**Public Hearing – FY'24 General Fund**

Chair Adams opened the public hearing at 5:35pm. Town Manager Charles Safford noted that the FY'24 General Fund budget being presented reflected the changes requested by the Selectboard at previous budget meetings, including the addition of \$500 to the Zoning & Planning Budget's line item for Conservation Commission for Bear Education; Social Services increased to \$3,000 for Lamoille Restorative Center and \$15,669 for Lamoille Home Health Hospice; Community & Economic Development had the addition of Big Heavy World at \$250, Stowe Community Fund at \$500, and Stowe Jazz Festival returned at \$1,200; a one-time bolster to the Equipment Fund of \$815,000 from the undesignated surplus, and a transfer from the undesignated surplus of \$350,000 to the general fund to reduce the amount to be raised in property taxes.

The final budget as presented will have an increase of \$1,263,167, an 11.67% increase. This will result in a projected tax rate of \$0.5013, a 9.48% increase. If the voters approve the local option sales tax and vote to reduce the amount to be raised in property taxes by \$700,000, this would result in a net budget increase of \$563,167, a 5.2% increase, and a projected tax rate of \$0.4723, a 3.14% increase.

Mr. Paul Sakash raised concerns about the 11.67% increase in budget, wondering if that was sustainable. Chair Adams noted that inflationary pressures across the budget, as well as an increase in population and demand for services, were big impacts on this budget and that hopefully inflation will level out soon. It remains to be seen what future needs the Fire/EMS department will require, but a study has been put out to bid to help the Town assess. Mr. Safford noted that the systemic shifts that resulted in higher demands for service continues to put pressure on other departments such as Public Works and Administration, and that this may need to be addressed in future years, but there is hope that this budget will help the Town recalibrate and be better positioned for future years.

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Ms. Hagerty stated that this was a responsible budget, and that staff and the Board did everything they could to mitigate increasing taxes, including creative funding sources such as the use of undesignated surplus and local option sales tax.

Ms. Courtney thanked the staff for all the work they put into this budget.

There was no further public comment. Chair Adams closed the hearing at 5:50pm.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Courtney, the Board approved the FY'24 General Fund Operating Budget for consideration by the voters at Annual Meeting.

### **Public Hearing – FY'24 Capital Fund Hearing**

Chair Adams opened the public hearing at 5:52pm. Town Manager Mr. Safford presented the Board with seven proposed capital projects for FY'24, for a total of \$635,000. This includes a Stowe Town Plan Community Engagement study, bear-proof containers, Public Safety Communications System Enhancement, Townwide Web Platform Consolidation, Town Clock Rehabilitation, Stormwater Catch Basin & Line, and Streambank Stabilization along the Rec Path near Bridge 1.

Mr. Sakash questioned the importance of a Town Clock, however Chair Adams noted that the clock and chimes can be important to those in the village.

The Board asked for a future update on major Capital Projects that had been previously approved. Mr. Safford indicated that he included this information in his Annual Report of the Public Works Department, but that many projects have been delayed due to supply issues, the availability of consultants and regulatory compliance/permitting issues. He also noted that demand on Public Works staff time has impacted the completion of some projects.

Chair Adams closed the public hearing at 6:02pm

On a motion by Mr. Nick Donza, seconded by Mr. Aumand, the Board approved the FY'24 Capital Fund Budget for consideration by the voters at Annual Meeting.

### **Adopt Annual Town Meeting Warning & Australian Ballot Warning**

Mr. Safford presented the Board with a slightly revised Annual Town Meeting warning, noting that there was a correction of a typo in the amount of money to be raised in Property Taxes, as well as a change in the working from "non-tax revenue" to "other revenue" as that can include the local option sales tax if approved by the voters.

It was discussed that Article 1 will allow the voters to decide on the Local Option Sales Tax, and if approved, Article 2 can be amended to include the anticipated \$700,000 revenue from the LOT to offset the amount to be raised in taxes.

It was also noted that there was an error in the dates listed on Article 6, which was corrected.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board approved the Annual Meeting Warning & Australian Ballot Warning with the corrections noted.

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Safford indicated that he did not have anything new to report at this time.

Mr. Bobby Murphy, Vice President and General Manager of Stowe Mountain Resort, asked for time to discuss parking concerns/updates with the Board. He noted that to date this season there has been ample paid and free parking at the Mountain, and that even on the busiest day of the season so far, Martin Luther King Jr weekend, there were no traffic issues. He noted that an increase in carpooling, use of the Mountain Road Shuttle and efforts by VTrans to keep the roads cleared have all been positive impacts on

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the traffic and parking. Ms. Hagerty noted that utilizing the bus service allows for better drop off in a prime spot, which incentivizes bus ridership.

Mr. Murphy also addressed concerns about parking at the Barnes Camp area, which he described as “growing pains” that the State and SMR are working through. He stated that the 90-minute time limit was decided on by both the State and SMR to encourage turnover of parking in that area and discouraging all-day parking. The resort is working with Green Mountain Transit to add an official bus stop at the entrance to the Notch/Barnes Camp and encourage free parking at the Cross-Country Center and use of the bus for those who can’t find parking at Barnes Camp. It was noted that only service animals are allowed on the bus. However there are other locations for dog walking throughout the Town.

On a motion by Mr. Aumand, seconded by Ms. Hagerty, the Board went into Executive Session at 6:28pm to discuss personnel.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:55pm.

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 6:55pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Bourgeois.