



**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting  
Wednesday, January 10, 2023**

**Present:**

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

**In Person Attendees:**

Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Finance Manager Cindy Fuller, Planning and Zoning Administrator Sarah McShane, Elizabeth Bushueff, Bodo Liewehr, Linda Hunter, Larry Lackey, Elaine Flynn, Alison Carosas, Barb Getty, Douglas Hendricks, Barb Puddicombe, Mila Lonetto, Ethan Carlson, Marina Meerburg, Mary Skelton, Lynn Altadonna, Tim Meehan, Tiffany Donza, Geordy Hutchinson, Sarah Jazeh, Missy Burgess, Tom Burgess, Todd Roliry, Kelly Shaw

50 joined via Zoom

**Call to Order**

Selectboard Chair Lisa Hagerty called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

**Approval of the Agenda**

On a motion by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, seconded by Mr. Paco Aumand, the Board approved the agenda as presented. All were in favor.

**Executive Session**

Mr. Aumand moved to find that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Nick Donza seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Aumand moved to go into executive session to discuss Personnel, and to include the Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager. Mr. Donza Seconded. All were in favor.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Ms. Adams, the Board came out of Executive Session at 5:26pm. All were in favor.

On a motion by Ms. Courtney, seconded by Mr. Adams, the Board appointed Aimée S. Green to the Stowe Arts and Culture Council, effective immediately, to fill a vacant term expiring on April 30, 2024.

### **Consent Agenda**

1. 1/3/24 Selectboard Minutes
2. Downtown Designation Renewal Application Approvals
3. Water & Sewer Applications
  - i. 673 S. Main Street
  - ii. 114 S. Main Street, Unit F4
4. Liquor Permits

On a motion by Mr. Nick Donza, seconded by Ms. Jo Sabel Courtney, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

### **Zoning Amendments Public Hearing & Potential Adoption**

Ms. Sarah McShane gave a summary of the recommended amendments to the Town's adopted zoning regulations. Following review and discussion with members of the Planning Commission and staff from the Department of Planning & Zoning on October 11th, October 25th, November 29th, and December 13th, the Selectboard voted on December 13th to warn a public hearing in accordance with 24 VSA §4442. A public hearing was scheduled for January 10, 2024, and warned on December 21st in accordance with 24 VSA §4444. During its meeting on December 13th, the Selectboard made one modification to the proposed amendments by removing a provision of Section 4.1(A) pertaining to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU).

Ms. McShane said that Stowe received a Bylaw Modernization Grant in 2022 from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to support municipal zoning bylaw updates that increase housing choice and affordability within smart growth areas (i.e., designated downtowns and village centers). The Town used that funding to closely examine the designated downtown and lower village, with the help of a consultant, to see if there were improvements that could be made to reduce regulatory barriers to develop housing. During that process, the Vermont State Legislature adopted Act 47. These regulations largely incorporate those changes into Stowe Zoning regulations.

Ms. Hagerty then called for testimony from the public on the proposed amendments. Mr. Larry Lackey asked whether Section 4.23 Areas Served by Municipal Water and Sewer Infrastructure would allow a density right for the entirety of a lot that is only partially served by water and sewer infrastructure, or for only the portion of that lot that is able to have a water and sewer connection. Ms. McShane said that this language comes from the State Legislature and the process for these lots will have to play out until state statutes are amended or case law provides better guidance.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Donza seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to adopt the amendments to the Town's adopted zoning regulations as presented, to become effective twenty-one (21) days after adoption, on January 31, 2024. Mr. Donza seconded. All were in favor.

### **Stowe Electric General Obligation Bond to Purchase VELCO Equity Interest**

Mr. Charles Safford presented a memo from Jackie Pratt, SED General Manager, requesting the Selectboard approve an Australian ballot article for voter consideration authorizing general obligation notes or bonds from time to time during the period from 2024 through December 31, 2028, in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$3 million dollar, payable primarily from the net revenues of Stowe Electric Department, to fund the acquisition by Stowe Electric Department of equity shares of Vermont Transco, LLC. The bonds are proposed to be general obligation bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the Town of Stowe.

Ms. Pratt joined via Zoom to answer questions from the Selectboard. Ms. Pratt explained that VT Transco uses the equity raised to fund ongoing system reliability and system enhancement projects. The average ROI on the Member Units is approximately 12%. Dividends earned on Member Units are used by SED to offset transmission costs. SED is responsible for paying its share of transmission cost no matter how many VT Transco Member Units it owns. If SED does not purchase the Member Units offered over the next several years, another utility will. This will result in SED continuing to pay its full share of transmission costs with no corresponding increase in equity dividends to offset those costs for its customers.

Mr. Adams moved to instruct the Manager to include the following article on the Annual Meeting Australian ballot warning: "Shall the voters authorize the issuance of general obligation notes or bonds of the Town from time to time during the period from 2024 through December 31, 2028, in an aggregate amount not to exceed Three Million and 00/100 Dollars (\$3,000,000.00), payable primarily from the net revenues of the Stowe Electric Department, to fund the acquisition by Stowe Electric Department of equity shares of Vermont Transco, LLC." Ms. Sable Courtney seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Adams moved to approve the resolution of necessity for VTransco equity purchases. Mr. Donza seconded. All were in favor.

### **FY'25 Budget Deliberations**

Mr. Safford introduced the budget and explained that this time has been set aside for the Selectboard to deliberate on the draft FY'25 General Fund Operating & Capital Budgets and instruct staff on what if any changes they may desire before warning the 1/24/24 public hearing. Mr. Aumand thanked the Town Manager for meeting the Selectboard's 2.7% net budget increase target.

The Selectboard discussed community development appropriation requests. Three organizations requested new or increased funding. The Stowe Area Association (SAA) requested an increase of 20%, from \$20,000 to \$24,000. The Stowe Farmer's Market requested a new appropriation of \$10,000. The Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR) requested a 20% increase, from \$1,000 to \$1,200.

Mr. Aumand stated that he was not in favor of any increases for FY25. Ms. Sabel Courtney stated the VFOR request is not unreasonable, noting that is only a \$200 increase. Mr. Donza stated that the VFOR funding is a good use of taxpayer money. Mr. Aumand voiced agreement with Mr. Donza's statement and stated the appropriation increase for VFOR should go forward.

Ms. Hagerty noted that the Stowe Farmer's Market request for a new appropriation was substantial, and that the requester may not have been aware of that. She suggests \$500 or \$1,000 as a first appropriation. Mr. Donza suggested allowing them use of the Mayo Farm event field, which would negate their need to pay rent for the event.

Mr. Aumand moved to include in the draft budget an appropriation of \$20,000 for the Stowe Area Association without an increase from its current level. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Donza moved to include a \$1,000 appropriation in the draft budget for the Stowe Farmer's Market. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. All were in favor.

Mr. Aumand moved to include a \$1,200 appropriation in the draft budget for the Vermont Foundation of Recovery, an increase of \$200 from its current level. Mr. Donza seconded. All were in favor.

The Selectboard then discussed Capital Projects. They reached a consensus to include the Memorial Room audio system, Moscow Village flashing speed signs, Akeley Building HVAC replacement, and the Rec Path reconstruction in the draft FY25 budget. Mr. Adams proposed moving the Emergency Management Shelter Generator from -FY'26 to FY'25. Mr. Safford indicated that the Stowe Emergency Management Director recommended that the Town consider a portable trailer mounted generator rather than a stationary generator that would only be able to serve Stowe High School which is designated as Stowe's primary emergency management shelter. Mr. Safford further indicated that it is estimated to increase the cost from \$300,000 for a stationary generator to \$400,000 for a portable trailer mounted generator. Mr. Adams noted that there was a potential for a grant to offset the cost and a long lead time, The Board agreed to include \$300,000 for a generator and figure out the details as time permitted.

Mr. Safford then called attention to the Equipment Fund. He presented the option of allocating \$580,000 from the unallocated reserves to offset the loss of the municipal discount. The selectboard reached a consensus to keep those funds in unallocated reserves.

Mr. Safford noted that the Selectboard must vote to adopt the Annual Meeting Warning 30 to 40 days in advance, so the earliest they can adopt it is 1/25/24 and the latest they can adopt it is 2/4/25. To meet these warning requirements, the Selectboard will need to hold a special meeting.

Mr. Adams moved to hold a special meeting on January 31<sup>st</sup> at 5:00pm. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. All were in favor.

### **Short-term Rental Work Session**

Ms. Hagerty stated that the Selectboard has held eleven public meetings on short term rentals since March 27, 2023, and they understand and agree that short term rentals and seasonal rentals have always

been a significant part of the fabric of Stowe. She also said that they have agreed that addressing short term rentals is one part of a comprehensive solution to address housing in Stowe.

The Selectboard proceeded with their ordinance work session and directed the Town Manager to make various edits to the language of the ordinance. They also reached a consensus to add a grace period to the ordinance for STR owners to register their properties before they would be in violation of the ordinance, to enable STR owners to advertise their properties for a rental period that will occur after the current registration period, and to make the registry requirements to as expansive as possible in accordance with the law with the goal of fairness.

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Safford presented a DRB Abutter Notice for 0 Spring Trail Road for pre-development clearing and construction of a driveway. The property is in the ridgeline overlay district.

Mr. Safford presented notice from the Agency of Natural Resources Solace Waste Management Program indicating they have found the WH Stowe LLC project located at 876 Mountain Road, Stowe VT to be consistent with the Agency's efforts to reduce waste production during construction projects.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Hagerty adjourned the meeting at 9:48pm.