



**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting
Wednesday, April 10, 2024**

Present:

Selectboard Members: Billy Adams, Nick Donza, Ethan Carlson

Absent: Paco Aumand, Jo Sabel Courtney

Attendees:

Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Town Clerk Penny Davis, Josie Kytte, Barbara Baraw, Charlie Lusk, Eric Chittenden, Beth Gadbois, Sara Opel, Stephen Edwards, Tiffany Donza, Bill Scudder, Deb Drinkwater, Marty Fried

Call to Order

Selectboard Chair Adams called the meeting to order at 5:12pm.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Carlson moved to add an agenda item discussing amendments to the Short-Term Rental Ordinance. Mr. Donza second. Mr. Donza said that he is not in favor but is willing to have the discussion. Mr. Adams said he is also in favor of the discussion, but added that the agenda item should be warned and all five members of the Selectboard present should be present for it. He also noted that at the previous meeting the Selectboard had agreed to avoid controversial issues in April. Mr. Carlson noted that discussion may not be possible at the next meeting with all five members present on May 8. Mr. Carlson and Mr. Donza voted in favor of the amendments to the agenda. Mr. Adams voted against. (2-1) [Motion fails – 3 votes required]

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Selectboard approved the agenda as presented. All were in favor (3-0).

Executive Session

Mr. Adams moved to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved, at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0)

Mr. Adams moved to enter executive session to receive legal advice. Mr. Donza seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0) The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:15pm.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Selectboard left executive session at 5:45pm.

Consent Agenda

1. March 27, 2024 Selectboard Minutes
2. March 29, 2024 Selectboard Minutes
3. VTrans Annual Highway Financial Plan and Certificate of Compliance
4. Special Event Application - Bailey Soccer Tournament
5. Special Event Application – Heady Trotter
6. GMC 2500 Bid Award
7. Liquor Items

On a motion by Mr. Carlson, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Selectboard approved the consent agenda as presented (3-0).

Tax Due Dates

Mr. Safford said the Town Appraiser is recommending that the first tax due date be moved from August 15 to September 16. Stowe had over 5,000 people in the most recent Census, which gives the Listers until June 24 to launch grand list, rather than June 4. The Listers have indicated they will need the full time to conduct a thorough review of all valuations for accuracy and fairness due to the town-wide reappraisal. Tax bills must be sent out on July 16, 30 days prior to the due date of August 15. It is anticipated that the Listers will hold grievance hearings for several days. This will create a time crunch for printing and mailing tax bills. Mr. Safford also noted that there may be a delay in the State setting the non-homestead tax rate, which impacts the Selectboard's ability to set the voter exemption tax rate. In 2020 due to the pandemic the Selectboard moved back one of the quarterly tax due dates by a month.

Mr. Donza asked if the other due dates throughout the year would remain the same. Mr. Safford said they would. Mr. Carlson noted that the lost interest income is significant. Mr. Safford said the Town is well positioned to cover it. Ms. Davis added that the State is requiring them to use new software this year, and transitioning to it could add more time to the process of preparing tax bills.

Mr. Donza motioned to move the first tax due date from August 15, 2024 to September 16, 2024. Mr. Carlson seconded. All were in favor (3-0).

Manager's Report

Mr. Safford provided the Selectboard with the March year-to-date budget actuals, saying that the budget is tracking well.

Mr. Safford informed the Selectboard that a new Quiet Path bridge has been constructed between fields D and E. This is to replace the bridge that was permanently closed due to safety issues resulting from a foundation failure. The new bridge was designed and built in-house by the Stowe Parks Department for approximately \$6,000 in materials. It lies outside of the Flood Zone and is about halfway between the previous bridge location and Weeks Hill Road.

Mr. Safford provided the Selectboard with tables showing the amount of non-property tax state revenue generated in Stowe, and how it compares to other towns. He noted that Stowe is in the top-10 for all categories of state revenue, and is fifth overall and the highest outside of Chittenden County.

Mr. Safford provided the Selectboard with multiple Act 250 notices: a permit authorizing an additional 22 lodging units at 876 Mountain Road (aka Town and Country), and a proposed permit to subdivide a lot on Poppi Bear Lane.

Mr. Safford notified the Selectboard that the Public Works department wants to replace a culvert on Stowe Hollow Road before it is paved this year. Due to the circumstances of this culvert, the road would need to be closed. Public Works recommends closing the road during school vacation week, the week of April 22. He said that it is not an emergency closure and the Selectboard authorizes the closure of roads on a non-emergency basis. Mr. Safford added that it is advisable to replace the culvert before new asphalt is laid down. The Selectboard was in agreement with the plan to replace the culvert and close the road during the week of April 22.

Public to be Heard Non-Binding

Multiple members of the public discussed the Short-Term Rental Ordinance and the upcoming Special Town Meeting where the voters will consider its rescission. Some reiterated the desire for the Selectboard to produce a fact-sheet. After discussion, the Selectboard agreed to instruct staff to post on Front Porch Forum about the vote and a link to the ordinance, and to prepare a fact sheet for the Selectboard to consider at their next meeting.

Eric Chittenden of Waterbury requested the Selectboard to consider supporting a petition to ban watersports on the Waterbury Reservoir. The Selectboard agreed to discuss the issue further at their April 24 meeting.

Executive Session

Mr. Adams moved to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved, at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0)

Mr. Adams moved to enter executive session to discuss personnel. Mr. Donza seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0) The Selectboard entered executive session at 7:35pm.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Selectboard left executive session at 8:20pm.

Appointments

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Selectboard made the following appointments (3-0):

- Deb Drinkwater, Recreation Commission
- Marty Fried, Arts and Culture Council (Reserved Seat – Stowe Performing Arts)
- Barb Baraw, Arts and Culture Council (Reserved Seat – Stowe Historical Society)

Executive Session

Mr. Donza moved to find that premature public knowledge would clearly place the public body, or a person involved, at a substantial disadvantage. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0)

Mr. Donza moved to enter executive session to discuss legal issues. Mr. Carlson seconded the motion. All were in favor. (3-0) The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:25pm.

On a motion by Mr. Donza, seconded by Mr. Carlson, the Selectboard left executive session at 8:45pm.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 8:45pm.