

# Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

Wednesday, August 28, 2024

Akeley Memorial Building  
67 Main Street  
Stowe, Vermont



**Selectboard Members:** Billy Adams, Paco Aumand, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza, Ethan Carlson

**In-Person Attendees:** Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, Beth Gadbois, Peter Schmeeckle, Nikolas Graupe (6)

**Zoom Attendees:** Ellie Feinstein, Brooke Dingleline, Blake Blundell, Missy Merrell Burgess, and 7 others (11)

## Call to Order

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

## Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to approve the agenda as amended. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

## Executive Session

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to enter executive session to discuss personnel. Mr. Donza seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 5:05pm. The Selectboard left executive session at 5:38pm.

## Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-5)

1. July 24, 2024 Selectboard Minutes
2. August 1, 2024 Selectboard Minutes
3. VLCT Voting Delegate
4. Water-Sewer Allocation – 127 Mountain Road
5. Liquor Items

Ms. Sabel Courtney moved to approve the consent agenda. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

## Mayo Farm Squash Culvert Permit Application(s) (Item B-1)

Mr. Safford said the Town is still the process of restoring our infrastructure from the June/July flooding events. During the July storm, a wooden pedestrian foot bridge washed out at the Mayo Farm. The foot bridge was used for people to cross from Field A to Field B without navigating alongside Weeks Hill Road. The bridge also served as a crossing for the Quiet Path and special events. There is an existing foot bridge that remains closer to the parking lot however the large volume of users during special events necessitates two points of crossing for safety and emergency purposes. Rather than replace the bridge, which would require a more substantive structure due to the larger elevated span for flood plain compliance, staff has contracted to install a properly sized arch culvert.

This portion of Mayo Farm is located within the Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) (i.e., the FEMA designated 100-year floodplain). Municipalities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program are required to regulate all development within the mapped SFHA in accordance with minimum FEMA standards. Stowe has elected to regulate development within the SFHA through its adopted Zoning Regulations. Under statute, prior to the issuance of any permit, municipalities must coordinate all proposed development within the SFHA with the State of Vermont Rivers Program, who provides technical assistance. Due to the timing of upcoming special events and anticipated

installation time, the Town Manager has submitted the zoning application and is seeking retroactive Selectboard approval to do so.

Mr. Shepard further explained the specifics of the type of culvert that will be installed.

Mr. Donza moved to authorize the Town Manager to apply for all permits required for an arch culvert crossing replacement of the bridge between Mayo Farm Fields A&B. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **FY'25 General Fund Budget Adjustment (Item B-2)**

Mr. Safford said there was an error in setting the FY'25 municipal tax rate that resulted in a reduction of \$350,751 in revenue. Based on sales tax receipts received to date in FY'24, staff anticipates we can offset this loss in property tax revenue through higher sales tax revenue than was budgeted.

Mr. Carlson said that while how they got here wasn't by intent, it did result in a favorable result for residents in an awful tax year.

Mr. Safford said it will help better position the FY26 budget by starting from a point of already anticipating the sales tax revenue. He explained that a challenge was waiting for the state to provide the education tax rate did they did not get that until after closing hours, and staff were working on it going into the meeting on August 1. They did not have a chance to spend time with it and catch the error.

Mr. Aumand said that he agreed with Mr. Carlson and that what they've done is create a little tax relief for taxpayers. He also said he wants to see that continue in future budgets. Mr. Carlson said he wants to see the sales tax accurately reflected. Mr. Donza said he wonders if the sales tax may go down in future years, based on conversations with people in town. Mr. Safford said that with more data points in the future they will be able to improve their forecasting.

Mr. Aumand said he does not want staff to feel they need to make up the difference in next year's budget. Mr. Safford said that next year's budget will account for this by increasing the sales tax revenue, and they will start with a base of \$1,050,000 instead of \$700,000.

Mr. Adams said that it resulted in a positive outcome because it works in the right way, but it was an error, and staff will make adjustments to not have those in the future.

Mr. Aumand moved to amend the budgeted FY'25 sales tax revenue from \$700,000 to \$1,050,751. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Short-Term Rental Registration Vendor Contract Award (Item B-3)**

Mr. Safford explained that the Town released an RFP for an STR registration platform, as reviewed and approved by the Selectboard on June 12, 2024, for which three proposals were received. This was a qualifications-based selection process, where price was important but not the only consideration. The staff committee that reviewed the proposals determined that Deckard was the best option based on quality of proposal, user interface, price, and good references from similarly situated municipalities.

The Selectboard reviewed the MSA and scope of work and made various inquires and edit requests, including but not limited to concerns about data security, the ability of the fire department to access contact information, and ensuring a Town employee would determine and issue violations, and requested additional clarification that advertising was not to be used as a trigger for a violation. They requested that the Town Attorney and the proposed vendor be invited to a future meeting to answer additional questions.

Mr. Adams asked how the expense would be reflected in the budget. Mr. Safford said it would be classified under administrative contingency because it is an unbudgeted expense. This would cause the expenditure line item to go over but the expense could be offset through registration fees. What if any fees to assess will be a topic of a future Selectboard meeting.

### **Manager's Report (Item C-1)**

Mr. Safford said that President Biden approved a Major Disaster Declaration for the July 10 storm. He also said the Governor advanced the June 23 storm to the President for consideration of the same but it has yet to be declared, and they will inform them when and if it is declared. He said the Town has three large projects remaining related to storm damage: the Depot Street culvert, a temporary bridge on North Hollow Road, and the Cemetery Road bridge repairs.

Mr. Safford said staff authorized shifting paving to damaged roads and the cost is about equal to what was previously anticipated for the annual paving budget. He added that after the winter they will see where they get Major Disaster Declarations and will make decisions accordingly from there.

Mr. Adams expressed his concern about the state-maintained section of Rt 108 near Topnotch, noting that it is still unpaved. Mr. Safford said they will check with the state whether they intend to repave that, and if not, they will encourage them to do something that gives some confidence it can get through the winter.

Mr. Safford said that Stowe co-ed volleyball has cancelled the remainder of their season due to field conditions resulting from flooding at Moscow Recreation Field. Staff will work with the Volleyball club to find a suitable location for future seasons. He also said they have worked with Stowe Youth Baseball to open the upper Memorial Park field by the Elementary School for them. He also said that they authorized staff to replace the bridge at Memorial Park which will hopefully get them back to being able to use one of those fields in the next few weeks.

Mr. Safford provided information on local option tax revenues, the Winooski River Watershed, Act 250 notices, and minutes.

Mr. Donza noted the recently approved development at Topnotch. The Selectboard had a general discussion on the strained surface transportation system and managing the cumulative impact of development rather than on a case-by-case basis.

### **Public to be Heard Non-Binding (Item C-2)**

Beth Gadbois said that bears are becoming a nuisance in town, and more should be done to ensure the problem does not worsen. Mr. Safford indicated that Vermont Fish & Wildlife has the ability to investigate human/bear conflicts and take enforcement action. Ms. Sabel Courtney said education is an important component. Mr. Aumand said the Be Bear Aware program should be reinvigorated.

### **Executive Session**

Mr. Carlson moved to enter executive session to discuss personnel and real estate. Mr. Donza seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:15pm. The Selectboard left executive session at 9:30pm.

### **Motions**

Mr. Carlson moved to appoint Nikolas Graupe to the Energy Committee as a student representative. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Carlson moved to appoint Ellie Feinstein to the Energy Committee as a non-voting student representative, and to instruct staff to update the Energy Committee charge to include a non-voting student representative. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Donza moved to accept the Contractor's Insurance Company offer of \$89,000 to settle the claim against the Contractor for the collapse of the Mayo Farm barn and authorize the Town Manger to endorse associated settlement documents on behalf of the Town. Mr. Carlson seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Carlson moved to appoint Christine Kaiser to the Cemetery Commission. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Aumand moved to appoint Betty Teffner to the Remembrance Program. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Carlson moved to appoint Mila Lonetto as the Planning Commission ex-officio non-voting member to the Housing Task Force. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Adjournment**

Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 9:35pm.

### **Notes**

Minutes submitted by Will Fricke.

The Selectboard of the Town of Stowe meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 5:30pm.

A recording of this public meeting is available at: <https://www.townofstowevt.org/selectboardrecordings>