

Stowe Selectboard Special Meeting
Friday April 10, 2020
Virtual Meeting

Present:

Selectboard Members: William Adams, William Noyes, Morgan Nichols, Lisa Hagerty, Nick Donza

Call to Order

Chair Lisa Hagerty called the meeting to order at 1:04pm.

Chair Hagerty began the meeting by stating that Governor Phil Scott has extended the Stay Home/Stay Safe executive order until May 15, 2020, which also extends all of his previous COVID-19 related orders. Governor Scott has indicated that the State will be monitoring trends and will slowly open things back up and get people back to work when it is responsible and safe to do so.

Approve the Agenda

On a motion by Ms. Nichols, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board approved the agenda as presented.

COVID-19 Update

Kyle Walker, Town of Stowe Health Officer and Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, gave an update on COVID-19, reiterating that the Governor has now extended his orders until May 15, 2020. Chief Walker indicated that there are currently 679 cases in Vermont with 19 of those in Lamoille County. The Governor has also asked that people wear cloth masks in public to help avoid spreading the virus before symptoms are present. Chief Walker is working with local volunteers to organize distribution of handmade masks. Regardless of masks, the public is still asked to remain 6' away from others for social distancing. The Town will continue to follow the guidance and directives of the Governor and Vermont Health Department at this time.

Dr. Melissa Volanksy, Stowe Family Practice, spoke to trends from Vermont that are encouraging, stating that we be reaching peak soon. There are currently no patients at Copley Hospital with COVID-19, and there have been no new cases in Lamoille County for a few days despite more testing being available. Dr. Volanksy stated that mitigation strategies should continue into May, but that they do not anticipate any supply shortages for the hospital at this time. She spoke to concern that people are no longer seeking out routine medical care, and in states like New York they have seen an increase in deaths of all causes due to delayed care. She encouraged those with medical needs or mental health needs to reach out as doctors are still providing care and people should not be afraid to see them. Finally, Dr. Volanksy encouraged those needing prescription assistance due to being laid off to call as there are many resources available such as patient advocates and discount pharmacies.

Emily Rosenbaum spoke on behalf of the Incident Command System and area health and human service organizations. She is working to coordinate all the good work being done throughout Lamoille County, which would include mask pick up and drop off, structure for communication and connecting people to resources such as Capstone, Lamoille Restorative Center and Copley Hospital.

Police Chief Don Hull spoke to the ongoing operations of the Stowe Police Department. He stated that they are fully operational and responding to emergency matters, cautiously and with as much distance as possible. The Stowe Public Safety Chiefs are in communication daily with each other and Town Manager Charles Safford, and are also getting regular updates from the State. Chief Hull indicated that he has seen an uptick in mental health and family issue calls, which follows national trends. He encouraged people to

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still reach out to the county and state resources for mental health and family issues as well, some of which have hotlines and can be found by calling 211.

Chair Hagerty read a statement from State Representative Heidi Scheuermann who was unable to attend today's meeting. She stated that the legislature is working to allow - lodging businesses to accept reservations for June 15th or after. They have also stopped all in person real estate transactions although those that can be done vial phone, email or online may continue. Financial and legal services continue to operate in limited capacities. The Stowe C-19 volunteer group is getting requests, and is urging others to use this service for errands. Those interested should contact Leslie Anderson at leslie.anderson@stowelawyers.com. The group is also doing outreach to check on those who need it, so if anyone is aware of someone who could benefit, please let them know. Additionally, funds are being raised to help those who need assistance with groceries and other essential supplies.

Charles Safford, Town Manager, updated on town operations. At this time highway and utility departments have been operated at reduced levels - in order to minimize exposure, but are still responding to hazardous and emergency situations. At this time, Mr. Safford is asking that people only call or visit Town Hall for essential, time sensitive business. Very limited in person meetings are allowed but otherwise all business should be conducted online or over the phone. He noted that boards are looking into meeting electronically, but it can be challenging, so the Selectboard is only handling time dependent essential and ministerial business at this time. Mr. Safford also noted that special events are being looked at on a case by case basis, there is currently one scheduled for May 20th that is being looked at, but a final determination hasn't been made. The Town recognizes that lodging can't be booked until after June 15th and this might impact the amount of visitors for a special event, but could be regional or local event if social gatherings are permitted. Mr. Safford also spoke to the upcoming tax payment date of May 15, 2020. Many payments are received through mail and autopayment, but the Selectboard may chose to move the date back. To do this, the Town would need to obtain a tax anticipation note from the bank and is currently working with the finance department and the bank to get this in place. The Town is not able to waive penalties or interest fees as they are in the Town Charter and would require both voter approval and legislature approval to suspend them. Currently Stowe imposes a 2% interest penalty which is less punitive than most Vermont municipalities. Going forward the Selectboard could adjust the FY21 tax dates as long as they are 4 equal payments, but cash flow is a consideration.

On a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Ms. Nichols, the Water & Sewer Commissioners approved the

Consent Agenda

1. Suspension of Dog Licensing Late Fees
2. Proposed Tax Collection Policy Amendment (Suspension of Tax Sales)
3. Close Memorial Park Basketball and Tennis Courts
4. Approve 3/27/20 and 4/3/20 minutes.

On a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Ms. Nichols the Board approved the Selectboard Consent Agenda as presented.

Chair Hagerty thanked all for attending the virtual meeting of the Stowe Selectboard. It was discussed that perhaps Selectboard Business could be a separate or every-other-week thing and the COVID updates do not necessarily dictate a full Selectboard Meeting. With this in mind, the next weekly COVIC update will be Friday April 17th, and the next full Selectboard Meeting will be April 24th, and this meeting will also include an update.

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There being no further business, Chair Hagerty adjourned the meeting at 2:39pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Earle.