

**Stowe Selectboard Special Meeting**  
**Friday April 24, 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 1:01pm.

**Approve the Agenda**

On a motion by Mr. Billy Adams, seconded by Mr. Willie Noyes, 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. Chief Walker indicated that there are currently 827 cases in Vermont with 25 of those in Lamoille County, and 44 deaths as a result of the disease. The Governor has now relaxed the workplace restrictions to those in manufacturing and construction in groups of 5 or less people who are 6' apart and wearing face masks. Chief Walker is working with local volunteers to organize distribution of handmade masks, noting that the first wave will be mailed to residents early next week. Those who are not residents can request a mask by contacting Nancy Small or emailing [Masks@stowevt.gov](mailto:Masks@stowevt.gov).

Dr. Melissa Volanksy, Stowe Family Practice, spoke to concern that people are no longer seeking out routine medical care. She reiterated that precautions have been put in place to have those who are not suspected of having the disease at different times and locations than those who may be ill. Routine care is still being deferred but those with chronic diseases, and well child visits are still occurring. 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. She also noted that Waterbury Urgent Care is closing, which may put more demand on Stowe Family Practice, so they have increased staff to meet that demand.

Heidi Scheuermann spoke to the need to remain vigilant with Stay Home Stay Safe restrictions despite the drop in the number of new cases. She asked all people to wear a cloth face mask when in public. She noted that the State is currently working on the Pandemic Unemployment Program for Self-employed workers who have lost wages, as well as the regular unemployment system. There are issues with both systems but they are working on getting advance checks out to those unable to process. She also spoke to work the Stowe COVID19 group is doing, including having \$20 in free dairy products for those who work or live in Stowe from Mansfield Dairy, and gift cards available at Shaws Customer Service for those unable to afford groceries. If anyone is struggling or knows someone struggling, please contact the group for assistance.

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. He reminded everyone to be aware of increased frauds and scams out there and directed people to the Public Safety website and Facebook for more guidance on handling them.

Tiffany Donza, Stowe representative on the Lamoille Unified Union School Board, stated that online learning was ongoing, but that grades would not be negatively impacted by the transition to distance learning. At this time the school has approximately 90% participation rates which is close to the average

daily attendance when school is in session as normal. The State is anticipating quite a shortfall in the education fund, which will make things financially difficult. The School is currently filling all full-time teaching positions, but they are not planning to fill open custodial or math coaching positions at this time.

Charles Safford, Town Manager, updated on town operations. Town Hall is currently closed but the Town Clerks are allowed to operate on a limited basis. Therefore, they are only accepting people by appointment due to limited space. A lot of their documents are currently on line and people are encouraged to use that whenever possible. The Parks, Water and Highway departments are being trained on COVID19 protocols and will be returning to work in small groups, per the Governors directive. This does not mean business is back to usual, so please continue to be patient. The Sidewalk and Utility Relocation Project is scheduled for a soft start next week with signage and set up. Starting the week of May 11<sup>th</sup> South Main Street will be closed from 6:00am to 6:00pm for approximately 6 weeks. Detour information will be put out soon, and full updates published on the Town Website, through Stay Connected emails and on Front Porch Forum. -

#### **Consent Agenda**

1. Annual Appointments
2. 4/10/20 Minutes
3. 607 Maple Street Water / Sewer Allocation
4. 3391 Mountain Road Water / Sewer Allocation

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

#### **Tax Anticipation Note**

Mr. Safford presented a \$5.5 million dollar tax anticipation note for the Selectboard to consider assisting with anticipated cash flow needs of the municipality. The Town Finance Department has put together a cash flow analysis which shows that by potentially moving the May 15<sup>th</sup> property tax payment that the Town would need this note to cover its cash flow, including the payment to the State Education Taxes on June 1, 2020. Additionally, the Town is anticipating an increase in delinquencies and tax abatements due to an inability to pay. The interest rate is 1.47% on any money borrowed between 4/27 and 10/27/20, the Town only draws down as needed and there is no pre-payment penalty. -

On a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Nick Donza, the Board approved the Tax Anticipation Note documents.

#### **Request to Move Back Property Tax Due Date**

Mr. Safford presented the Board with an email From Catherine Crawley requested the Selectboard “take up consideration of postponing the May 15<sup>th</sup> property tax collection until later date within the current fiscal year to provide relief to individuals and businesses. The Town Attorney has agreed that the Selectboard has the authority to amend the payment due dates so long as it doesn't go beyond the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30, 2020. The Town must pay the State Education Taxes on June 1<sup>st</sup> and the local schools twenty days after the tax due date- The Town is not able to change the 2% interest rate on late payments as that is part of the Town Charter. This charge compounds monthly, starting the day after the due date. If approved, the Town will provide notice to residents of the change in date through both online notices, newspaper notices and signs outside the Akeley Building.

On a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Noyes, the Board approved moving the 4<sup>th</sup> FY20 tax installment from May 15<sup>th</sup> to June 15<sup>th</sup> and authorized the Town Treasurer to issue payment to the local schools prior to the end of the current fiscal year rather than waiting the full twenty days.

Selectboard Meeting 4/24/20

### **Manager's Report**

Mr. Safford stated that a group of citizens is working on a way to honor the graduating seniors of Stowe High School, possibly through some sort of signs on public property. The Selectboard agreed by consensus to have the Manager to reasonably work with the community group to accomplish this objective.

He also noted that the Town is currently monitoring when social gatherings will be allowed by the Governor and working with Special Event organizers to meet the governor's mandates. Currently the Catamount Ultra Marathon is looking at moving their event from June 27<sup>th</sup> to a tentative date of August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Selectboard was agreeable by consensus to have the Manager work with event organizers that wanted to move back their special event dates.

The Manager indicated that they are also preparing to work if Stowe Area Association, hotel owners, special event organizers to help educate visitors on the COVID-19 protocols in place at the time hotels open back up and / or special events are allowed to occur again.

The Selectboard discussed the need to continue to have special meetings on Friday afternoons, and decided that unless there is a compelling need for a special meeting they will resume their usual Monday night meetings at 5:30pm via virtual meetings starting on Monday May 11<sup>th</sup>.

There being no further business, Chair Hagerty adjourned the meeting at 3:04pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Earle.