

**Stowe Selectboard, Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting**  
**Monday September 28, 2020**  
**Virtual Meeting**

Present:

Selectboard Members: William Noyes, William Adams, Lisa Hagerty, Nick Donza, Morgan Nichols  
There were 17 participant on Zoom.

**Call to Order**

Chair Lisa Hagerty called the meeting to order at 5:33pm.

**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**

Stowe Health Officer Chief Kyle Walker gave a COVID-19 update, stating that there are currently 1,745 cases in the State of Vermont, with 41 of those in Lamoille County, which is up 8 cases in the last 14 days. The number of deaths remains at 58. Chief Walker reminded everyone to continue your vigilance with social distancing, mask wearing and frequent hand washing/sanitizing, as we recognize that COVID-19 is here in our community.

Chair Hagerty shared her personal experience with being exposed to and then diagnosed with COVID-19. She noted that her case was considered mild but was not a joke and she was sick for 10 days, with lack of taste, fatigue and other symptoms, although no fever was present. She praised the Vermont Department of Health for their vigilance in being in touch quickly and frequently and noted that the system for notification of exposure worked well. Chair Hagerty stated that she has been cleared by the VDH to return to normal activities.

Mr. Adams brought up concerns about the Vail winter season and the number of visitors it will be bringing to the community and what protocols they had in place. Chief Walker indicated he had been working with Stowe Mountain Resort as they have been open for tourism since this summer, with rules that are either meeting or going above and beyond current State recommendations. Bobby Murphy, Vice President & General Manager of Stowe Mountain Resort, noted that he would be willing to over any specifics with the Board at a future meeting.

**Consent Agenda**

1. Minutes of 9/14/20
2. 56 Turner Mill Lane Water/Sewer Allocation
3. 161 Mountain Road Water/Sewer Allocation
4. Liquor Consent Items

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

**Halloween – Consideration of Maple Street Road Closure**

In past years, Maple Street has been closed to motorists on Halloween to accommodate the hundreds of Trick or Treaters that the Town typically sees. Stowe Parks & Rec also spearheads a candy drive for donations to give to those who live on Maple Street, as well as organizing a Halloween party at the Elementary School.

With COVID-19, the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development has limited outdoor events to under 150 people, and the CDC has classified trick or treating and trunk or treating as high-risk

activities. Stowe Elementary School has indicated they do not plan on holding their Halloween parade this year and will consider safer alternatives within the school community. Stowe Parks & Recreation will not be holding their annual events but will look at safer alternatives such as a virtual costume contest.

Neighboring towns such as Morrisville and Waterbury have not yet decided on whether to close down roads for Trick or Treating but have verbally indicated they do not believe they will.

Chief Walker recommended that people in the village follow best practices and not encourage trick or treating and shared a link from the CDC on alternatives for Halloween celebrations.

The Selectboard agreed to not closing Maple Street for trick or treating this year. It was noted that this change is only for the 2020 Halloween, and that future years closing the road for trick or treating will be considered. Signage and ads will be put out to notify the public that Maple Street will not be closed for Trick or Treating this year.

### **Helen Day Art Center Lease**

Town Manager Charles Safford presented the Board with a Lease Agreement between the Helen Day Art Center and the Town of Stowe. This lease is for a term of 20 years, at a rate of \$1 per year, and is substantially in alignment with the current delineation of responsibilities, however it adds a section stipulating “any use of the basement portion of the Premises to make, teach or demonstrate the making of ceramics shall require the installation of a separate electricity meter. Electricity delivered to the Premises through that meter shall be billed to and be the sole responsibility of HDAC.” Rachel Moore, Director of HDAC, noted that the HDAC Board has seen and approved of this lease agreement.

On a motion by Mr. Adams, seconded by Mr. Donza, the Board approved the Lease Agreement between the Town of Stowe and the Helen Day Art Center.

### **HDAC Ceramics Classroom and Capital Reallocation**

At the June 22, 2020 Meeting, the Selectboard heard from HDAC regarding a proposed conversion of the basement storage space into a classroom space with two kilns. Concerns were raised by some members of the Friends of the Library who also use the basement space regarding air quality. The Selectboard instructed staff to look into potential air quality concerns. Public Works has done so and confirmed that the proposed kiln and classroom project includes new mechanical systems including ventilation independent of the building systems the existing basement does not have any ventilations systems. This will remain unchanged for the areas of the basement used by the Friends of the Library. The ventilation system for the ceramics classroom and kiln will isolate the area and any dust from the rest of the basement area, and the discharge flume will include a filter to minimize dust exhaust. The new ventilation system will require small air intake and exhaust louvers in the north exterior wall, which the Historic Preservation Commission has approved of. All modifications to the space and HVAC system install, including ceiling design revisions to allow access to the existing utilities contained between the ceiling and the floor above, and the moving of one fire pull station will be considered part of the HDAC project costs. At this point the Town is satisfied with the review of the project and the HVAC systems. It was noted that once installed, the ventilation system will become part of the building and responsibility for maintenance will be with the Town.

During the planning for the HDAC project, it came to the attention of the Town that the existing electrical service for the building is inadequate and not compliant with code requirements for the existing building. This will require an upgrade to the existing 400-amp service to a new 800-amp service. This involves a utility pole drop, 200LF trench excavation conduits and feeders, new meter panel and installation of new electrical panels separating the electrical to the HDAC classroom/kilns and the remainder of the building and exterior restoration. The estimated total cost for this work for the Town

sided electrical panel is \$25,000. The cost for the HDAC panel and interior electrical work for the classroom/kiln will be paid by the HDAC. As this cost falls under the \$50,000 threshold for putting out to bid, it will be completed to the Town electrical contractor, Gould Corp.

On a motion by Mr. Noyes, seconded by Ms. Morgan Nichols, the Board approved the proposed classroom/kiln project and to appropriate \$25,000 from the General Fund Capital reserves to pay for the electrical service upgrade required to bring the building up to code, with the understanding that HDAC will pay for upgrades to the new service panel and interior electrical system for their classroom/kiln project.

### **Police Staffing and Update**

Chief Hull provided a memo for informational and discussion purposes regarding current police staffing levels and concerns. The mission of the Stowe Police Department is “to provide quality service in a professional, respectful and ethical manner to the residents and the visitors of the Ski Capital of the East.” The organizational and staffing levels have been established over the years to fulfill this mission. Chief Hull indicated that despite current staff shortages due to medical leave, vacancies, maternity leave and vacations he has been able to assure coverage to meet the needs of the Town and respond timely to all calls with very few delays. However, he did note that some of his officers are currently working very long stretches, as much as 14 days in a row, which can be wearing on the officers. He also indicated that he anticipates 1-2 more vacancies in the next year. It can be difficult to find experienced officers, and the process to bring on a new officer and put them through Police Academy and all required trainings can be about a year long process. The Board discussed the impact of special details such as construction project traffic details. Chief Hull indicated that many of those positions are covered by part time officers who are not interested in doing regular patrol, but that is can be difficult to cover those shifts as well. It was noted that the Town is compensated for those projects, so it is budget neutral. It was also noted that while Lamoille County Sherriff Department provides dispatch services for the Town of Stowe, they are not in a position to provide staffing coverage. Chief Hull indicated that Stowe works closely with Morrisville Police, Vermont State Police and the County Sherriff on many calls.

The Board also spoke with Chief Hull about 21<sup>st</sup> century policing and transparency in policing. Recently the Stowe Police posted all of their General Orders which cover police procedures and guidelines online for the public to review and ask questions. Chief Hull indicated that policies are up to date to reflect current best practices, but indicated he believes several of them will be updated in the coming year, as model policies are being developed statewide. All Stowe officers are trained in de-escalation and bias training above and beyond state requirements. Chief Hull noted that his officers have received their second round of de-escalation training as a refresher as well as three trainings on bias in policing. - The Board and Chief Hull also discussed a recently released press release from the Boston ATF/State Police and Town of Stowe regarding recent arson attempts and are offering a \$15,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of the responsible party. Chief Hull indicated that reward is being split between the three agencies, and that he believes an anonymous citizen has offered an additional \$15,000 bringing the total reward up to \$30,000. He asked all residents to be aware of their surroundings and report anything suspicious.

Mr. Safford thanked the Stowe Police Officers for their hard work, and for showing use of force restraint in the field. Chief Hull thanked the community for their support over the summer.

### **Manager’s Report**

Mr. Safford noted that the Highway Department will be working to extend on-street parking on School Street near the elementary school to include 5 parking spaces. This will formalize and make safer current

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practices of people parking on the side of the road. The cost is estimated to be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 out of the highway paving budget, and they hope to have this completed before winter.

Mr. Safford also reminded the Board that the next meeting will be on Tuesday October 13<sup>th</sup> as Monday October 12<sup>th</sup> Town offices are closed in observance of Indigenous Peoples Day.

Mr. Safford noted that the State legislature adjourned on Friday, and that the bill regarding lot sizes for areas providing water/sewer that the Town Planning Commission provided comments on did not make it through the legislative process this session. He also discussed Bill S.354 which allows for Annual Meeting to be voted on by Australian ballot for 2021 in recognition of the current pandemic and the limits on gathering sizes and the difficulty of large electronic meetings. Selectboard members expressed concern about the loss of the tradition and the need for more public input during the budgeting process in January. Mr. Safford will address this in a Municipal Corner to try to get the word out.

Public Works Director Harry Shepard provided an update on the overhead utility relocation project, noting that it has entered the final stages of removing the overhead wires, and that they are hopeful that the poles will come down before winter. The Town is working with local proponents of the project on a virtual ribbon cutting to celebrate the completion of this project.

There being no further business, Chair Hagerty adjourned the meeting at 7:26pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Abigail Earle.