

## Stowe Selectboard Liquor Commission & Water/Sewer Commission Meeting

Wednesday, September 24, 2025  
5:30pm

Akeley Memorial Building  
67 Main Street  
Stowe, Vermont



**Selectboard Members:** Paco Aumand, Ethan Carlson, Jo Sabel Courtney, Nick Donza, Beth Gadbois

**In-Person Attendees:** Town Manager Charles Safford, Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, Paul Sakash, Mila Lonetto, Sam Gaines, David Lockard, Jeremy Hulbert, Rachel Moore, Terrie Wehse, Walter Frame, Peter Livaditis (12)

**Zoom Attendees:** Mary Skelton Altadonna, Lynn Altadonna, Blake Blundell, Heather Coburn Snyder, Hannah Mitrani, Julie Marks, Missy Merrell Burgess, Alison Beckwith, Bob Davison, Laura Eselius, Adrienne [last unk] (11)

### Call to Order

Selectboard Chair Aumand called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

### Approval of the Agenda

The Selectboard moved consent items A-4 and A-9 to the end of business and to consider item A-5 in business alongside item B-4.

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

### Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-10)

1. September 10, 2025 Selectboard Minutes
2. SHS Generator Bid Award
3. WWTP Access Rd Paving Bid Award
4. ~~Purchasing Policy Amendments~~ (*Moved to business*)
5. ~~Stowe Arts & Culture Charge Statement Amendments~~ (*Moved to business*)
6. Stowe Vibrancy Letter of Attestation
7. Cemetery Road Bridge Change Order Approval
8. Water & Sewer Allocations – 299 Mountain Road
9. ~~November & December Meeting Schedule~~ (*Moved to business*)
10. Liquor Licenses

Paul Sakash asked about the budget for the Cemetery Road Bridge Change Order. Mr. Safford noted there is potential FEMA reimbursement but it not yet assured so it seemed prudent to set aside the full amount of the project. Mr. Donza asked how long it would take to get reimbursed. Mr. Safford said it is not yet clear.

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

### Special Event Application – Folks & Fairways at Spruce Peak (Item B-1)

David Lockard of Spruce Peak presented the special event application for the upcoming Folks & Fairways event. He highlighted the extensive effort that has gone into the public safety planning and emphasized the goal of a safe, successful event.

Mr. Aumand asked about sound amplification. Mr. Lockard responded that only one main performer would use amplification, and no band would be performing. Ms. Sabel Courtney asked whether attendance was expected to reach 1,500 people. Sam Gaines replied that the venue has accommodated that number in the past.

Mr. Donza expressed concern about people attempting to enter from the surrounding hillsides. Mr. Lockard stated that only ticket holders would be allowed in the Spruce Peak area and that un-ticketed access via the Over Easy would not be permitted.

Mr. Donza moved to approve the special event application. Ms. Gadbois seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

Mr. Carlson raised concern about receiving applications close to the event date. Mr. Safford explained that coordination between the Police Department and security staff had taken extra time in this case. Mr. Donza noted that it would be awkward to deny late applications once tickets are sold. Ms. Gadbois agreed. Mr. Donza suggested the Town consider policy amendments to further address late applications for future events. Mr. Aumand said that having organizers attend meetings allows the Board to ask questions directly. Mr. Gadbois added that the earlier an application is in, the more time organizers have to implement requested changes.

### **Short-Term Rental Registry Preliminary Statistics (Item B-2)**

Chair Aumand noted that the discussion this evening would focus on STR data, with policy discussion scheduled for October 8. He said tonight just to talk about data or to ask for more data. The Selectboard requested additional data including the number of STRs owned by LLCs, homesteads by size by year, bedroom comparisons, and value by size.

Mr. Fricke discussed the comparison between homesteads and non-homesteads. He also discussed the difference in condos compared to residential homes, and the ski/resort PUDs. Mr. Fricke noted homes current 1500 square feet or lower were 47.5% homestead in 2011 compared to 44.5% in 2025.

Mr. Aumand noted there should be a clear goal, for example whether they want more housing stock, and how the data is to be utilized. Ms. Gadbois said there could be a moratorium on new STRs. Mr. Carlson questioned how much a cap would actually affect the cost of housing. He noted there could be unintended economic impacts, and from his perspective they may be rushing a bit. He noted there is already talk of an economic downturn happening.

Mr. Aumand noted, with respect to the units in the Ski and Resort PUDs, that he is not sure they can be limiting those units whose purpose is to put heads in beds. He said he can't see telling Trapps or Spruce Peak that we are going to cap their use of STRs. Mr. Safford asked if there are any year round residents in those areas. Sam Gaines said there are not; the people who own units at Spruce Peak typically own them as second or third homes, sometimes they rent it out, and some people spend very little time there while others spend a lot of time. Walter Frame said the number of STRs at Trapps is very small if there are any.

Lynn Altadonna asked about the utilization of the Fire Department contact list and whether there have been issues with knockboxes. Mr. Safford said the Fire Chief indicated that the contact list has been helpful and owners have been installing knockboxes. Mr. Fricke said the Fire & Rescue Department has recorded 60 calls to STRs this calendar year, where 45 had no issues and 15 had an issue, that being no key access/knockbox, a responsible person not being available, and/or contact information not being posted.

Blake Blundell noted the section of the memo discussing a lack of evidence for widespread 3+ unit ownership. He also talked about research on the impact of STRs on housing prices, and noted limiting them would have economic consequences. He also said that most STRs are already second homes that are underutilized.

No action was taken at this time.

### **Main Street Crosswalks & Pedestrian Safety (Item B-3)**

Mr. Safford provided background on the history of Main Street crosswalks and police feedback. He explained Vermont law requires vehicles to yield in marked crosswalks but not at unmarked crossings.

Ms. Sabel Courtney said crosswalk visibility is important and raised concern about the library crossing, particularly for children. Mr. Safford noted that new crosswalks must meet accessibility standards and there is infrastructure at one end that would have to be relocated (telephone pole and fire hydrant). The Town has conceptual plans, but it has not been advanced to date due to an estimated cost of over six figures to narrow the intersection and do other

pedestrian improvements. He said the Union Bank development project does include plans to advance those improvements if it moves forward. Ms. Sabel Courtney also mentioned the lack of a cross on Depot Street at the post office.

Mr. Donza noted that traffic congestion makes crossing difficult. He also asked if there was anywhere to add parking, such as adding a parking deck at the rec path.

Peter Levaditis raised concerns about pedestrian safety near Straw Corners. Mr. Safford said staff would meet with him to understand his concern.

#### **Boards, Commissions, & Committees (Item B-4);**

##### **Stowe Arts & Culture Charge Statement Amendments (Item A-5)**

The Selectboard discussed residency requirements for board and commission members. Ms. Gadbois suggested at least half of members should be residents.

Mr. Safford noted that some commissions require significant staff support and that committee work often makes staff a conduit for Town issues for the volunteers regardless of its relation to the committee. Mr. Aumand stressed that committees should stay within their charge and not act independently of the Town. Mr. Carlson added that board and commission sizes should be reviewed, as quorum challenges can limit productivity.

The Selectboard discussed specific language for the SACC charge.

Mr. Gadbois moved to adopt language for the SACC charge as recommended by the Town Manager. Jo Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

#### **Municipal Communications (Item B-5)**

Mr. Safford reviewed how staff communicate with the public. He noted past survey data showing residents primarily use Front Porch Forum for information. Ms. Gadbois and Ms. Sabel Courtney suggested developing a Town newsletter. Mr. Aumand expressed concern about adding staff just for communications. The Board agreed to experience with a quarterly newsletter.

#### **Purchasing Policy Amendments (Item A-4)**

Mr. Safford reviewed proposed amendments to the purchasing policy. Ms. Gadbois said that raising limits from \$50,000 to \$250,000 for construction projects felt excessive. Mr. Carlson said the intent is to allow quicker action on projects. Mr. Safford noted that a bidder could still appeal to the Selectboard if they felt aggrieved.

Mr. Carlson noted these changes only affect projects already approved by the Selectboard. He said he doesn't know if the exact numbers are right or wrong but the concept is sound.

Ms. Gadbois said vendors will sharpen their pencils with a formal public bid process. Mr. Donza disagreed, saying in the current environment many vendors will avoid bidding on projects with public bids.

Mr. Carlson moved to approve the amendments as presented. Ms. Gadbois Seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

#### **November & December Meeting Schedule (Item A-9)**

The Selectboard set the following meeting schedule through the end of 2025: October 8, October 22, November 5, November 20, December 3, and December 18.

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

Mr. Safford reported that the Town of Stowe and K2 Reality have entered into a purchase and sales agreement for the eastern portion of the 749 Barrows Road property (Tax Map # 06-108.000), with a conceptual goal of developing the site as a new PFAS-free water source and finished water plant. The purchase price is \$1.2 million, with a closing deadline of July 1, 2027, contingent on water quality and quantity testing and permitting requirements. The site is approximately 26.5 acres and would replace the Village Green site as the Town's primary source of drinking water. Public Works aims to complete testing on the Barrows Road property this fall. The Town's quest for PFAS-free drinking water continues to be a significant effort of Public Works staff.

Mr. Safford provided a memo from Loren Polk, Stowe Free Library Director, detailing a decision by the Library Board of Trustees to adjust the library's open hours in order to better support our goal of increasing public programming. She notes that this adjustment will not alter library FTE or impact the department's budget, but will provide library staff with dedicated time for program planning, preparation, and delivery.

Mr. Safford said VTrans confirmed they would conduct a traffic study on Harlow Hill to be presented to the Traffic Committee on December 10. He said the Traffic Committee meeting is public and the Town will be notified in advance if they wish to attend and provide testimony.

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

No public comment.

**Executive Session**

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

The Selectboard entered executive session at 7:50pm, and left at 8:10pm.

No action was taken.

**Adjournment**

Chair Aumand adjourned the meeting at 8:10pm.

**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.stowevt.gov/Government/Selectboard>