

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

**Wednesday, January 22, 2025**

**Akeley Memorial Building  
67 Main Street  
Stowe, Vermont**



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

**In-Person Attendees:** Town Manager Charles Safford, Public Works Director Harry Shepard, HR Director Charleen McFarland, Interim Clerk Susan Moeck, Beth Gadbois, Bob Davison, Barb Puddicomb, Jeff Clarke, Deb Clarke, Terrie Wehse, Larry Lackey, Neil Van Dyke, Col. Baker, Sarah Winch

**Zoom Attendees:** Assistant Town Manager Will Fricke; Finance Director Cindy Fuller; Rich Scott, Connect Stowe, Heather Snyder, Lisa Hagerty, Paul Sakash, Mila Lonetto, Loren, Chris Stevens, Michael Koch, Liz, Julie Michals, Skeeter Austin, Courtney Percy Chris Brenner, Susan, Becca

### **Call to Order**

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

### **Approval of the Agenda**

Chair Adams requested a motion to approve the Agenda as presented.

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

### **Consent Agenda (Items A-1 through A-8)**

1. January 8, 2025 Selectboard Minutes
2. Health Officer Appointment
3. Highway Mileage Certificate
4. Luce Hill Bridge Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Engineering Contract
5. Water-Sewer Allocation-Topnotch Resort
6. Consecutive Sewer System Agreement-Topnotch Resort
7. Public Works Development Agreement-Spruce Peak Building C
8. Liquor Licenses

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

### **Police Chief Search Input**

Mr. Safford explained that the Town hire VSP Col. Jim Baker (Ret.) and VSP Cpt. Julie Scribner (Ret.) (via zoom) of JW Consulting <https://www.jwleadershipconsulting.com/> to assist with the Stowe Police Chief Search. The Police Chief Search Advisory Committee members are Neil Van Dyke (Citizen), Norm Williams (Citizen), Maura Weiler (Stowe Elementary School Principal), Scott Reeves (Interim Co-Chief Fire/EMS), Scott Brinkman (Interim Co-Chief Fire/EMS), Drew Clymer (Deputy Stowe Mountain Rescue Chief), Dustin Pray (Stowe Police Sergeant), and Jason Leneau (Morristown Police Chief). Mr. Safford said he and Charleen McFarlane (HR Director) would also be on the Committee. He added that this time was set aside for the Selectboard and for the public to provide input on the characteristics desired in a new police chief and what the new Chief/Department should focus on.

Col. Jim Baker and Cpt. Julie Scribner were introduced. Col. Baker provided information on his and Cpt. Scribner's

professional backgrounds and an overview of JW Leadership Consulting. He said his company utilizes a filter process to recruit, screen and identify suitable candidates. He further described the search process and at what point the interview panel conducts interviews until a finalist is identified for the Town Manager's consideration and a proper background investigation is done.

The Board welcomed Col Baker's assistance and thanked him for his presentation.

### **FY'26 General Fund Budget Public Hearing, Selectboard Deliberations and Budget Adoption for Warning Purposes**

Mr. Safford explained this time had been set aside as a public hearing on Selectboard's proposed FY'26 General Fund Operating Budget with changes that had been made as directed by the Selectboard at their Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> meeting. This included increasing the Equipment Fund transfer from \$550,000 to \$1,350,000, using \$800,000 of Undesignated Surplus Funds. He noted that increase has - no impact to projected tax rate. He explained that the FY'26 Budget as proposed currently represented a net budget increase of \$542,286(+4.64 %). The proposed budget as currently proposed is projected to increase the municipal tax rate by \$.0079 (+3.60%).

Chair Adams raised the idea of increasing the use of undesignated surplus for paving to potentially include Depot Street. Mr. Safford indicated that the Town anticipates replacing the water main and reconstructing Depot Street within the next couple of years, which would include paving once the subsurface work is complete. Mr. Adams followed up by asking if Public Works had any roads that they considered paving if the Selectboard wanted to use undesignated surplus. Mr. Shepard indicated they did not have any roads estimated to consider at this time. Mr. Safford indicated that unless the Selectboard was prepared to drop the paving budget next year, it wouldn't be considered one time spending and may cause a spike in the tax rate. He also the Town is after the \$800,000 Equipment Fund Transfer as part of the FY'26 budget the General Fund is anticipated to have \$1.8 million in undesignated surplus. This equals two months of cash flow, which is what is recommended by the Auditors. He concluded by saying that in the past when there was an anticipated operating surplus in the spring Selectboard sometimes used that money for additional paving. He said he didn't want to get ahead of himself, but staff could assess once we get through winter if there is potential capacity to consider this option. Mr. Aumand said he would prefer to have a discussion once staff have had time to prepare projects for their consideration and consider how best to potentially advance additional paving. The consensus of the Selectboard was they were open to the idea of spending more on paving in the future, but did not vote to increase the proposed FY'26 paving budget.

Mr. Adams opened the public hearing.

Larry Lackey questioned the funding of events. Mr. Safford indicated the Selectboard's Social, Community & Economic Service Appropriations Policy states, "In order to be eligible for a social, economic or community service appropriation the organization must be a non-profit and provide services to Stowe Residences." Members of the Selectboard indicated they thought there was value in some local events that the community could attend.

Mr. Lackey also asked if the proposed capital projects were going to be voted on by the electorate at the Annual Meeting. Mr. Safford said statutorily that reserve funds are within the control of the legislative body and the voters had already approved the money for the proposed projects, so there would be nothing on the warning in this regard. However, the voters would need to approve any long-term debt if and when it might be proposed in the future.

Sarah Winch indicated she had approached the staff in the past about putting a crosswalk across from where people park on Weeks Hill Road to access the Rec Path. She said that it would help to at least cut back the vegetation for visibility purposes.

Ms. Sable Courtney indicated that she would like to see a crosswalk across Pond Street to the Library. Also, she would like the lighted pedestrian crosswalks on Main Street.

Mr. Safford said if he recalled correctly the Historic Preservation Commission did not support the lighted pedestrian crosswalk signs as part of the Main Street Overhead/Sidewalk project. He said that crosswalks should be warranted, and he will have staff assess and queue up a future Selectboard agenda item on crosswalks including consideration of lighted crosswalks on Main Street.

Mr. Aumand voted to close the public hearing. Mr. Donza seconded. Motion carried (5-0)

Mr. Carlson moved to approve the FY'26 General Fund Operating Budget as presented and to warn a Special Selectboard Meeting on Wed. Jan. 29, 2025 to adopt the Annual Meeting Warning. Ms. Sable Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

## Approval of Capital Projects

Mr. Safford said this time had been set aside to decide what capital projects the Selectboard desired to earmark for funding. Based on the Jan. 8, 2025 meeting the proposed FY'26 projects follow:

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|--|------------|
| • Structural Inspection/Assessment of Rec Path Bridges   | \$ 75,000  |
| • Parker Barn – Preliminary Design/Permitting for<br>Structural Rehabilitation   | \$ 85,000  |
| • Reconstruction of Cemetery Road Bridge   | \$ 425,000 |
| • FEMA Flood Mitigation Projects Cost/Benefit and Hydraulic Analysis<br>(Luce Hill Bridge \$35,000 and North Hollow<br>Road Bridge/Upper Hollow Road Culvert \$50,000) | \$ 90,000  |
| • Moscow Playground Design, Permitting, & Build  | \$ 75,000  |
| • Cemetery Management Software   | \$ 30,000  |
| • Public Safety Communication Systems Phase 2  | \$ 183,993 |
| • Memorial Park Preliminary Design and Permitting  | \$ 320,000 |

<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b><u>\$1,283,993</u></b>
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Board members expressed varying degrees of support for the Parker Barn and discussed how much they might be prepared to spend including for the initial phase. Mr. Shepard indicated that the \$85,000 was based on 10% of \$850,000. Mr. Safford indicated that if the money wasn't spent in the initial phase, it could be carried over to offset the cost of construction if the Selectboard decided to move forward with a renovation project. Mr. Safford asked if the intent was to build it in accordance with historic preservation standards, to maintain the original structure as may be reasonably feasible, or to have something that looks like the original structure but may include modern materials. It was the consensus of the Board that the intent was to maintain the original structure as may be reasonably feasible but not to historic preservation standards. The Selectboard discussed during other business they could get feedback from the attendees on this project and Memorial Park to gauge support. Mr.

Safford also reminded them that even if they earmarked the money at this meeting, they could unallocate the money in the future and discontinue a project at any time.

Mr. Adams raised concern about some dilapidated properties in Stowe and wondered if the Health Officer or some other mechanism could be used to induce them to be brought back into active use. Mr. Safford indicated based on the Town's experience with the former Creamery Building in Stowe it would have to be a bona fide public health hazard, not merely an eyesore or a nuisance. Mr. Aumand discussed the language in the Zoning Bylaws regarding demolition by neglect. Mr. Donza said peeling lead paint may be a basis for requiring improvements. Mr. Safford said property maintenance standards established by civil ordinance may be a possibility. The Selectboard indicated they would like to further discuss the topic at a future meeting.

Mr. Carlson moved to earmark the proposed capital projects for the amounts indicated. Mr. Aumand seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Draft Annual Meeting Warning Review**

Mr. Safford said that this time was for review of the Australian ballot and floor vote warning.

No changes were recommended.

Mr. Donza moved to warn the adoption of the Australian ballot and floor vote warnings at a Special Selectboard Meeting on January 29, 2025. Ms. Sabel Courtney seconded. Motion carried (5-0).

### **Letter to Governor and Legislative Delegation Regarding Impact of Statewide Education Property Taxes**

The Selectboard discussed potential edits to the draft letter. Mr. Carlson will work on incorporating the draft edits for further consideration at the Selectboard's special meeting on January 29, 2025.

### **Manager's Report**

**Agenda Summary Format:** Mr. Safford noted the change to the agenda summary format to also include any adopted policy impact, fiscal impact and human resource impact.

**Open Meeting Law Update Training:** A State training on Vermont's Open Meeting law and amendments as a result of Act 133(S.55) <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/open-meetings/> is available.

**Parker Barn History:** Celebrating its 150 anniversary, the Parker Barn was originally a carriage house located on the Charles B. Parker property. The Parker property consisted of 160 acres of farmland, 50 acres of pastureland, a dairy with 30 cows and a sugar orchard. The Parker residence was located directly east across the road. It was described by VT Division of Historic Preservation as a distinctive example of a carriage barn in Stowe. There were efforts in the 1990s by the Stowe Conservation Commission to improve conditions. A new cupola was constructed and repairs to the foundation/sills were made. In 1995, voters were asked for approval to spend \$15,000 to be matched by a preservation grant from the State of Vermont. It was turned down as many non-essential items also were that year.

**State Legislative Delegation:** Attached is a list of the Stowe's State Legislative Delegation and their committee assignments.

**Lamoille Legislative Breakfast:** A reminder about the upcoming Lamoille Legislative Breakfast at the Akeley Building on February 3, 2025 at 8:00am. Tickets are \$8. To register visit: <https://lamoilleconomy.org/breakfast/>

**DRB Abutter Notice:** A 24 unit PRD located Along Eagle Ridge in VC-30 and VR-40 zoning districts abutter notice was sent to the Town since the Town owns on Cady Hill which is an abutting property. The Town maintains a 30' right-of-way over the subject property connecting into Cady Hill Forest, which the Applicant is proposing to improve with a 16' gravel roadway to serve their planned development. Unless otherwise

instructed by the Selectboard, staff will provide technical comments but won't intervene as an interested party on behalf of the Selectboard/Town.

### **Executive Session**

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

The Selectboard entered executive session at 8:35pm. The Selectboard left executive session at 9:03 pm.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Chair Adams adjourned the meeting at 9:03 pm.

### **Notes**

Minutes submitted by Susan Moeck.

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>