

TOWN OF STERLING
Select Board Meeting
November 18, 2020

MEETING:	<p>Chair Cranson, called the Select Board meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Roll Call: Chair Cranson – Present. Select member Sonnenberg – Participated remotely. Select member Kilcoyne – Absent. Also present were Interim Town Administrator, Fred Aponte and Senior Executive Assistant, Kama Jayne.</p>
Minutes	<p>Select member Sonnenberg moved to approve the minutes of November 4, 2020. Chair Cranson 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion Carried.</p>
Public Hearing – Tax Classification	<p>Prior to the mailing of the 3rd quarter tax bills, the Board of Selectmen must hold a hearing to determine the percentage of the Town’s property tax levy to be borne by each major property class, per Chapter 40, Section 56 of the Massachusetts General Laws.</p> <p>At 7:02 Select member Sonnenberg moved to open the Public Hearing regarding Tax Classification. Chair Cranson 2nd. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Chair Cranson - Aye. Motion carried. Assessor, David Manzello participated via Zoom. The Board was advised that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Assessors have recommended that the tax rate be increased by .16 cents to \$16.97. Valuations continue to rise, so despite the reduction in the rate, tax bills will increase for most homeowners• The tax increase represents an annual increase of \$\$302.00 per average home.• There is a healthy excess levy capacity of \$655,568.40 that could be used before a proposition 2 1/2 would be required to fund a significant budget increase. (not planned)• The Assessors recommended that the Town continue to support the single rate, as has been the practice, in order to continue to encourage business. <p>After discussion, Chair Cranson moved that the Sterling Board of Selectmen vote in accordance with MGL Chapter 40 Section 56, as amended, the percentage of local tax levy will be borne by each class of real and personal property relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2021 tax rates and set the Residential factor at 1.0000, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0000, pending certification of the Town’s annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue. Select member Sonnenberg 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried. The Board members will sign the LA5 letter that states the excess levy capacity and the approval of the single tax rate. It will be certified by the Town Clerk and submitted to the Department of Revenue.</p> <p>At 7:32, Select member Sonnenberg moved to close the Public hearing for the Tax Classification Hearing and to open the Public Hearing on regarding the release of Lot, 16, 17 and 18, Justice Hill Road, from Chapter 61A. Chair Cranson 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.</p>
Public Hearing - 61A Releases	<p>The Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Assessors have voted to approve these releases and to not pursue the purchase of the property. After discussion, Select member Sonnenberg moved to approve the release of Lots 16, 17 and 18, Justice Hill Road (Worcester Registry of Deeds, portions of the Deed recorded in Book 6059, page 338), from 61A and to not pursue the purchase of the properties. Chair Cranson -2nd. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried. Select member Sonnenberg moved to close the Public Hearing. Chair Cranson – 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion Carried</p> <p>At 7:38 Select member Sonnenberg moved to adjourn the Public Hearing and to proceed with the meeting. Chair Cranson -2nd. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion carried.</p>

Select Board Meeting Minutes

November 18, 2020

Emergency spending from General Stabilization Fund

The Water Department had requested that an article be included in the Dec. 7th Special Town meeting warrant to purchase Badger Water meter upgrades. However, due to the Covid pandemic, the STM has been postponed indefinitely. The article was to transfer \$350,000.00 from the Water Enterprise Retained Earnings to convert the current water meter system over to the drive-by Badger system. The current AMI water meter reading system is being changed, due to costly failure and the fact that support for the system is to be discontinued. A cost savings will be realized within the next ten years if this new Badger system is implemented. This project is considered to be an emergency and as such it qualifies to be considered by the Select Board, pursuant to Section 10 of the Acts of 2020, for Fiscal Year 2021. The Town may appropriate funds from a stabilization fund, for any lawful purpose, by two-thirds-vote of the Select Board. (This is a waiver of the usual requirement that funds are subject to appropriation by two-thirds Town Meeting vote.) After discussion, Chair Cranson moved that due to the cancelled STM article, the Board approve the use of the General Stabilization Fund in the amount of \$350,000.00 for the Badger meter replacement system. Pursuant to Section 10 of the Acts of 2020, for Fiscal year 2021 only. The funds will be returned to the General Stabilization fund using the Water Department's retained earnings, pending Town Meeting approval. Select member Sonnenberg 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.

ATM Calendar

The Finance Committee's proposed [Budget Calendar](#) was considered by the Board. Everett Heller, Chair of the Finance Committee, participated remotely. The Finance Committee and the Capital Budget Committee and the Town Accountant/Interim Town administrator are satisfied that this "fluid" calendar is workable and it will be used as a guideline for progressing toward the deadlines for the ATM. Discussion included the suggestion that the warrant be posted on the website on April 16th and that it also include an SLCT presentation on the articles. Select member Sonnenberg moved to accept the proposed FY 22 Finance Calendar for the ATM with the proposed additions. Chair Cranson 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.

Wachusett Fund

Chief Hurlbut reported that at its meeting on October 30, 2020, the Wachusett Fund Committee voted to recommend the approval of expenditures of up to \$36,730.00 to purchase two replacement Physio-Control Lifepak-15 Cardiac Monitor/Defibrillators. He explained that normally, this is the cost for one single monitor. However, due to a promotion from Stryker Medical, the monitors have been made available at \$18,365 each until December 15, 2020, with the trade-in of our current monitors. In June 2020, Stryker, the parent company of Physio-Control, notified the department that our current monitors were reaching end-of-life due to their age (8- years old), and replacement components, most importantly the main board, were no longer available in the market. The committee voted 3 – 0 in favor of recommending the expenditure. The Wachusett Fund account balance as of October 30, 2020 was \$169,698.70. Select member Sonnenberg moved to approve the expenditure of up to \$36,730.00 to purchase two Physio-Control Lifepak-15 Cardiac Monitor/Defibrillators. Chair Cranson – 2nd. Chair Cranson – Aye. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Motion carried.

ITA Report

Interim TA Report 11/18/2020

- We here at the Town Hall would like to send our best wishes to Officer Dave Johnson and wish him a speedy recovery. There is a Go Fund Me page if anyone is interested.
- Patrice and her crew have done a great job painting the stair wells and adding strips to avoid any slipping.
- COVID cases are on the rise in Sterling and around the immediate area. There has been discussion regarding closing the Town Hall to the public. My suggestion would be to close on

PSAs

Adjourn

November 27th, the day after thanksgiving. People will most likely be at family gatherings and risk exposure, closing on the 27th will lower the risk of exposure to Town Hall employees.

- We received notice that Senator Tran has secured a \$40,000.00 grant for the Butterick renovation.

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- A staff meeting will be held this week to address Covid protocols
 - The school committee voted to delay the start of “hybrid” classes until January 19th. Viewers were reminded that the Select Board does not hold sway with school decisions, such as these.
 - The Board sends its heartfelt best wishes to Detective Johnson
 - Thank you to Senator Tran for being an outstanding advocate for the Town of Sterling
 - Thank you to the Board of Health for all they have done during this pandemic
 - On Saturday, there will be a trial run at the school parking lot for future vaccine distribution

At 8:07 Select member Sonnenberg moved to adjourn the meeting. Chair Cranson – 2nd. Select member Sonnenberg – Aye. Chair Cranson – Aye. Motion Carried

Materials: Agenda, Minutes, 61A releases for Lots 16, 17 and 18 Justice Hill Road, Tax classification material, Meter replacement advise from Town Counsel, ATM calendar, Wachusett Fund request for Defibrillators