

March 10, 2021

The Stonington Board of Selectmen held a regular virtual meeting on this date at 5:30 p.m. This meeting was also streamed on Facebook live and was available via audio on a conference line. First Selectman Danielle Chesebrough, Selectwoman June Strunk and Selectwoman Debbie Motycka Downie were in attendance. No public or press were present in the room. Public and press were able to view via Facebook live as well as audio through a conference call.

**(1) Call to Order**

Ms. Chesebrough called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**(2) Pledge of Allegiance**

**(3) Commendation**

The Board presented Claire, a 5<sup>th</sup> grade Stonington elementary school student, with a commendation in recognition of her being named to the 2021 Connecticut Kid Governor's Cabinet.

**(4) Approval of Minutes**

- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 24, 2021.
- A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the special meeting minutes of March 4, 2021.

**(5) Correspondence**

Ms. Chesebrough took in correspondence from Mr. John Prue in regards to his prior letter submitted to the Board of Selectmen about the Climate Change Task Force's request of a climate emergency declaration. He noted that he wished to clarify some of the items in his prior letter. Ms. Chesebrough stated that she would be forwarding the letter to the Climate Change Task Force.

**(6) Old Business**

**Update on COVID-19**

A reminder to check the Town's website for weekly updates regarding COVID-19. Town Hall continues to be open by appointment only. Most services can be completed over the phone, online or by using the drop box outside of Town Hall.

As of March 5<sup>th</sup>, 24.79% of Stonington residents had received a vaccination and 17.6% of CT residents had been vaccinated. Vaccinations continue to be offered to those 55 and older. Please refer to the Town's website as for an overview of the many different ways to register for a vaccination.

**(7) New Business**

**Discussion – Budget Review**

Ms. Strunk discussed the Community Outreach Specialist position that is requested in this year's budget by Human Services. She noted this was a previous position housed at the Police Department which was grant funded at the time. If the new position is funded this year, it will continue to support the Police Department as well as Human Services. This position would help with family outreach, domestic violence, mental health and other healthcare issues. Ms. Strunk noted that statewide, domestic violence has increased by 35%. She added that during budget presentations, Safe Futures noted that they have seen a 700% increase in spending towards assistance to victims of domestic violence.

Ms. Strunk proposed shifting funding from the second and third selectmen salaries of \$10,000 each. The salaries grew over the years as a former First Selectman reallocated funding from the First Selectman salary line to the second and third selectman line items. Ms. Strunk noted that the combined total could help secure half of what is needed for the new position.

Ms. Downie was in full agreement and stated that she had been moved hearing from all of the outside agencies especially Safe Futures. She stated she had been trying to think of a creative way to help and that this funding shift would bring the salaries back to where they were a few years ago.

Ms. Chesebrough stated that Ms. Strunk and Ms. Downie are true public servants. She added that the Community Outreach Specialist position would help to provide preventative measures in many areas including domestic violence.

A motion was made by Ms. Downie, seconded by Ms. Strunk and voted unanimously to approve the reduction of \$20,000 from the second and third selectmen line item to help offset the cost of the Community Outreach Specialist position.

**(8) Comments from the Public**

None

**(9) Comments from the Selectmen**

- Ms. Downie and the other members of the Board thanked the anonymous person that was kind enough to send flowers to the Board of Selectmen in honor of International Woman's Day.
- Ms. Strunk noted that the K-12 Building Committee held their final meeting. She added that the Board of Education will formally accept the schools at their next meeting.
- Ms. Chesebrough stated that Congressman Courtney held a meeting at the Town Dock to highlight that the fishing quota on black sea bass has been increased. She noted how important this quota increase is for our fishing fleet. She thanked the Board of Finance for earmarking \$300,00 from the Town's open space line to be used toward the Al Harvey property conservation efforts. Ms. Chesebrough noted that a Special Virtual Town meeting will be held on Saturday, March 13, 2021 followed by drive up/walk up voting at Town Hall. Lastly, she highlighted the return of the Discussions with Danielle series which allows residents to share their thoughts, questions and concerns in an informal setting. The meetings will be held monthly at different outdoor venues. More information and meeting dates/times are on the Town website.

**(10) Adjourn**

There being no further business to come before this Board, the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.



Stacey Haskell  
Recording Secretary