

**BRATTLEBORO SELECTBOARD
TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2020
SPECIAL MEETING – 6:15PM
HELD REMOTELY VIA ZOOM
MINUTES**

NOTE: Per the “Stay Home – Stay Safe” order issued by Governor Scott this meeting was held remotely with no physical location using Zoom

Selectboard members in attendance: Tim Wessel, Elizabeth McLoughlin, Ian Goodnow, Brandie Starr, and Daniel Quipp.

Staff participating: Town Manager Peter Elwell, Assistant Town Manager Patrick Moreland, and Executive Secretary Jan Anderson.

Others participating: Christian Stromberg, ASL interpreter Janet Dickinson, and BCTV staff and volunteers.

Chair Tim Wessel called the meeting to order at 6:20pm. He confirmed that the meeting was properly warned.

CHAIR’S REMARKS

Chair Wessel noted this meeting was the first Selectboard meeting taking place on the Zoom platform. He said that the meeting was not going according to plan because Tropical Storm Isaias was blowing through at this time and much of the town was without power.

MANAGER’S COMMENTS

Town Manager Elwell confirmed that more than half of the town was experiencing a power outage due to Tropical Storm Isaias. He warned that high winds should be anticipated for the next few hours and trees and limbs were expected to fall. He said that Green Mountain Power (GMP) was working to restore power and that GMP and Town crews would be working throughout the night. He asked drivers to exercise caution while driving tonight and in the morning. He announced that only a few items of urgent business would be conducted at this meeting and the remaining items would be postponed to a future special meeting that would be determined later in this meeting. He suggested the Representative Town Meeting Warning that was on the agenda for this meeting be postponed to the next meeting because it would still fall within the 30 to 40 day statutorily required timeframe. The Board generally agreed to the schedule suggested by Elwell.

LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS

MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO CONVENE AS LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 4-0 (STARR WAS NOT PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE VOTE).

First and Third Class Liquor License – Saxtons River Distillery, LLC. Elwell said that Christian Stromberg, owner of Saxtons River Distillery, was “present” at this meeting and he asked the Board to hear this item. He said that the Board was asked to approve a First and Third Class Liquor License for Saxtons River Distillery, LLC, located at 155 Chickering Drive, for the purpose of opening a tasting room and outside consumption area. He said that all of the paperwork was in order and staff recommended the application be approved. Stromberg spoke about the business plan and the outdoor tasting area. There was a brief discussion by the Board.

At this point in the meeting, an intruder “Zoom bombed” and hijacked the meeting using profanity, racial slurs, pornographic images, and a picture of the Nazi flag. The organizer of the meeting struggled to gain

control of the meeting. Some minutes later, the intrusion ceased. McLoughlin noted that she had received a string of calls from Portland, Oregon, which apparently were connected to this incident. When order had been restored, the Board continued its business.

MOTION BY ELIZABETH McLOUGHLIN TO APPROVE A FIRST AND THIRD CLASS LIQUOR LICENSE FOR SAXTONS RIVER DISTILLERY, LLC, LOCATED AT 155 CHICKERING DRIVE. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO ADJOURN AS LIQUOR COMMISSIONERS. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Elwell asked the Board to consider the following agenda item because it was time sensitive.

NEW BUSINESS

Set FY21 Property Tax Rates – Elwell asked the Board to consider the urgent matter of setting the tax rate for FY21 so that tax bills could be issued in time for property owners to receive their tax bills 30 days prior to the due date, which was set on September 15. He said that a memo from Finance Director Andre Jaeger, dated August 4, had been distributed earlier in the afternoon. He spoke about the amount of funds that needed to be established by the Selectboard this year for the municipal portion of taxes and the resulting municipal tax rate of \$1.2948 per \$100 of assessed value. He also spoke of additional taxes to be levied on properties in the Downtown Improvement District and Tri-Park. He then spoke about the education portion of taxes. He said that the information contained in Jaeger's August 4 memo had been provided by the local School District, which the District confirmed was consistent with information that would be provided at a later date from the State of Vermont. He said that the State's process was delayed due to COVID-19 matters. There was no discussion.

MOTION BY DANIEL QUIPP TO APPROVE A MUNICIPAL TAX RATE OF \$1.2948 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION FOR GENERAL FUND OPERATIONS, AN ADDITIONAL \$0.1303 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION FOR THE DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, AN ADDITIONAL \$6.8785 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION FOR THE TRI-PARK SPECIAL ASSESSMENT; AND TO APPROVE THE TOWN CALCULATED EDUCATION RATES OF \$1.6990 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION FOR HOMESTEAD PROPERTIES AND \$1.6069 PER \$100 OF ASSESSED VALUATION FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

The Board agreed to hold a special meeting on Tuesday, August 11 at 6:15pm, to hear the items that were not discussed at this meeting. Wessel noted that the first Zoom meeting had not gone as anticipated with the entrance of a tropical storm, the resulting power failure, and the intrusion on Zoom. There was a brief discussion. There was no further business.

MOTION BY BRANDIE STARR TO ADJOURN AT 6:56PM. MOTION CARRIED 5-0.

Ian Goodnow, Clerk