

Town of Shaftsbury Selectboard, January 4, 2021

- 1) Call to Order  
The meeting came to order remotely via the Zoom platform at 6:30 p.m. Present were Selectmen Tim Scoggins (chair), Art Whitman, Ken Harrington, and Joe Barber. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan and Treasurer Melanie Dexter.
- 2) Conflict of Interest Statement  
No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.
- 3) Minutes: Approval of minutes was postponed as they were circulated too late.
- 4) Warrants

Retirement #2 for \$12,608.04. Moved by Whitman; seconded by Harrington. Approved 4-0-0.

Check #23 for \$170,005.14. Moved by Whitman; seconded by Harrington. Approved 4-0-0.

Payroll # 13 for \$24,328.19. Moved by Whitman; seconded by Harrington. Approved 4-0-0.

- 5) Announcements
  - a. Openings on PC, DRB, SB
  - b. Town Meeting by Australian Ballot
- 6) Public Comments–non budget  
No public comentss.
- 7) Treasurer Report  
Ms. Dexter reviewed December’s treasure’s reports.  
A significant amount of delinquent taxes has been received. Outstanding delinquent taxes this year compared to this time last year are very similar (though they may diverge later).  
The \$4.5 million check represents the transfer to the schools, meaning the cash position is much more realistic now.  
Expenses are slightly behind this year’s, purposely.  
The negative balances in the reserve accounts report will go away when Ms. Dexter records transfers.  
Six residents took advantage of a State program that assisted people with utility – in this case water – payments.  
Mr. Whitman asked for Ms. Dexter’s recommendation for the taxes-due date. She said she is agnostic on it – but that she thought that any date in the first half of November would be appropriate. Ms. Dexter will check with N. Bennington and Bennington to confirm their 2021 taxes-due date. The consensus seemed to be to align the Shaftsbury dates with that of those communities.
- 8) Road Report  
Mr. Kiernan said plowing, salting, and sanding is pretty much all the crew is doing, with occasional machine maintenance.
- 9) E911 Address Changes per request from State

Mr. Kiernan said the Town had been notified a couple of years ago that several camps on the mountain lack E911 addresses. The State has asked that this situation be corrected. Mr. Kiernan said he would like to suggest to the State that we simply use mapping programs to assign address numbers to the midpoint of the front lot line. Mr. Whitman asked how we know that there are camps on the parcels. We don't know for sure, he said. Mr. Scoggins suggested seeking a planning grant to locate the addresses. He said he sees the exercise as of limited practical value, but the State seems to be insisting we do it.

Mr. Kiernan said part of the Furnace Brook development's road system must be changed. (The landowners will be asked what the new name should be.) Other landowners' addresses were incorrectly assigned. But assigning new numbers will cause significant disruptions. Mr. Kiernan said it would be best to wait until the pandemic is over to reach out to landowners about new addresses.

Mr. Whitman moved to seek a grant to bring the town's addresses into compliance with E911 standards. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

#### 10) Budget FY21

- Overview

Mr. Kiernan reported that no significant changes have been made since the last Select Board meeting. All budget materials can be accessed via the Town website. The budget proposes an increase of \$25,000 for the year, an increase from .4449 to .4563 or 1.1%.

Re community appropriations, Mr. Kiernan contacted WBTN and has not heard back from anyone. (Twenty-six percent of the station's budget is the \$5000 represented by the request from Shaftsbury.) Mr. Kiernan explained that the Town's informal policy has been to place a request that has not changed on the ballot. Lacking a policy otherwise, he said he doesn't see a way to reduce the WBTN request. Mr. Whitman agreed that it is the voters' right to decide, up or down. Mr. Scoggins noted that in a normal year, the Board could change or delete a request, and require the organization to mount a petition drive to override that Select Board vote. That isn't possible this year due to COVID.

Mr. Barber asked whether the Cleveland Avenue skating rink would go forward. Mr. Kiernan said only two percent of the neighborhood residents responded to a survey about the rink, and the responses were evenly split. The Town has no basis on which to move forward.

- Public Questions /comments on budget

Mr. Kiernan said he has not received any comments.

#### 11) Other Business

Mr. Whitman moved to re-appoint Ken Harrington and Cinda Morse to serve as commissioners on the Bennington County Regional Commission. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

Mr. Whitman said about a year ago he and Mr. Scoggins were given a tour of the old Stanley Works. They saw a machine that stamped the numbers on the squares, a one of a kind instrument weighing at least a couple of tons and the size of a dinner table. He said the Historical Society was supposed to be caring for it but is letting it rust away. He wondered if the Town crew could get it out of there and store it safely somewhere. Mr. Whitman thought it belongs to the Historical Society but wasn't sure. The plant is up for sale for \$4 million.

Mr. Scoggins said he thought the old building is beyond hope, and rather than try to preserve a building the Town should be interested in creating a memorial.

Mr. Scoggins will contact the plant manager and the Historical Society to seek their approval to remove the machine.

12) Review of Action Items

- Ms. Dexter will check on the N. Bennington/Bennington tax date
- Mr. Kiernan will look into a grant to bring the town into E911 compliance.
- Mr. Scoggins will contact the plant manager and the Historical Society to seek their approval to remove the machine.

Mr. Harrington moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel issue. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

13) Adjournment