

Shaftsbury Special Select Board meeting

November 29, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were selectmen Art Whitman (chair), Ken Harrington, Tony Krulikowski, Joe Barber, and Mike Cichanowski. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan. Mr. Whitman asked to add to the agenda a discussion of the Town Christmas tree lighting.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

No minutes had been distributed.

4. Warrants

- Town water bill, \$396.12. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Check warrant #17, \$36,495.53, rebating overpaid taxes. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Check warrant #15, \$39,974.35. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Check warrant #18, \$4,170,528 to transfer school taxes to the school district. Mr. Harrington moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

5. Announcements

There were none.

6. Public Comments

There were none.

7. Proposed Rule Requiring Wearing Face Coverings Indoors in Public Spaces

Mr. Krulikowski moved to adopt a mask requirement as outlined in language shared with the Town by Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion. The board discussed the motion.

Mr. Harrington said he thought everyone in attendance had been vaccinated. He thought he could make his own decision. He thought unvaccinated people should wear masks, but that vaccinated persons should not be required to. He said Covid has been bad enough without adding such mandates.

Mr. Barber shared a report from a world health organization which he said showed that most masks do not markedly reduce the transmission of Covid 19. He said he thought it should be up to individuals to decide whether to take the risk, if any, posed by not wearing a mask.

Mr. Krulikowski said he thought masks should be required for the common good.

Mr. Cichanowski said that if hand washing, social distancing, and/or wearing masks could save one life, he would consider it worth it. He said he wanted to go on record as trying to do something to help and that a mask mandate might help.

Mr. Whitman said it is weird to make a mandate we can't enforce. But as a society, we have a responsibility not to hurt or even kill someone else. Admittedly it isn't perfect, but this

business of “I can do what I want” has gone way too far. Mr. Whitman asked to call the question and so end the discussion, noting that a two-thirds affirmative vote was necessary to do so. The board agreed to call the question by a vote of 3-0-2. The board voted by roll call on the original motion: Mr. Harrington, no; Mr. Krulikowski, yes; Mr. Barber, no; Mr. Cichanowski, yes; Mr. Whitman, yes. The motion passed 3-0-2.

8. FY23 Budget Proposal

Mr. Kiernan said this year he’d like to make up for some cuts they imposed last year, in preparation for Covid. The first step is giving every staff person a raise of 5%. He would like to also add a dental plan and a vision plan for each employee. The resulting pay grades for the highway department are competitive with those offered by Vtrans.

If the voters vote to eliminate the listers, the assistant town clerk will take over the listers office (and assist the professional assessor).

Other possible changes would be updating the website, using a different web platform, and matching the grant to scope out sidewalks on Grandview and Hawks. Some savings can be found elsewhere in the budget, such as in reduced insurance costs and a reduced paving budget (a large balance remains in that account).

The total increase will be about 4.7%, or \$27.30/\$100,000 (compared to last year’s increase of %1 or \$14.20/\$100,000). The increase is still considerably below the inflation rate.

Mr. Kiernan described some of the other changes, including reduced overtime, increased utilities for cell phones, and no propane costs for the garage (so efficient is the structure – the 1000 gallon tank hasn’t needed refilling yet).

Mr. Kiernan doesn’t have all the community appropriation requests yet. In person requests from new groups will be required, on Dec. 6 and Dec. 20. He hopes to have a vote on the budget December 20. The tax rate will be set in August, after the Grand List has been certified in 2022.

9. Approval of Cemetery Regulations

Mr. Harrington moved to approve the proposed cemetery regulations promulgated by the cemetery committee over the last four years. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

10. Other Business

Mr. Kiernan said he finally received the scoping documents for the Grandview and Hawks sidewalk scoping project. The scoping will take place next summer or fall. He reminded the board that the Town is still waiting to learn about the infrastructure funding.

The tree lighting ceremony will not be held this year. Norshaft Lions lacks the person power. It was agreed that the tree will not be lit at all, for safety reasons.

11. Review of Action Items

Mr. Kiernan will let the board know what time the Water Board meeting will be held on Friday this week. He will post an agenda.

12. Adjournment

Mr. Harrington moved to adjourn at about 7:30 p.m. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.