

Town of Shaftsbury
Regular Selectboard Meeting
6:00PM
Monday, January 21, 2013
Cole Hall - 61 Buck Hill Road

Members present: Lon McClintock (Chair), Carl Korman, Karen Mellinger, Billy Obenauer

Members absent: Craig Bruder

Others present: Margy Becker (Town Administrator), Sandra Mangsen (Recording Clerk), Jeri Schoof, Tom Huncharek, Mitchell and Joann Race, Art Whitman, Jay T. Palmer, Jim Secor (MSK Engineering)

1. 6:00 PM – Call to Order

Lon McClintock called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Fire Dept. Facilities Inspection

Members inspected the two Fire Stations.

3. Call to Order of Regular Meeting

Lon McClintock called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Lon McClintock reported that Selectboard visited Fire Department buildings, in order to investigate repairs that may be needed. He noted that the Fire Department is taking meticulous care of the existing equipment.

3. Announcements

Billy Obenauer wished everyone a happy Martin Luther King Day and noted his contributions to preserving the democratic process we continue to enjoy.

Carl Korman commented that it is also inauguration day for President Barack Obama. He hoped residents have had the opportunity to view those proceedings and to reflect upon our democratic process and the peaceful transition of power. He expressed his thanks to the troops that serve our country and wished President Obama good luck in his second term.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

5. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were none.

6. Proposed FY 2014 Budget & Bond Interest Payments

Lon McClintock reported that work on the budget was completed at special meeting on Jan 17. He remarked that the approved budget reflects a 1.4% decrease in expenditures. The amount to be raised in taxes is expected to remain the same.

Lon McClintock stated that the Selectboard must decide whether to include the cost of the garage in 2014 budget. Since approval is not yet in place, it seems sensible not to include this project in budget; however, residents should be made aware of the impact of a successful bond issue.

Lon McClintock then asked the Selectboard to consider how best to inform residents. Karen Mellinger suggested creating an information flyer and inserting a description in Town Report. The aim is to make the information available, even though it will not be included in the budget per se. The consensus is not to include it in the budget, but to make relevant information readily available.

Lon McClintock sought the Selectboard's permission for Margy Becker to delete certain line items in the budget that have not been used in the recent past. Specific lines to be deleted were discussed.

Lon McClintock stated that the amount to be raised by taxes in fiscal year 2014 is \$1,302,258; this is slightly less than the amount needed in fiscal 2013 or \$ 1,302, 614.

The total amount of proposed expenditures t is \$1,854,628, compared to \$1,882,771 in fiscal 2013.

No increases in town fees are anticipated. There is an increase in health insurance premiums for employees, since the cost of Blue Cross Blue Shield will increase by 9.4%.

A Fund Balance of \$320,000 has been accumulated over the past few years. Treasurer Bill Fisk advised that the amount of capital to be maintained on hand should be 10 to 15% of total income. Given the Fund Balance in hand, approximately \$120,000 ought to be used to reduce current taxes. Lon McClintock noted that \$67,500 was accumulated over the last year, due to careful handling of expenses by administrators.

Lon McClintock commented on some specific items. A part-time person has been hired to assist with bookkeeping, and another will be sought to handle routine administrative tasks (a total of sixteen hours/week was budgeted, but only about half are being used by the bookkeeper). Some increases in technical support are anticipated (the Listers want to use a digital mapping system and the town website will be made more dynamic, making public records more easily and widely accessible). Large equipment purchases (highway department trucks – two purchased in combination in order to attract a lower financing rate); the NorShaft Little League (now merged with its Bennington counterpart) has asked for an appropriation; the Northern Vermont Resource Conservation and Development Council (formerly the George Aiken Fund) has asked for an appropriation in order to accomplish their many community projects; and a new appropriation is anticipated for the Turning Point Center of Bennington, which helps individuals with drug or alcohol problems.

7. New Town Garage:

a) Status Report – MSK Engineering

Jim Secor (MSK Engineering) described the project to build a new town garage at the Land Fill Site, property already owned by the town. The project involves a 9000 square-foot garage building for storage of town trucks, and a repair bay, office space, break room, and bathroom amenities for the Highway Department and Water Department.

The Selectboard expects to receive information about proposed costs later this week (Friday, Jan 25, 4:30 p.m.) and will at that point be able to consider some alternative approaches to specific aspects of the construction.

b) Informational Mailing to Public

An informational mailing will be developed at Friday's meeting, once the plan and associated costs are available. Jim Secor will send information to Margy Becker in advance of the meeting.

8. Howard Park – NorShaft Lion's Club Request for Security

Karen Mellinger thanked the Lions for all their contribution to the parks and to the town and brought those in attendance up to date on Howard Park. The Lions had approached the Selectboard with concerns about security and vandalism at the park, which have made them reluctant to make improvements. In the past the volunteer chair of Recreation Committee was able to open and close the park, and removed any trash. Since that approach is no longer viable, the Recreation Committee investigated the costs of Sheriff's services. The Sheriff's Department would charge \$125/week fee to patrol and close Howard Park each day. Some members of the Selectboard thought that this was too costly. Another approach would be to transform the park superintendent's position from seasonal to year-round, and increase his/her hours to cover opening and closing of the park gate and managing of equipment (storage, putting up and taking down the skating rink, for instance).

Carl Korman proposed another solution, in which camping/trailer parking privileges would be granted in exchange for park supervision. Carl Korman will work with Karen Mellinger to pursue this idea.

Billy Obenauer pointed out that the closing time for the park (currently, "at dusk") is in need of clarification. The Selectboard promised to let the Lions Club and Art Whitman know about any solutions.

9. Proposed Conflict of Interest Policy

Discussion deferred.

10. Purchasing Policy – Proposed Waiver language for Gov't Surplus Purchasing

Discussion deferred.

11. Town Meeting Preparations:

a) Agenda:

There is a need to make sure that anything the Selectboard thinks needs to be accomplished at the Town Meeting will appear on the Agenda. Lon McClintock noted that this is a meeting of the town, not of the Selectboard, whose members are present simply to offer explanations, or respond to questions.

b) Town Meeting Warning Approval

Lon asked the members about the idea of using the Fund Balance to meet expenses in advance of tax receipts, instead of borrowing needed funds from the bank and paying interest on such bank loans. The idea would be to ask for approval of this approach at the Town Meeting. Funds would be used consistent with Bill Fisk's suggestion that the fund balance be maintained at 10 to 15% of expenditures.

c) Town Meeting Presentation

Issues to be discussed at the town meeting include the bond for the Town Garage project, the budget, and any special recognition to be offered. Mitchell Race will help to assemble pictures of events from this past year.

12. Town Administrator's Report

Margy Becker reported that her focus has been primarily on preparation for the Town Meeting. In addition she mentioned that a new member is currently being trained to join the Road Crew. Anthony Myers is retiring. The transfer station and landfill will be recertified by an engineer; safety at Church St. and Rte 7A is still of concern to residents (speed limit reduction has been requested; further consultation is in order); twenty people attended a recent emergency preparedness training session.

13. Other Business

a) New appointments to the Development Review Board.

Billy Obenauer reported that the Development Review Board has completed interviews with all candidates for open positions. Megan Donckers (Chair) has sent a summary of current DRB members' views of each candidate; this was reviewed by Selectboard members at the meeting.

Lon McClintock asked the Selectboard to decide which candidates they wished to interview. Interviews will be conducted on Wednesday, with any overflow conducted on the following Monday. Members agreed to interview Jay Palmer, Mitchell Race, Michael Bidy, Jennifer Viereck, Mike Foley and Kathy Geneslaw.

Billy Obenauer reminded members that the Planning Commission will be considering the revision of the Town Plan. Commission members will want to be on the Selectboard agenda in the near future. Margy Becker will put this on the agenda for Feb 4, 2013.

Carl Korman noted that there is a hazardous situation at the Fire Department building on Buck Hill Rd., caused by the possibility of falling ice and snow. Signage is needed to warn people of this hazard. The Highway Department will be asked to post appropriate signage.

Lon McClintock raised further budget questions: whether to maintain the extended Sheriff's hours for the next seven months (Dec – June) and the need to generate a memorandum of understanding with respect to costs of maintaining the newly acquired generator. It is anticipated that such a memorandum will be in place before the Town Meeting.

14. Minutes: 12/22/12 (Special), 1/7/13 (Regular), 1/12/13 (Special), 1/16/13 (Special)

Consideration deferred until the next meeting.

15. Warrants

Motion. To approve Check Warrant # 21 in the amount of \$ 1,303.15. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Billy Obenauer. Carried, 4-0-0.

Motion. To approve Check Warrant #21R in the amount of \$ 254.68. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Billy Obenauer. Carried, 4-0-0.

Motion. To approve Expenditure Posting Report PRW #28 in the amount of \$ 9,640.12. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 4-0-0.

Motion. To approve Check Warrant Report (unnumbered) in the amount of \$4000.00 Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Billy Obenauer. Carried, 4-0-0.

Motion. To approve Check Warrant Report #19 in the amount of \$ 1400.00. Moved by Billy Obenauer; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 4-0-0.

16. Adjournment

Motion. To adjourn the meeting. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 4-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 9: 45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Sandra Mangsen
(Recording Clerk)