**Select Board Meeting Minutes March 28, 2022 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order**: Bob Manners called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Margaret Payne, Andrew Baker (arrived 5:34), and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

**Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was put forth by Margaret to approve the minutes of March 11 and March 14. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Senior Center** – Julianne Moreno, the new director will be starting on April 11.

**Highway Department** – The crew is working on keeping the dirt roads in shape. The Little Mohawk Road project is moving ahead but due to inflation, costs have increased.

**Police Department** – The town has received a $200,000 state grant to explore regionalization with Buckland.

**Energy Committee** – A grant for $16,000 has been received from Mass Save for the purposes of outreach. The committee is in the process of interviewing applicants for the position of outreach coordinator.

**Arms Library** – Th library will be holding three community events in the month of April.

**Village Task Force** – A task force will be formed to energize and promote communication with businesses. This task force will eventually replace the business association.

**Pocket Park** – Lease arrangements and design work or being worked on by the landowners.

**Gift of Land** – The architect for Residences@Mill Falls has given the town a map which depicts what areas are owned by the town, what Mill Falls owns, and what Mill Falls hopes to gift to the town. The information was given to Town Counsel who will create language for a warrant article.

**Tax Title Property** – One of the tax title properties on upper Main Street has passed land court and is now owned by the town and will need to be insured. Terry asked if the town should consider demolition of the structures on the property rather than insure condemned buildings. It is a possible that a grant could be available for demolition.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Norman Beebe RE: Use of Cowell Gym & Potential Woodlands Grant** – Norm said the Recreation Committee wishes to go on record in supporting the Community Preservation Act.

The Rec Committee hopes to launch three programs, volleyball, adult basketball, and pickleball, which would be open to the public. There is also request from a citizen to have a private group use Cowell Gum for futsol. A Rec Committee member would not necessarily be present at all of these activities but someone from the committee would be assigned to take responsibility for opening and closing the gym, and enforcing any COVID-related requirements. Norm said the Rec Committee would follow the lead set by the Selectboard regarding masks, etc. The Rec Committee is in favor of renting the gym to Jake Thurber for futsol. Norm said the priorities for use of the gym were to use it for groups that were open to the public but as long as private rentals don’t conflict with public use such activities are approved. A motion was made by Margaret to allow the Rec Committee to move forward with plans for public volleyball, basketball, and pickleball, with the provision that COVID protocols be observed. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Andrew – yes; Margaret – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. A motion was put forth by Margaret to allow Jake Thurber to rent the Cowell Gym for futsol. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Andrew – yes; Margaret – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Norm said that a Woodlands Partnership Grant could be applied for and could be worth up to $20,000. It was thought that the grant money could be used to create an ice skating rink. When the tennis courts at Cowell Gym were redone a few years ago, they were no longer able to be flooded for ice skating. A rink has been used on private property for a few years, but the Rec Committee would like a rink on town property. The Arms Academy Field might be a potential location. The Board was supportive of that idea. The grant needs to be submitted in April.

**6:00 pm Mark Shippee, Highway** (Jim Burnham, John Redeker, Deb Andrew, Terri Mitchell, Todd Dubreuil, Finance Committee) – The highway operating budget was presented as being the same as last year, with some line items changing. Mark said he tried to account for inflation, but things have changed in the short time since he made the budget. Fuel-related items will increase. The price for diesel is only locked in until July 1. A suggestion was made to increase the price of fuel by 20%. Bob reminded everyone that funds can easily shift from one line item to another within a budget. The last five budgets will be studied to see how line items have changed to see if there might be room in the budget to move money.

Next discussed was the snow and ice budget. Mark said that there was $16,000 left over this year. This account is unique in that the DOR allows it to run over, but only if the budget is not decreased at Town Meeting. Andrew asked if less salt could be used. Mark said the town was not really using more salt, it was just costing more and sand is getting hard to find.

Capital requests included replacing the 2001 dump truck and building a pole barn across the street from the highway garage, to be used for storage. It would have solar panels on the roof. The barn comes as a kit. It was estimated that the total cost of the materials and construction would be about $100,000. This would not include the solar panels. Andrew noted that the pole barn was not listed in the long-term capital plan. Bob said it had not been determined how to fund the barn. Andrew asked to see and updated long-term capital plan.

**6:30 pm Arms Library** (Laurie Wheeler, Sheryl Gilmore, John Cornman) **–** The total budget, as presented, showed an increase of 7.2%. Laurie explained that the salary for the director showed an increase of 5.9% to match the salary of the director of the Shelburne Free Public Library. The assistant director’s salary showed an 11.15% increase. The Page and temporary workers also received increases, due to the increase in the minimum wage. Andrew noted that 20% of the library’s budget came from one-time donations and bequests. Sheryl agreed that this money would not always be available. Discussion focused on the budget appropriations of Shelburne and Buckland. Shelburne contributes considerably more than does Buckland. Laurie said there was more usage of the library from Shelburne residents. Andrew said usage really needed to be tracked. The Finance Committee would like to see the appropriations more evenly divided between the two towns. Buckland does not contribute to building maintenance, since Shelburne owns the building. Bob asked that Buckland be given the message that there needs to be some sort of equity between the towns regarding financing the library. The library had also made a capital request of $1,939 for panic buttons. This would make the library a safer place for both patrons and staff. The request only went to Shelburne as Buckland said it would not be responsible for the building itself. Members of the Finance Committee felt that the $1,939 should come from the library’s building maintenance account.

**7:00 pm Greg Bardwell, Police** – Greg explained the police operating budget which was up by 4.4%. Electricity and propane costs are set to increase as the department gets used to the actual costs of the new building. The line item for training is up due to four officers planning to attend the Bridge Academy. Gas and propane costs are probably not budgeted high enough considering the rapid increases in prices in recent weeks. When asked, Greg said the cost of the alarm system reflected a lease/purchase agreement that is still being paid off. Police salaries show an increase. The increase of reserve officers covers both their shifts and time at the Bridge Academy. Greg would like to see a wage classification study done to see how Shelburne’s salaries match with those of similar towns. Margaret said the study should be done sooner rather than later to hopefully avoid having to raise salaries by a large amount in one year. Terry keeps an eye on the FRCOG wage and salary survey to make sure Shelburne’s wages are competitive. Greg said if the regionalization plan goes through he will be looking to hire two more full time officers.

**7:30 pm Senior Center** (Sylvia Smith, Penny Spearance, Suzanne Bishop) – Apportionments for the budget are calculated using a five-year average. Shelburne is being asked to pay 48.6% of the budget, which is an increase of .84%. The only questions were about the cost of electricity and propane. Sue said budget overruns could be covered by other sources.

**Old Business:**

**FY’23 Budget RE: Proposed Inflationary Increases** – The Treasurer has said that if salaries were to rise in order to offset some of the effects of inflation, only retirement and unemployment would be affected. Andrew said with national and state inflation rates greater than 7%, keeping salary increases to 2.5% would essentially be asking employees to take a pay cut. Responding to conditions of the times, is something the town needs to address. The Finance Committee had recommended a salary increase of 3.5%. The Selectboard agreed with that. This would mean a total salary increase of $31,882. After discussion with was agreed that employees who were to be given increases of 2.5% would get the 3.5% increase. Employees who had received higher increases for other reasons, would still get those higher increases.

**Senior Center Expansion RE: West County Senior Services District** – Margaret is concerned about misinformation that is circulating. She corrected two pieces of false information: all three towns would need to make decisions and no financial decisions could be made without Town Meeting votes. Also, this process has not been rushed, it has been going on for five years. Going forward, Margaret said, a mailing would be going out to every resident n all three towns providing them access to the district document, the executive summary and other documents. Jim Burnham said since an article to create a Senior Services District had was not requesting funds, the Finance Committee would have no opinion on it. Margaret said she had heard that the Finance Committees from the other two towns were opposed to the district article. The Finance Committee will invite the Expansion Committee to a meeting for a discussion.

**Senior Center Director Position** – Three interviews were conducted and Julianne Moreno was chosen to be the new Senior Center Director. She has accepted the position and will start on April 11.

**Town Hall E: Re-Opening Discussion** – Margaret and Terry have spoken with the Town Hall employees and the Health Agent has toured the building. The overall reaction of the employees was reluctance to open the building too quickly. Plexiglass barriers will be installed in the offices, masks will still be required, and one bathroom will be designated as staff only. At first the building will be open two mornings per week. Once the materials have arrived and have been installed the building will gradually reopen. A table with masks, sanitizer, and maybe a log for contact tracing will be at the front of the building. Terry will most likely be the first person people see, as her office is closest to the door therefore, she will be the one to enforce the mask mandate.

**New Business:**

**Pre-Town Meeting Forum** – Such forums have been held in the past and have been helpful. Terry will contact the school about holding the forum at BSE on May 26. Topics to be discussed include, the CPA, the Senior Center District, police regionalization, Mill Falls “gift” of land, and a possible lease of the Singley lot.

**Parade Permit: Arms Academy Alumni Association and Bridge of Flowers Road Race** – The Arms Alumni Association has requested a permit for Saturday, June 5. The Bridge of Flowers Road Race, on Saturday, August 13, while not technically a parade, requires road closures. Both events have been signed off on by the Police Department. A motion was out forth by Andrew to approve the parade permits for the Arms Alumni Association and the Bridge of Flowers Road Race This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**One More Parade Permit** – Buckland Youth Baseball has requested a permit for opening day of the youth baseball season, April 23, starting at 1pm. A motion was made by Andrew to approve the parade permit for Buckland Youth Baseball This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Disclosure of Potential Conflict of Interest** – The Energy Committee is in the process of hiring an individual to promote energy efficiency. Two members of the committee have filed disclosure of conflict of interest forms. John Walsh is a friend of one of the applicants but he is confident that he can remain objective. George Boettner’s wife is applying for the position. George will recuse himself from the hiring process. Having reviewed the disclosures, the Board will file them with the Town Clerk.

**Correspondence:**

**Jake Thurber RE: Use of Cowell Gym** – This was handled under appointments.

**Public Comment:**

John Walsh, said as a member of the Energy Committee he had been looking at Cowell Gym. He expressed concern about deferred maintenance on the building, particularly the poor condition of the storm windows. He urged the Board to make maintenance of the building a priority.

**Adjournment**: At 9:07 pm a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary