

Call to Order: Andrew Baker called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Bob Manners, Margaret Payne, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

Acceptance of Meeting Minutes: A motion was put forth by Margaret to approve the minutes of December 19. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Department Liaison Reports:

Highway Department – Bob said that while in the transitional period awaiting snow, the crew is cleaning up brush and cleaning out ditches. Mark Shippee is meeting with Terry Walker who assisted in getting the MassWorks grant for Little Mohawk Road. There is \$39,000 left in the grant. Guardrails and other projects for the road are being considered. The highway crew will be collecting Christmas trees from the village area on Monday, January 9, at 7 am.

Senior Center – Margaret said tomorrow is the day when it will be learned if the Governor signed the district agreement. It has made it through the House and Senate and is on the Governor's desk. Senior Center Director Juli Moreno is working with the Councils on Aging from the three member towns hoping to get them to be more active.

Town Hall – The elevator is out of service after having become stuck between floors. A representative from United Elevator will be making a site visit. If the elevator is eligible for an upgrade, the estimated cost would be \$80,000 to \$100,000. If not eligible there would be a need to try to refurbish the failed circuit board.

A kickoff meeting with people from the Collins Center will take place on January 5. This will be in regard to updating the town's ADA compliance. Stakeholders from all town-owned buildings have been invited to the meeting. The town's streetscape may be studied as well.

Memorial Hall Association – Andrew met with the group working on securing a Mass Cultural Council grant. Preliminary estimates for repairing the floor and getting new seats are around \$400,000. That will be the focus of the matching grant. Andrew felt that this work on the hall may trigger more ADA requirements including a lift to the stage and an ADA compliant bathroom near the green room.

Town Newsletter – Tricia Yacovone-Biagi has volunteered to assist Andrew with the monthly town newsletter. Andrew asked if there could be a town email address for the newsletter. Terry reached out to Northeast IT. There will be a cost. Terry will forward options to Andrew. Bob and Margaret agreed that a separate email for the newsletter would be a good idea.

Arms Library – Margaret said the lift at the library is not functioning. It seems that most of the needed parts are hard to find as they are considered obsolete. Budget review and shared costs are continuing to be discussed.

Appointments:

5:45 pm Town Clerk, Joe Judd RE: Public Hearing to Opt Out of Vote by Mail for Town Election

– The hearing opened at 5:45 pm. Joe explained that Federal and state elections must have a vote by mail option. However, local elections do not have that requirement and some towns are no longer offering vote by mail for those elections. Vote by mail comes with a cost of both time and money. All 1,422 voters need to be sent a notice asking if they want to vote by

mail. Those choosing to do so then receive ballots and once those are returned they must be processed. Joe said that Shelburne seldom has any races in local elections. Instead of opting out of vote by mail entirely, Joe suggested placing a notice on the back of the annual census form telling people if they want to vote by mail to contact the Town Clerk. Joe also said he planned to limit in-person early voting to just four days and he would handle that himself, rather than bringing in election workers. Absentee voting is always available and would not be affected by any of this. Margaret wanted to be sure as many options as possible for voting were available. Bob supported Joe's plan. Andrew liked the fact that Shelburne voters were so engaged with state and Federal elections and wished they were as engaged with local elections. A motion was made by Bob, to support the request of the Town Clerk to have early voting by mail available with a notification on the town census saying that ballots would be available by contacting the Town Clerk. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. The Board supported Joe's plan for a short period of in-person early voting. The hearing closed at 6:14 pm.

Old Business:

375 & 379 Main Street RE: Demolition Update – Terry said the demolition was complete. Andrew recognized Terry for the great amount of work she put into this project. Andrew spoke with Megan McDonough of Habitat, who will follow up when she is able. Will Flanders of the Planning Board plans to consult with Town Counsel about allowing the now-vacant lots to be used for affordable housing. The Planning Board hopes to have a bylaw change, allowing the lots to be used, ready for town Meeting.

Relocation of Veteran's Memorial at BSE – Andrew feels that placing the memorial in front of Town Hall may make that area more crowded and it seems that the memorial might be placed right behind a fire hydrant. He wondered if one of the garden areas near the pothole viewing deck, might be a better location. Margaret agreed that placing the memorial behind a fire hydrant was not very respectful. She wanted to see the memorial before making a decision about its placement. Bob said that while he was not opposed to the pothole area site, he reminded everyone that the area in front of Town Hall would be redone next spring as part of the Bridge Street project and wanted to see what the plans for that renovation looked like before deciding on a location.

Proposed Pavilion at 19 Bridge Street – Terry had spoken with Building Inspector Jim Hawkins, who said to go ahead with the foundation. Mike Nobrega from the Tech school will get the building permit started. Andrew said he had some ideas for the design of the structure, which he will share with the Board.

New Business:

Angel Bragdon, Collector/Treasurer RE: Request to Reconsider Salary Increases – The Board had previously decided on a 3.5% COLA increase for all employees for FY'24. Following that decision, Angel had written a letter to the Board expressing her thoughts that an increase in health insurance costs could wipe out the benefits of such a pay increase. She also pointed out that inflation was greater than 3/5%, and urged the Board to recognize the worth of town employees by giving them a greater pay increase. Terry has some ideas about changing health insurance benefits. However, since that item was not on the agenda for this meeting, it was decided to discuss that at a separate meeting.

Any Other Business:

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program (Planning Board members John Wheeler & Tricia Yacovone-Biagi) – Shelburne is one of the few towns in the Commonwealth that has not joined this program, which helps communities assess their vulnerabilities in the face of climate change and enhance their resilience. The town can join the program by simply send in in a letter of support from the Board. Tricia and fellow Planning Board member Will Flanders have agreed to serve as the local leaders of the program until someone else can be found to do it. It is hoped that someone from FRCOG can be employed to manage the project. A motion was put forth by Margaret to agree to support the grant application of the Planning Board for the MVP program. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Correspondence: None

Next Meeting – The next Board meeting will be on January 30.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: At 6:33 a motion was made by Bob to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Bob – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary