

Selectboard Meeting Minutes January 30, 2023 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm

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 January 4. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

A motion was made by Bob, seconded by Margaret, to approved the minutes of January 26. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Department Liaison Reports:

Senior Center – Margaret reported that all was going well at the Center. Many people are getting help with fuel assistance. Director Juli Moreno is trying to develop programs for younger seniors, including a social history project, guided hikes, bus tours, pickleball, and a walking club called Hearts and Soles. The Memory Cafe attendance has almost doubled from a year ago.

Arms Library – Margaret said that two large expenses are coming up. The library hopes to replace windows at a cost of around \$200,000, and the replacement of the non-functioning lift will be at least \$156,000. Fundraising and grants are being looked at.

Highway Department – Shelburne was lucky to have escaped the major tree and wire damage that caused problems in many other towns. The crew is clearing up small branches. Bob credited the tree trimming done by Eversource as preventing major outages. Mark Shippee is looking into the next projects for Chapter 90 funds. It has been learned that the state has “numbered route” programs. In theory the state will pave numbered routes such as South Maple and Bridge Streets, which are technically Route 2A. If the state paves those streets, the town could use its funds to pave Mechanic and Church Streets instead.

Town Hall – Terry said department budgets are due this week. The annual audit is coming up.

Police Department – The date for the next public forum on shared police services has not been decided, but it will probably be in March

Energy Committee – Andrew reported that 85 people attended a workshop on heat pumps.

Village Task Force – Andrew had met with some Buckland officials and asked that they reconsider the budgeting of the Cultural District funds. Currently, all funds are allocated to Buckland and none to Shelburne. The hope is to rectify that.

Town Newsletter – The Board agreed that the newsletter should have an official town email address. The cost will be \$120 per year.

Appointments:

5:45 pm Jim Kessler RE: Mass Cultural Council Application – Jim said the grant application was nearly complete. He said he had received some great letters of support from the community, which will be included in the application. Items from the feasibility study that should be addressed are the floor and the seating, which would total about \$400,000. However, with contingencies, etc., the total would be closer to \$600,00 so the grant request will be for \$600,000. A motion was made by Margaret to approve the application of the Town of Shelburne to the Mass Cultural Council for a matching grant for the renovation of Memorial Hall. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

6:00 pm Linda Overing RE: Public Hearing CDBG FY'22 & FY'23 Application (Gina Govoni, Pam Parmakian, Roger Bowen Weld, Marilyn O'Brien, P. Corcoran) – The hearing was opened by Andrew at 6 pm. A hearing is required for the FY'22 and FY'23 applications, which are due on March 3. This round of grants combines two years of funding for a total of \$1,350,000, with a length of 24-months. Projects to be submitted are kitchen improvements at Highland Village and support for food pantry services by Community Action Pioneer Valley (CAPV) for income-eligible Shelburne residents.

Janna Tetreault, acting Director of Community Services at CAPV presented information about the West County Emergency Food Pantry, located at Cowell Gym. In FY'21 109 Shelburne residents were served, with an average distribution of 23 meals per month per person. The pantry is open every Wednesday. Clients may come twice a month for groceries and every week for produce. It used to be once a month for groceries, but as the need existed, a change was made to twice a month. Now, three-quarters of the way through the current grant cycle, 34,000 pounds of food have been distributed with one-third of that being fresh produce. The pantry delivers to 11 homes at Highland Village and will also deliver to other households if requested. The West County pantry serves 350 people. Another 2,550 people are served in Greenfield. Shelburne residents can make use of either location. Bob said he has always supported this vital funding. Janna said most of the grant money goes towards staffing. A lot of the food is purchased at low or no cost from the Food Bank, or is donated.

Kitchen and bathroom improvements at Highland Village were first proposed several years ago. In 2017 the bathroom improvements were done. In 2019 the plan for the kitchens was revisited and updated. The current plan calls for removing the asbestos in the flooring and replacing all cabinets and counter tops. The hope is to do all three buildings. Gina Govoni, Executive Director of the Franklin County Regional Housing and Economic Development Authority, said her team has been working with architects Bradley & Associates to update plans with post-COVID prices. Sinks, cook tops, and ovens will all be reused. Walls and ceilings will be repainted. Costs are expected to reach \$1.5 million. The housing authority is working with DHCD to get additional funds. So far, about \$300,000 has been approved for asbestos abatement and relocation, with another \$117,000 leveraged with HILAPP. The duration of the project would be 22 months, beginning in July or August 2023. Bidding would last from November to February 2024, pre-construction in March 2024, construction starting in June 2024 with completion by April 2025. The plan is to do work on five units at a time. A large contingency has been built into the budget. Gina said the plan would be to start taking units off line beginning in July 2023 in order to vacate units for residents to live in while their homes were being renovated. Pam Parmakian, of the FCRHA, said an analysis of the rate of turnover for the past three years had been done and the timeline seems accurate. The state will take those units off line so there will be less impact on the ongoing rent subsidy for the remaining units. Roger Weld, said that as a resident of Highland Village he could agree that the project was needed and recommended that it proceed. Linda said it was critical that letters of support, especially from residents, be included in the grant application. Pam said she had some letters of support in hand. A motion was made by Margaret to submit the FY22/23 CDBG application for Highland village Improvements and Food Pantry Assistance; to authorize the Chair to sign all related documents; and to designate Terry Narkewicz, Town Administrator, as Environmental Certifying Officer for the Town of Shelburne. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. The hearing was closed at 6:25 pm.

Andrew asked Linda to comment on other possible CDBG projects. Linda said that making the stage at Memorial Hall handicap accessible was probably eligible, but might not be competitive. If it was a small project there could be surplus funds left from another project that could be used. The same was true of making the Singley lot pocket park handicap accessible, probably not competitive. The repaving of Mechanic Street was done with CDBG funds years ago. The other time the area was considered to be a low/moderate income project. An income survey would need to be done to see if the area still qualifies as demographics have changed.

6:30 pm Natalie Blais RE: Annual Legislative Visit (Sen. Paul Mark, Corinne Coryat, aide to Rep. Blais) – Natalie said she tries to meet with each Selectboard in her district on an annual basis. She was joined by newly elected State Senator Paul Mark, who was previously a State Representative. Paul mentioned that he plans to have roving office hours in several of the 57 towns he now represents in the Senate. Office hours will be held in Buckland, Margaret thanked Natalie, Corinne, and Paul for their help in the creation of the West County Senior Services District. The senior center will be needing more staffing and eventually more space and will be looking for more state funding. Bob thanked the legislators for their advocacy for our region. He would like to see full funding for regional schools as well as funding for Chapter 70 and Chapter 90, all of which helps to reduce the strain on town budgets. Bob expressed his support for the idea of east/west rail corridors, which would help the area maintain its viability. Andrew thanked Paul and Natalie for their letters of support for the Mass Cultural Council grant. He asked that a few things, that might be addressed at the state level, be kept in mind by the legislators. These items include the impact on small towns of police reform, ways to recycle or reuse sludge, monitoring electric rates, and creating enough charging stations for electric vehicles. Paul had filed a bill that would give DPU more control over rates. Natalie had introduced a bill that would eliminate an automatic annual rate hike for electricity. Natalie thanked Terry, and the Board for being such great partners to work with.

Old Business:

Relocation of Veteran's Memoria at BSE – Terry asked Board members to visit the garden area near the potholes to see if that might be a site worth exploring.

Proposed Pavilion at 19 Bridge Street – Nothing new to report. There will be more information at the next meeting.

New Business:

FRCOG's 2023 Local Technical Assistance Request Form – Top 3 Priority Projects – The Board had picked their top three projects – an open space plan, senior housing and family caregiver, and facilities management of municipal buildings and grounds. The Planning Board had listed managing flood risks, conducting a survey on economic development, developing a pop-up park, updating the Master Plan, climate resilient storm water management standards, housing-related bylaw development, and short-term residential rentals. The Open Space Committee had asked to be able to continue their Open Space and Recreation Plan update. The Board felt that if senior housing was included under housing-related bylaw development that would be helpful. Andrew was interested in the pocket park choice, thinking it might help to get some funding for the project. A motion was put forth by Bob to request the following three projects for Local Technical Assistance in 2023: housing-related bylaw development, development and implementation of a pocket park, and continued updating of the Open Space

and Recreation Plan. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Frankton Road Intersection RE: Citizen's Request for Modification – The Board had received a letter, signed by 25 residents of Call, Patten Hill and Frankton Roads, asking for modifications to be made to the intersection of Frankton Road and Route 112. The angle of the road is such that making a right hand turn when entering Route 112 is difficult and dangerous. A letter from the Colrain Selectboard, in support of the citizens, had also been received. Bob had discussed the situation with Highway Superintendent Mark Shippee. There is a question of whether the town or the state has the authority over the intersection, as well as who would be primarily responsible for funding, since it involves both a town road and a state highway. Bob agreed to reach out to MassHighway District 1 Director Francisca Heming to discuss the matter. He will also ask about the possibility of this project being eligible for the state Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Marilyn O'Brien, the resident who initiated the citizens' letter, said she and the other signers are people who negotiate the intersection almost daily. Now that the nearby buildings have been demolished the hope is that the intersection can be improved before the adjacent properties are reused.

Discussion of West County Senior Services District Board of Managers Appointees –

Margaret said she was not ready to discuss this yet.

Eversource Streetlight Conversion – Eversource had created two pilot areas. Police Chief Greg Bardwell said that while he initially had leaned towards the 51 bulbs, he felt the glare was too much. He now feels the 36 bulbs compare favorably with the current bulbs and supports the use of the 36. Andrew said that John Walsh, of the Energy Committee, recommended using 36 bulbs on the main street and 30 on the side streets. Terry will speak with Eversource to see if they would be willing to install two different kinds of bulbs. If not, the Board was satisfied with the 36 bulbs.

Franklin Regional Retirement System RE: Vote to Add Additional 2% to COLA – It was agreed that, if approved, this would bring people using the retirement system closer to what those on Social Security are receiving. The overall cost to the town for one year would be about \$4,500. A motion was made by Bob to adopt the addition of a 2% increase to COLA for the Franklin Regional Retirement System. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Bob – yes; Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Any Other Business: None

Correspondence:

Tom Johnson RE: Streetlight Conversion

Next Meeting – The next Board meeting will be on February 13, 2023.

Public Comment:

Roger Weld asked if the Town had a Master Plan and where he might find it. Terry said there is a paper copy at Town Hall. It is also on the website on the Planning Board page.

Adjournment: At 7:48 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