

**Selectboard Meeting Minutes   April 10, 2023   Zoom Teleconference   5:30 pm**

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

**Acceptance of Meeting Minutes:** A motion was put forth by Margaret to approve the minutes of March 27 and March 29. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Highway Department** – A new chipper has yet to be delivered. In the meantime, the old one is being used to continue clean up from the March snowstorm. The crew is sweeping the edges of the roads. Quotes are being sought for a generator for the municipal building.

**Arms Library** – Margaret said Dan Alden, of the Arms Trustees, is continuing to address budget concerns.

**Veterans Group** – Margaret will attend a meeting of the group which is happening this week.

**Senior Center** – New volunteers are now on board. Spring programs are beginning.

**Town Hall** – Bridge Street construction is underway. A temporary water main has been laid. Sewer work is starting. The FRTA bus stop has been relocated to the corner of Cross and Main Streets.

Terry met with students from the Franklin Tech landscape department about the pocket park.

They will be giving feedback concerning working with the slope and plantings.

The Town Report has gone to the printer.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Jim Perry RE: Central Rivers Power RE: Proposed Revised Recreation**

**Management Plan: Request to Appoint Open Space Committee Member, Request to Represent Shelburne during Review and Comment Period** – Central Rivers has a proposed mitigation plan for recreation areas on both sides of the Deerfield River. They have committed to a parking plan for Wilcox Hollow, which has not been done. Central Rivers did not notify either Buckland or Shelburne about their recreation plans. The Open Space Committee has authorized member Jim Perry to speak on behalf of the committee. Jim is President of the Deerfield River Watershed Association. Jim is asking the Selectboard to allow him to represent not just the Open Space Committee but the town as a whole. Jim said the Buckland Town Administrator has been approached about having someone represent that town. A motion was made by Bob to appoint Jim Perry to represent Shelburne during the Central Rivers Power recreation plan review and comment period and during the FERC process. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**6:00 pm Finance Committee RE: Review of FY'24 Operating & Capital Budgets Period** (Deb Andrew, Terri Mitchell, Todd Dubreuil, Matt Popoli, Finance Committee) – As the budget now stands, taxation is still well under the levy limit. The few categories where expenses have risen are largely due to costs that are out of the town's control. One of the largest budget increases is the computer account mostly due to cyber security insurance. Way too much is at stake if the town's computer system were to be hacked. If all capital expenses are approved there would still be more than \$302,000 in unrestricted stabilization and a total of \$454,647 in total

stabilization. The Selectboard was satisfied with the budget. Margaret expressed appreciation for the town's financial management. Matt asked if there were ever any surprises not covered by the budget. Terry recalled only one in recent years when the municipal building became available and the town had to have a special town meeting to obtain funding for the purchase.

The capital expense that had not been previously discussed with the Finance Committee was \$111,000 for a solar installation on the new pole barn. When the barn was approved last year its south-facing metal roof gave the town the opportunity to expand its solar capability. Five solar installers have been contacted and some have given preliminary estimates for a 25-kw system. Actual quotes cannot be sought until Town Meeting gives it approval for moving ahead with a system. Andrew said the \$111,000 seems to be a generous amount and is probably over bid prices. The system could also qualify for a 30% rebate. Bid specs will include the cost to install a solar array and the cost to bring three-phase power from the road to the pole barn. The system would be rated to last 25 years and is expected to pay for itself in six years.

There were no questions about the warrant questions from either the Selectboard or Finance Committee.

**6:30 pm Sheryl Stanton & Bill Lataille RE: FY'24 MTRSD Budget Presentation** – Sheryl felt that all expenses and revenue has been communicated to the towns. The Governor's budget increased rural aid and transportation reimbursements. The school district is using COVID aid to keep assessments to the towns reasonable. The overall assessment to the towns is up 2.9%, while the total budget has increased by 5.75% over FY'23. More than \$4 million in offsets, revolving accounts, and grants are being used to balance the budget. The biggest cost drivers are transportation, school choice, maintenance, and salaries. The district is adding new programs in American Sign Language and theatre. Bill explained how Shelburne's assessment was calculated. Shelburne's total operating and capital assessment is up by 5.96% Matt said the five-year decline in enrollment was 35% while expenses rose by 28%, was that expected to continue? Sheryl said the decline in enrollment has flattened out. Terry noted that the budget was using ARPA funds and asked when that funding source was gone and if rural aid doesn't come through, what would happen. Sheryl said there were other funds available for the short term but that was not sustainable.

Terry said 13 pages of language changes had just arrived. These changes are to be voted on at Town Meeting. She asked for an explanation. Sheryl said the goal was to have equitable assessments to towns in regard to school choice and how much towns pay for that. If approved, the changes would be implemented on an annual basis. The Finance Committee asked how the language changes would affect town assessments.

### **Old Business:**

**Relocation of Veteran's Memorial at BSE** – The gardener who cares for the gardens near the potholes has expressed concern that the veteran's memorial is too large for the gardens and could interfere with an existing tree. Andrew suggested moving some of the existing plantings to make room. Terry will look at other sites for the memorial.

**Proposed Pavilion at 19 Bridge Street** – Construction of the pavilion is awaiting the issuance of a building permit.

**West County Senior Services District Board of Managers Appointees** – Margaret said she is waiting to hear back from Ashfield and Buckland as to where they are in the process of appointing managers. Shelburne has two interested people who will be interviewed. Both people

are COA members. It would be preferable to have someone who is not on the COA, but the legislation allows two COA members to be appointed.

**Franklin County Tech School Seeks Shelburne Representative to Serve on District**

**Committee** – Terry has spoken with one interested person who will now be speaking with the moderator regarding being appointed to the position.

**Shelburne Police Department Rules & Regulations Manual RE: Vote to Adopt** – Police Chief Greg Bardwell presented the manual to the Board in February. Members have had the chance to review it. Margaret commented that the language in the Police Department Manual was mostly inclusive as to race and gender, etc. however, there were a few instances where terms like “he” or “she” were used. She would encourage the Chief to revise those areas to reflect the word “they”. A motion was put forth by Margaret to adopt the Shelburne Police Department Rules & Regulations Manual. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**New Business:**

**Mohawk Athletic Association RE: Closing Iron Bridge, August 20, 2023 for Bridge Dinner**

– Jenn Pease, President of the Mohawk Athletic Association explained that the Bridge Dinner would be largely the same as in the past except that the meal is being catered. Local businesses are helping to support this event. Mohawk athletes will be waiters and waitresses. The Buckland Selectboard approved the application last week. Shelburne police have signed off and will be providing one detail officer. A motion was made by Bob to grant the Street Use Permit to close the Shelburne end of the Iron Bridge for the Bridge Dinner on August 20, 2023. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0. Jenn thanked the Board for being so supportive.

**Buckland Shelburne Youth Baseball RE: Opening Day Parade Request** – A parade permit was sought for this event, which has become a tradition. Participants will gather behind either Greenfield Savings Bank or Keystone Market, then march down Bridge Street and across the Iron Bridge. This permit has been approved by the police department. The day shift will assist with traffic during the event. A motion was put forth by Bob to approve the parade permit for Buckland Shelburne Youth Baseball for April 22, 2023. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Treasurer, Angel Bragdon RE: Payroll Processing** – Angel was asking to have all employees use direct deposit for their paychecks. This would eliminate some fees and generally make things easier for the Treasurer. This plan would include election workers and elected officials. A motion was made by Margaret to approve the direct deposit plan for Shelburne payroll processing. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Open Space Committee RE: Request to Appoint Joan LaPierre and Nina Talayco** – Letters of interest have been received from both people. A motion was put forth by Margaret to appoint Joan LaPierre and Nina Talayco to serve on the Open Space Committee. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**MTRSD RE: Request to Place Articles on Town Meeting Warrant** – These articles, as mentioned during the Mohawk budget presentation, are 13 pages long and have just arrived. Terry and the Board have not had time to study them. The articles concern school choice and making assessments equitable for all district towns. Terry said the last vocational update she saw showed 50% of district eighth graders choosing out. She does not know the specific number from

Shelburne. The Board did not see any specific reason for not putting the articles on the warrant, but hoped for more information before town meeting. A motion was made by Bob to approve the MTRSD's request to place three articles on the Town Meeting warrant. This was seconded by Margaret. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Andrew – yes; Bob – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:** None

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on April 24, 2023.

**Correspondence:**

**Kate Whittaker & Tom Johnson RE: LED Streetlight Installation Concerns and Citizens' Petition** – A petition, signed by 56 people, had been received regarding replacing the street lights. It asked that the replacement be paused until residents' questions could be answered. Terry said the Board had voted in September 2022 to proceed with the conversion of the lights and in March voted to go with the 30-watt lights. Eversource has offered to add shields, at no cost, to the lights which should help to direct the lights downward towards the streets.

**Public Comment:** Kate Whittaker said she appreciated the town's efforts to reduce energy usage but asked that those affected by the lights be allowed to have a voice. Tom Johnson as Chair of the Energy Committee he would be willing to take on an in-depth study of LED lights and asked to be allowed time to do that. Jill Connolley said the lights were so bright at her home that even the trees in back of her house were illuminated and that the lights shone through her shades and curtains. Eric Lucentini said he has two lights near his house which currently have a warm glow. He has seen some of the new lights and the thought of having those lights near his home is distressing. He said a lot of historic neighborhood keep older style lights and hoped that could happen here. Robin Logan said she only recently found out about the light conversion and hoped it could be postponed. Brock Cutting said it would be a good idea to compare the conversion with what Buckland did. Sarah Pirtle was concerned about the health of wildlife and thought a study was a good idea. Beth Boron said LED lights can trigger migraines and disrupt sleep patterns. Roger Weld said perhaps Eversource didn't make it clear about the quality of the new lights. The lights are free and maybe the town is getting what it paid for. Patricia Snow felt the existing sodium lights were already too bright. John Walsh, who had volunteered to assist in reviewing the specs of the fixtures, said the pilot lights were improperly installed and that the fixtures met Dark Lights Coalition's certification. He said if the town were to start over it would be hard pressed to meet the budget for street lights. John felt that properly aimed and shielded lights should help with the glare and encouraged the Board to continue with the agreement. Maureen Moore suggested waiting until some lights could be properly installed before making a decision. Emily Baron who said she grew up in the big city with bright lights said that people here want to be able to see the night sky and that bright lights might make the village less appealing to tourists. Rita Jaros said what was being asked was a pause. Andrew said as a resident he had a light right across from his house and proposed to add this item to the next agenda. Laurie Wheeler thanked everyone for their work and comments and hoped alternatives could be considered.

**Adjournment:** At 8:55 a motion was made by Margaret to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Bob. Roll call vote: Margaret – yes; Bob – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary