

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectmen
Regular Monthly Meeting
26 Sept. 2019
7:00 PM. Mallory Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, Selectman Kevin Keenan

Audience and Invited: Liz LaVia, Eric Holub and audience of approximately 37.

CLERK: Linda Whitney

CALL TO ORDER: First Selectman D. Lowe Called the Meeting to Order at 7:03p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

CORRESPONDENCE:

D. Lowe summarized correspondence from the CLA. The CLA is creating a Lake Management Plan and is looking for input from the stakeholders. If anyone in Sherman is interested in serving on this subcommittee , please let D. Lowe know.

D. Lowe shared a guiding document he received at a meeting with the State Police on Ransomware. This document outlines best practices on how community organizations can protect themselves. It will be posted at Town Hall.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Regular Monthly Meeting minutes of 22 August 2019 was made by K. Keenan.

Seconded by: D. Lowe.

Vote For: Unanimous

TAX REFUNDS:

A. K. Keenan **made a motion** to grant the 2 property and 4 motor vehicle tax refunds in the amount of \$4,775.97.

Seconded by: D. Lowe.

Vote For: Unanimous.

B. Consideration of Refund: There was discussion regarding the request to refund \$506.08 in property taxes paid in 2013, 2014, and 2015 on property on Chapel Hill Road. There were 2 parcels of land on the property that had been foreclosed on by the bank. The former owner paid the \$506.08 tax while the bank owned the property. This refund request is past the three year ordinance.

D.Lowe **made a motion** to not reimburse the tax refund for the property listed for consideration.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVIEW:

L. LaVia reported that we are at the end of the first fiscal quarter and are operating on track with our budget. L. LaVia requested that the annual town meeting scheduled for 12 Oct. 2019 be rescheduled for 19 Oct.2019 due to reporting delays.

D. Lowe **made a motion** to reschedule the annual town meeting from 12 Oct. 2019 to 19 Oct. 2019 at 9:00 AM.

Seconded by: K. Keenan.

Vote For: All.

APPOINTMENTS TO INLAND/WETLAND COMMISSION:

B.Ostrosky **made a motion** to appoint Merialis Lewis to a two year term, effective 1 Oct. 2019, to the Inland/Wetlands Commission.

Seconded by: D. Lowe.

Vote For: All.

K.Keenan **made a motion** to appoint Jerome Mendell to a two year term, effective 1 Oct. 2019, to the Inland/Wetlands Commission.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

TOWN MEETING ITEMS:

K.Keenan **made a motion** to bring to town meeting an appropriation in an amount not to exceed \$5,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund to pay for the emergency fire code upgrades needed at the Playhouse.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

K. Keenan **made a motion** to bring to town meeting an appropriation in an amount not to exceed \$4,400.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund to pay for the town's 5% share of the SVFD FEMA Grant of \$92,440.00. This grant will pay for portable radios for the Fire Dept.

Seconded by: D. Lowe.

Vote For: All.

INFORMATION & DISCUSSION:

SVFD

J. Reilly reported that the SVFD had several lake rescues last month and has several members in classes now. The Fire Department is getting ready for the winter months.

OEM Radio Antenna Installation:

J. Reilly reported on the OEM radio system, and explained that these ham radios are used for the Office of Emergency Management.

D. Lowe **made a motion** to bring to town meeting an appropriation not to exceed \$3,000.00 from the Capital Non-Recurring Fund for the installation of the radio antenna.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

SENIOR HOUSING COMMISSION REPORT:

B.Hoag presented a report from the Housing Commission outlining their findings from a community survey and requested the support of the BoS for their Project Sherman 55. This project is for construction of 24 rental units on the property behind the American Pie. These units are planned to be housed in a 2 story building that will include a common area. The project is planned for construction on town owned land but will be privately funded and managed. The Selectmen agreed to put this on their next agenda to discuss after they have had time to review the report.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Art VonPlachecki, Sail Harbor, asked if the Housing Commission had looked into P&Z regulations that may have to change for this project or if they had consulted with the SVFD as to their readiness to handle emergencies at this type of building.

C. Kovorkian asked if the town land would be leased and taxed.

BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENTATION:

K.Diotte, J.Neunzig, and J. Melendez presented the updates to the school's district goal #6, "create a sustainable facility use plan to address current and future needs" of the district. The focus was on the K-Wing, which hasn't been used since Feb. 2015, the problems with potable water, the upgrading of playgrounds. The Board of Education has contracted an architect, who completed a facilities report in May,2018 (this is available on the school website), they have formed committees to evaluate ideas for community outreach programs and explored many different options for the future of the Sherman School. The BoE is committed to maintaining a K-8 school and creating a sustainable facility to best serve student needs. They will consider proposals with focus groups for a redesign of the school and return to the Board of Selectmen with their recommendations and requests.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

E.Holub asked if there had been any enrollment projections done and if the 24 units proposed by the Housing Commission would impact future school plans.

K. Diotte explained that there is a consultant hired by the school to track enrollment and make projections for the BoE.

Mrs. Von Plachecki, Sail Harbor, commented that the school should not count on the seniors using the school for their functions.

A. VonPlachecki, Sail Harbor, expressed appreciation for the hard work of the BoE.

D.Lowe also expressed appreciation for the work the BoE and the Housing Commission achieved.

HAPPY ACRES BARN reorganization progress report:

There was discussion on Phase 1 of the HAF reorganization plan. This plan is a move toward a simplified agreement between the town and the farm, with phase 1 including meetings with attorneys to draw up contracts, selling the cows, and holding session to chose a site manager. The Selectmen agreed on holding a Town Forum on Sunday, 20 Oct. 2019 at 2:00 PM to present phase 1 of the reorganization plan and to listen to input from the town.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

C.Schulman asked about the future of the cows and how much land will be left to use at HAF. She also asked if there would be funds available through the HAF trust to support activities at the farm.

D. Lowe explained that part of the plan includes activities being funded by the vendor, not the farm.

E.Holub asked if the site manager would be a 1099 tax scenario and if the job would have to go out to bid.

J. Burruano, Farm Road, questioned whether a state statute would require permission from P&Z before selling the cows and restructuring the farm.

M. Renard, Pine Hill Trail, asked if this was a bandaid or a long term solution.

D. Lowe explained that this was a long term solution to manage the farm.

HAPPY ACRES BARN REPAIR:

There was discussion on the specs that detail the repair work to be done on the barn as well as the electric safety work required in the barn. There was also discussion on whether to put off any repair work until the farm reorganization plan is under way. Dan Havens has been awarded the bid for the barn repairs at a cost of \$62,051.00. Audette Electrical Services has submitted a bid for \$9,570.00 to complete the necessary electrical safety work.

D.Lowe **made a motion** to bring to town meeting the appropriation of an amount not to exceed \$80,000.00 from the HAF Restricted Fund for the barn repairs and electrical safety work.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote: Selectmen Lowe and Ostrosky voted **FOR**, Selectman Keenan voted **AGAINST**.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

E.Holub asked if the funding for the painting project at the farm should be a part of this town meeting.

D.Lowe explained that the painting is scheduled as a project for the spring so it is not necessary to appropriate funding for it at this time.

HAPPY ACRES SILO DEGENERATION:

D.Lowe reported that Tony Iadarolla has come on board as the engineer who will manage this project and help negotiate funding from the cell companies. The plan may include a new antenna on the same footprint as the old one.

MALLORY TOWN HALL, ESF FACILITY, PLAYHOUSE WATER/WELLS:

The well installation project is awaiting state permitting approval. The water testing results at MTH and the school indicate that the wells are now producing water within the state standards.

SENIOR CENTER REGIONAL MERGING WITH NEW MILFORD SENIOR CENTER:

D.Lowe has been approached and had some preliminary meetings regarding the regional merger of the Sherman Senior Center with the New Milford Senior Center. This merger would allow for more services for our seniors although transportation may be a problem. There was discussion and it was the consensus of the BoS that Sherman would like to keep its own senior center and that the regional merger would not be an option they will pursue.

RIGHT TO FARM ORDINANCE:

There was discussion about a local right to farm ordinance mirroring the state ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Burrano explained that the right to farm ordinance is essentially an anti-nuisance ordinance that protects good farming practices from litigation. She further warned that if Sherman adopted such an ordinance that it would become the responsibility of the town to determine "good farming practices" if faced with litigation and to enforce any violations of the ordinance.

B.McCann explained that the proposed ordinance defers all authority to the Dept. of Agriculture at the state level.

D.Lowe **made a motion** to bring to town meeting a vote on the Right To Farm Ordinance.

Seconded by: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: All.

WHITE OAK TREE PLANTING:

A white oak tree has been donated to Sherman by the CT Tree Association. D.Lowe is accepting suggestions as to where to plant the tree.

JERICHO ROAD NORTH IMPROVEMENT FOR EMERGENCY ACCESS:

Public works will make improvements on a section of Jericho Road North that is currently impassable for emergency vehicle use. This improvement will include the installation of a gate to restrict the use for emergency vehicles only.

TAX EXEMPTION INCREASE FOR DISABLED VETERANS:

There was discussion regarding increasing the tax exemption for disabled veterans to match the tax abatement currently available to the Sherman volunteer firemen. The BoS agreed to collect specific numbers to consider this and discuss it at the next meeting.

MALLORY TOWN HALL: DOORS/ADA COMPLIANCE:

There was discussion regarding the information that has been given to the First Selectman that the doors do not have to be updated if there is no current remodeling project underway. B. Trott has reported to the First Selectman that she has received complaints from handicapped people that they cannot independently enter the building. The BoS agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting.

TOWN WASH STATION: INSTALLATION OF WATER PURIFIER:

There was discussion about the hard water at the town wash station causing a scale build up and film on the town trucks.

D.Lowe **made a motion** to bring to town meeting a request to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$3,000.00 from the capital non-recurring fund for the purchase and installation of a water purifier system at the town wash station.

Seconded by: K.Keenan.

Vote For: All.

ESF BUILDING: INSTALLATION OF SOLAR POWER:

In an effort to bring down the expense of the electric bill at the ESF, D.Lowe had the facility looked at for the possibility of installing solar panels. The project would require significant tree removal.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

J. Reilly urged the BoS to be cautious as the emergency services need to have uninterrupted service available at all times.

S. Greenbaum, Peace Pipe Lane, asked about installing free standing panels.

The BoS agreed to discuss this further at the next meeting and make recommendations at that time.

SIDEWALK PROJECT:

B.Ostrosky reported that the drawings are in, the permitting process has begun and 2 crosswalk signs have been purchased.

HAPPY ACRES FARM REPORT:

There was no farm report submitted other than a herd count showing 65 cattle currently at the farm.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: D. Lowe at 9:30 PM.

Seconded: B. Ostrosky.

Vote For: Unanimous.

The next Board of Selectmen Regular Monthly Meeting is scheduled for 24 October 2019
at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Linda Whitney