

**Town of Sherman  
Board of Selectman Special Meeting  
Thursday, October 8, 2020 at 7:00 pm  
Via ZOOM Telecommunication**

**Member's Present:** First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Kevin Keenan, and Selectman Bob Ostrosky

**Member's Absent:** None

**Audience & Invited:** Treasurer Eric Holub, Phyllis Fox Schaer, Marianne Gaffey, Mark Howarth, Nick Mellas, representatives from CLA, and members from the community.

**Clerk:** Margaret Beatty

**Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance:** First Selectman Don Lowe called the special meeting to order at 7:01pm followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

First Selectman Don Lowe began the meeting by introducing members of the Candlewood Lake Authority. He prefaced the CLA watercraft request presentation by acknowledging that all information presented will be discussed at the BOS regularly scheduled monthly meeting dated October 22, 2020. He then turned over the meeting to the CLA to proceed with their presentation.

Marianne Gaffey addressed the public by asking a simple question, "Why are we here?" The short answer is the CLA is responsible for public safety on the lake. She noted that the CLA lost 2 boats in their fleet from excessive wear and tear policing Candlewood Lake this season. She stated with the added strain of Covid, the lake has experienced an uptick in activity creating a hardship for the CLA to properly maintain the safety for its users. She also noted that the Lake has been gaining in popularity in the last several years. With the increased popularity and Covid, it has resulted in overcrowding, water quality issues, and excessive noise complaints. The goal of the CLA is to increase patrol and visibility on the Lake. The CLA modeled their boat needs from the state's neighboring lake patrol. The CLA feels designating 4 patrol boats and 1 dedicated science boat would adequately cover the needs of Candlewood Lake.

Nick Mellas added that an active patrol presence would help curb bad behavior on the lake. The CLA believes that with the proper equipment and splitting the lake into 4 zones, the patrol can meet the service needs of the Lake. With more patrol boats a larger area of the Lake can be covered in a shorter amount of time resulting in decreased wear and tear, as well as less engine hours.

Mark Howarth detailed the type and style of boats that would best serve the needs of the Lake. He suggested commercial purpose aluminum boats. Mark and Nick explained that aluminum boats are more durable, lighter, require less fuel, and quicker. They also noted that aluminum boats have a longer lifespan, offers more efficient towing capabilities, and has a higher resistance to abrasion if the boat needs to quickly dock on shore on any of the Lake's islands. The hulls of the aluminum boats are designed for police use and can withstand extreme conditions.

Marianne Gaffey wrapped up the presentation by reiterating the CLA's request for 2 new boats to add to the existing fleet. The price per boat is valued at \$150,000, with an all in price tag of \$300,000. The cost would be divided between the 5 lake municipalities (Sherman, New Fairfield, New Milford,

Brookfield, and Danbury) equating to a \$60,000 request for funding. The CLA is asking for emergency appropriation for an unanticipated expense in the current budget year for 2 new marine boats.

First Selectman Don Lowe thanked the CLA for their indepth presentation and opened up the meeting to the BOS for questions and comments.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky inquired whether the CLA was able to lease the vessels. Phyllis Fox Schaer responded that the CLA is unable to lease because the CLA does not have any assets to back up a lease.

Selectman Kevin Keenan questioned if the CLA had a Capital Improvement Plan designated in their budgeting. Marianne Gaffey responded that when the current budget was conceived the prior year the CLA did not anticipate the excessive usage causing the stress and decommission of 2 boats. She also added that the CLA does have a reserve fund but the money allocated for that fund was under the assumption that 2 boats was adequate to service the Lake. She also commented that the CLA will be committed to fundraising to help improve their reserves. Phyllis Fox Schaer commented that the CLA exercises discretion when making high priced purchases and noted with their most recent boat purchase the CLA applied for an ICE Grant. The grant helped defray the cost covering 60% while 40% of the cost was shared by 5 towns.

Doug Cushnie interjected that the boat types presented are considered industry standard. He added that adding new boats to the fleet would draw talented officers to Lake Candlewood.

Martin O'Connor asked if any of the boats out of commission can be repaired or sell the boats to help defer some of the cost. Doug Cushnie responded that the boats are overdue. He explained that the sidelined boats are fiberglass and very porous and susceptible to rotting. He explained that the boats are beyond repair, the engines are passed usable life. Phyllis Fox Schaer commented that some of the components can possibly be recouped and repurposed.

Ed Hayes commented that he agrees with the plan of coverage for the Lake in the future. Secondly, he inquired what the increase in hours for patrol and the costs associated with the increase. Marianne Gaffey responded the CLA compiled information calculating patrol hours, shifts, gas, maintenance, and insurance and will be able to cover expenses and will continue to monitor the needs of the Lake.

First Selectman Don Lowe clarified that the purpose of this special meeting was to gather information so that the topic can be addressed and discussed at the next BOS regular monthly meeting. During the BOS meeting decisions will be made whether to present the topic to a Town meeting. The lead time to call a Town meeting is 7 days.

Richard Lenihan of 15 Osborn Rd had several comments and questions. First, he was seeking clarification regarding the need to purchase all the boats at once and whether deals are present. Secondly, he inquired on the maintenance if multiple boats are being used simultaneously. Many representatives of the CLA commented stating that the pricing for boat purchase is always changing. Mark Howarth and Doug Cushnie both concluded that aluminum boats require less maintenance, most maintenance on boats are servicing equipment such as radios, sirens. Doug Cushnie added that any maintenance done to the new boats would be routine maintenance as opposed to repair.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky questioned if any other Town has committed or if the CLA is still information gathering. Marianne Gaffey responded that Brookfield unanimously approved of the request and sent

the \$60,000 to the Board of Finance with the recommendation that the board approve the \$60,000 not contingent on any other Town. Currently, discussion is ongoing with New Milford and New Fairfield but the CLA has not yet presented to Danbury. Marianne also noted that a request was made to Firstlight for a donation. The request for funding per Town would be non-contingent.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky also posed another question relating to how much money is in the current Capital Reserve that is unencumbered. Marianne Gaffey replied that current unencumbered balance is \$60,000 in the equipment and facilities reserve and another \$7500 that is left in the current budget, ending the budget year there will be a total of \$67,500.

Treasurer Eric Holub raised an idea that reflects the Lake Town's signing a guarantee and then finding a bank willing to finance the cost under the umbrella of the CLA. Marianne Gaffey responded that it has been difficult to have all Town's connect on one ZOOM meeting and that the idea presented by Treasurer Eric Holub was beyond her purview. Mark Howarth also responded stating that the CLA is under a time constraint for ordering the potential boats, in order to have an increased operational fleet by next season the boats would have to be ordered by the beginning of November 2020. The limited time to make a decision could affect the process of finding a lender. Phyllis Fox Schaer was open to the idea of finding a bank but was concerned that any potential bank might have concern providing a loan equipment sharing between several municipalities.

First Selectman Don Lowe interjected deferring the idea to Martin O'Connor and asking his opinion on securing a bank loan. Martin O'Connor responded that a major problem could be encountered securing the finances. He went on to explain hardships such as where the asset is going to sit, who owns the asset, and the potential for liens. He believes the suggestion would be very challenging but he did agree to follow up.

The final item up for discussion is motioning a request to bring to Town Meeting for a utility easement for Paul Russo of Lakeview Property Inc. on Town property between 22 and 27 Cedar Lane.

First Selectman Don Lowe commented he is looking to properly confirm bringing the easement to the annual Town Meeting and discuss the issue. He invited both selectman to read over the maps, as well as take a site walk through the property. An easement like this needs an affirmative Town vote. The Town Meeting is scheduled on October 17, 2020 at 10:00 am via ZOOM.

**Motion: To bring to Town Meeting a request by Paul Russo of Lakeview Property Inc. for a utility easement on Town property between 22 and 27 Cedar Lane.**

**Motioned by:** First Selectman Don Lowe

**Seconded by:** Selectman Bob Ostrosky

**All in favor:** Unanimous

Selectman Bob Ostrosky motioned to adjourn the special meeting at 8:22 pm

**Motioned by:** Selectman Bob Ostrosky

**Seconded by:** First Selectman Don Lowe

**All in Favor:** Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty October 14, 2020.