

Town of Sherman
BOS Meeting March 26, 2020
Regular Monthly Meeting
Mallory Town Hall
Via ZOOM Video Conferencing

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

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Eric Holub, Liz LaVia and several town members participated by teleconference

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman called meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Public Comment: None, be done at the end of meeting

Correspondence: One letter of correspondence was submitted by Steven Berkowitz voicing his concern about a \$15,000 proposed expenditure to landscape MTH. He feels that in light of recent developments with Covid 19 such an expense is not of importance.

Administrative Items:

A) Approval of Minutes:

02/27/2020 BOS Regular Meeting: Selectman Bob Ostrosky made a clarification to verbiage in meeting notes relating to fire house flooring, should be cost effective not cost prohibitive.

Motion to Approve: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky **All in Favor:** Unanimous

03/07/2020 BOS Special Meeting: No discussion

Motion to Approve: F. Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Kevin Keenan **All in Favor:** Unanimous

03/14/2020 BOS Special Meeting: No discussion

Motion to Approve: F. Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Kevin Keenan **All in Favor:** Unanimous

B) Tax Refunds: None

C) Financial Review: Liz LaVia reported that there are no notable issues, and that we have ended at the third fiscal quarter. She has stated that the town is beginning to incur expenses relating to the Covid 19 virus and that they are being captured for later reference. The Fire Department has been asked to keep track of expenses and volunteer hours pertaining to the virus in the event these expenses can be submitted to FEMA.

D) Appointment of sub-registrars as per Carol Havens: technicality for section 765 of the CT General Statutes, mandatory for the town clerk to appoint 2 sub registrars of vital statistics.

Sub Registrars: Bonnie Butcher Smith and Christopher M. Milano

Motion to Approve: F. Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

Information & Discussion:

A) SVFD monthly report: No representative present to report, volunteers have been busy dealing with Covid crisis. First Selectman Don Lowe took the opportunity to discuss precautions Sherman is taking to curb outbreak in town. Those traveling for hot spots are to self-quarantine for 14 days, curbside shopping is now being provided to town members. Town constituents are also encouraged to check town website for daily updates and to follow suggested protocol instituted by state and local municipalities, such as social distancing, washing hands regularly and often, and staying home. Also noted, it has been a struggle to find/get protective gear.

B) Budget Workshop: Liz LaVia stated that the Board last left off needing discussion about the capital plan and also animal control. Sherman has decided that the Animal Control budget would stay even without the contribution of New Fairfield who elected to leave the regional animal control. The budgetary figure would stay at \$28,555. Treasurer Eric Holub made adjustments on revenue to remove pre-school tuition that isn't to be paid because of Covid 19, BOE asked that tuition be free for Sherman residents. Another point of discussion was the inclusion of the Health Department job description for their proposed addition of a scanning clerk, this item will be remaining in new budget expenses. The part time P&R recommended position will also stay in current budget expenses. Current mill rate is proposed at 19.179%, a 3.2% decrease.

Capital Plan: A review of the proposed Capital Plan showed the following requests: Public works-replace International truck about \$200,000, purchase of Kubota tractor for \$15,000, approved funding of the SVFD tanker replacement for \$228,486. Park/Rec- boardwalk section for \$45,000, stair climber \$5800, dog park fence at \$15,000, regrade upper Veteran's Field (to be determined, guestimate at \$75,000). Miscellaneous items include MTH business office renovation and upgrade of existing space at \$12,000. Bridges under 20ft. requiring state mandated evaluations at \$15,000. Selectman Bob Ostrosky voiced opinion that he does not necessarily endorse all items suggested. First Selectman Don Lowe in turn responded that these items are a wish list and items that potentially needed. In total for budget on town side \$4,866,283 and BOE \$9,380,589, total combined proposal of \$14,246,872, balanced budget again with a 3.2% decrease in mill rate.

C) Virtual Pre-School: All selectman agreed to waive the remaining Pre-K tuition as a result of Covid 19.

D) Budget Schedule and Referendum Plan: Town members will be notified via Nixle of budget. April 1, 2020 would be a town hearing, April 16, 2020 would be a budget workshop, and town constituents would be able to email comments or participate via Zoom with questions and concerns in-between or during scheduled meetings. Another virtual town meeting, via Zoom, would be held April 25, 2020 for further input on budget.

Note: First Selectman Don Lowe made motion take item H) Septic Walk-Over ordinance and table the discussion until it can be added to a town meeting. The item becomes Septic Walk-Over Ordinance/ Town Meeting.

Motion By: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

First Selectman Don Lowe also made a motion to move this item up to section E) in agenda so that it can be discussed next.

Motion By: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

E) Septic Walk-Over Ordinance/ Town Meeting: As noted above, a meeting was scheduled for March 28, 2020 at 10 a.m. at MTH. The meeting was to discuss 3 capital items, 2 from Happy Acres restricted fund, and 1 from the Capital Non Recurring Fund. Another to end septic walk ordinance. First Selectman Don Lowe recommends to table the Septic Walk-Over Ordinance and asked for a motion to move to future town meeting.

Motion By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded By: F. Selectman Don Lowe

All in Favor: Unanimous

The town engineer, Tony Iadarola, would like to meet with the contractor in charge of the repairs on Happy Acres and the scope of all work necessary. After much discussion back and forth between all selectman, everyone agreed to take a step back and gather more information/ opinions and clarity on the matter.

All items were ultimately tabled for future discussion.

First Selectman Don Lowe made motion to table all items scheduled for the March 28, 2020 meeting at 10 a.m.

Motion By: F. Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded By: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous

F) Meeting Video Conferencing: In light of the current environment, all meetings scheduled moving forward will be done virtually via Zoom.

G) Happy Acres Farm Monthly Report: Farm in good working order, potential discussion on community garden. Eric Holub commented on the monetary expenditure towards grass seed and whether it was used for town/farm upkeep or for private farming. A plan should be established to differentiate between private enterprise and property management.

H) Happy Acres Silo Degeneration / Cell Carriers' Equipment: Firm commitment of 1/3 of cost from AT&T, trying to motivate T-Mobile to also contribute, but they are in the midst of a merger with Sprint and have been hard to pin down with a conclusion.

I) Playhouse/ ESF/ Mallory Town Hall well installation: Monday, March 30, 2020 work is slated to begin, Werner Plumbing and Tim Beatty of Beatty Construction will be on site.

Other Business: None

Public Comment: Phyllis Schaer brought up her concerns of rescinding the septic walkover plan, she has been corresponding via email with First Selectman Don Lowe. Both agreed to continue communication through email until the present climate with the Covid pandemic settles.

Adjournment: Selectman Bob Ostrosky moved to adjourn meeting at 8:12 p.m.

Motion By: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded By: F. Selectman Don Lowe

All in Favor: Unanimous

Board of selectman moved on to executive session including Treasurer Eric Holub

Respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on March 30, 2020.