

Town of Sherman
BOS Regular Monthly Meeting
June 25, 2020
Via ZOOM Teleconferencing

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

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Fire Chief Bob Acosta, Cathy Hagadorn, Joyce Leiz, and members from the community.

Clerk: Margret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: None

Administrative: A) Approval of Minutes: BOS Regular Monthly Meeting 5/28/2020

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous

B) Tax Refunds: No tax refunds and 7 applications were submitted for the Tax Deferral program. Applications for the Tax Deferral program ends July 1, 2020.

C) Financial Review: Last review for the current fiscal year, Business Manager Liz LaVia explained all expenses are not fully in and she will have a better idea of expenses within the next month. The Town will have an approximate surplus of \$200,000 in the General Fund largely due to Covid 19. This is due to minimal town hall operations, and programs and services that were not provided. The current Covid expenses have amounted to \$4,000 for PPE and cleaning supplies. The Resident State Trooper's billing came in \$44,000 under what was initially estimated because the RST Collective Bargaining Agreement was not finished at the time the Town budgeted last year. The fringe rate and the rate of pay were less than the state initially quoted the Town. All current overage's and underage's are justifiable. Liz LaVia noted that the building inspector has a large project and the budgeted line will exceed about \$18,000 for fees and permits. Also, she noted that the Town will have a 50% rebate on 2020/2021 CCM fees due to Covid Relief once annual dues are paid. Anthem Dental will also offer a 50% premium reduction in August as a Covid relief measure. Discussion about obtaining a company credit card was considered. All were in agreement that having a card could help streamline expenses in the office but that use would need to be controlled. Treasure Eric Holub would provide a

parameter for use. Lastly, Liz LaVia mentioned that QuickBooks is set to go live and that she will attempt the first payroll of the new fiscal year but that she still has Phoenix as backup in the event she encounters problems. Treasure Eric Holub offered comment that the audit this year will be done remotely, it will require more effort on the town's part to scan proper documentation. He also noted that there would be additional fees associated with the process. Business Manager Liz LaVia also noted that additional fees will be incurred on the Fire Department insurance due to the fact that the new boat has extra apparatus that requires extra insurance. The fees would result in an additional \$2,000 of expenses.

Information & Discussion:

A) SVFD monthly report: First Selectman Don Lowe gave a brief overview of the report. Fire Chief Bob Acosta was unable to participate because he and the volunteers were detained on a call. First Selectman Don Lowe noted that the fire department will be having an election of officers coming up. There will be a roast beef dinner August 1, 2020 done by order. The money raised will go to the SVFD as part of its fund raising efforts. Lowe mentioned that both the SVFD and the library's fundraising efforts have been hampered due to the Covid 19 virus. Selectman Bob Ostrosky will send out a Nixle to announce the roast beef dinner.

B) Covid 19 report: First Selectman Don Lowe gave a brief review, the Town's cumulative Covid 19 case count still stands at 14 with 2 deaths. The beach is now open to residents, at a 70 person maximum with 20 allowed in the water at any given moment. Lowe reports that the lifeguards are doing a wonderful job greeting people as well as enforcing the rules. Summer camp is slated to start on July 6, 2020, the camp will be capped at about 50 campers. The camp will run 4 weeks with a non-refundable fee of \$300 due at time of application. Lowe also said that there is a new state travel advisory, which requires those traveling from hotspots to self-quarantine for 14 days before immersing themselves in public gatherings. In person meeting may resume for committee/ commissions that do not have large attendance. The BOS will continue via ZOOM. Town Hall will remain closed to the public until further notice. The Town will continue serving our residents via email, private appointment, and/or invitation.

C) Happy Acres report: Contractor Dan Havens and Electrician Audette have been making progress on the approved work. The farm is in good shape, Dave Jellen has done a wonderful job maintaining property and equipment. The Dave Jellen has planted a large garden, the plans for the yielded harvest to be determined. First Selectman Don Lowe opened agenda item for questions.

Questions: Treasure Eric Holub was seeking clarity on the scope of the current work being done on Happy Acres Farm. First Selectman Don Lowe commented that the work is the start of the major repairs. The foundation needed to be repaired but the electrical line needed to be relocated so work can begin as well as still providing electrical to Dave for farm operations. Once the foundation is secured than the structure of the barn can be repaired. First Selectman Don Lowe stated that the barn work was not to exceed \$80,000, and the foundation was not to

exceed \$27,000. Business Manager Liz LaVia interjected that Dan Havens was looking for a down payment of \$20,000 as well as the repair for the garage door, which was an additional expense resulting in a cumulative amount of \$25,000.

Treasurer Eric Holub also inquired about the painting of the farm house. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that the painting is scheduled to happen within the next couple weeks and falls under a separate capital item.

Note: Discussion on more frequent bear siting in Sherman. All selectman agreed that the Town will send out an informative Nixle notifying residents to be aware.

D) Appropriate \$55,000 for operating expenses at Happy Acres Farm for July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021: Discussion between selectman on proper wording of motion, the BOS within rights to approve as if it were a town meeting via the Governor's executive order 7S.

Motion: To appropriate \$55,000 for operating expenses at Happy Acres Farm for July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 from the Happy Acres Operating Fund.

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe

All in Favor: Unanimous

E) Discuss and possibly bring to Town Meeting ADA compliant doors and their installation for Mallory Town Hall paid for out of LOCIP funds:

Discussion: First Selectman Don Lowe commented that he sought counsel from a reputable contractor of the most cost effective measure for installation. He described that most efficient way was for the town to purchase the doors, the appropriate company to install the doors, and for a contractor to do all the preparation for the doors as well as the finishing touches. The bid specs would read in that fashion. This discussion will allow the Town to put this agenda item to Town Meeting. All selectman are aligned with the project.

Motion: Bring to Town Meeting for an amount not to exceed \$12,000 out of the LOCIP fund for ADA compliant doors at Mallory Town Hall.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous

Note: Selectman tentatively agreed that they will meet via ZOOM July 3, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. to discuss the project.

F) Neighborhood Assistance Act Program: First Selectman Don Lowe gave a synopsis for the program stating that a non for profit organization can apply and receive donations from business, big or small, in turn the businesses will get a federal tax break. The applicant Deer Farm Pond needs the blessing of the local municipality in which they reside. The BOS is only responsible for acknowledging Deer Farm Pond.

Representative Cathy Hagadorn described that the Department of Revenue Services needs to confirm that the entity is a vetted non-profit organization. The current structure on the property is looking to upgrade to energy efficient windows, the Neighborhood Assistance Act would allow the farm to apply to businesses for donations for the specific scope of the project. Joyce Leiz, Development Director of Deer Farm Pond, added that corporations are awarded the opportunity to donate up to \$100,000 a year to non for profit corporations through the specific program. She reiterated that it would have no administrative impact on the Town.

Motion: The Town validates and is willing to be the application liaison for Deer Park Farm and the Neighborhood Assistance Act program.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

G) Cyber security for ransomware protection: First Selectman Don Lowe opened up agenda item for discussion. He commented that he had a long conversation with the Town's network company about adding additional protection to the system. He stated the coverage would provide full protection from ransomware. The estimated additional fee for the year would be \$8,000.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky agreed with the concept but the PowerPoint did not provide enough information for clarity. He felt it was a very generic PowerPoint and would like more detail.

Treasurer Eric Holub mentioned funds to pay for this expense would have to be allocated from the technology fund.

Business Manager Liz LaVia interjected that CIRMA could provide some insight on the idea.

It was decided that the topic would be added to the agenda for the next BOS monthly meeting once more information is compiled.

H) Park and Recreation discussion: Much new information pertaining to P & R was discussed in the Covid report section of the agenda. First Selectman Don Lowe offered a brief overview of points of interest. Summer camp is on target to start July 6, 2020. The state approved camp groupings of 10-14 children, the Town is looking to provide additional sanitation such as wipes for added safety measures. Lifeguards are doing a wonderful job enforcing rules. New signage has been placed strategically to reiterate safety measures such as social distancing. The policy at Veteran's Field has changed slightly, wear a mask if you cannot practice social distancing but not necessary if you can. Two applicants have currently applied for the new Park and Rec part time employee position, a decision will be made in the coming week to fulfill the position. No dogs allowed at Colonial Field will be a new policy.

Treasurer Eric Holub inquired whether 2 people are necessary to man the boat launch. First Selectman Don Lowe will follow up with the attendants and P & R if there has been trouble with out of town residents attempting to launch boats.

Lastly, First Selectman Don Lowe added that a two young ladies, one from Sherman and one from New Fairfield, approached the town about hosting a racial awareness event. The two have identified Volunteer Field as the place of gathering. Park and Rec have had meetings discussing the details. The event had not been decided yet and is an ongoing discussion. There is an in person meeting scheduled for Monday June 29, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at Charter Hall to discuss the topic. All selectman have commented that they will be present.

I) Happy Acres Silo/ Cell carriers: Progress had been made. T-Mobile, Sprint, and AT&T have been in contact and are moving forward with negotiations. The deal still stands at all parties providing 1/3 of costs.

J) Playhouse/ ESF/ Mallory Town Hall well installation update: First Selectman Don Lowe explained that the well has not been signed off by the state. The state wanted to test and review another water sample before it is approved. An additional expense of \$300 was added to cover the second water test. Sign off is pending.

Other Business: Selectman Kevin Keenan is interested in discussing the purchase of a new truck for the Town Highway Department. First Selectman Don Lowe plans to gather specs and add the item to the agenda at the next BOS monthly meeting.

Treasure Eric Holub added that the BOE will potentially approach the BOS with their plans on the school expansion and possibly discuss as an agenda item to a BOS Town meeting.

Public Comment: Terri Hahn of 13 Pepper Pond Rd. took the opportunity to thank the BOS, Town hall, SVFD, and Linda Oppenheimer. On Father's Day the Chamber Ensemble performed their first free concert on the town green. The event was capped at 40 people with ages ranging from 18 to 87, everyone properly socially distanced and wore masks. The event was a success and the Chamber Ensemble expressed their gratitude for allowing them to offer the concert to residents.

Adjournment: Selectman Bob Ostrosky moved to adjourn the meeting at 8: 25 p.m.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on June 30, 2020.