

**Town of Sherman
BOS Monthly Meeting
July 23, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.
Via ZOOM Teleconferencing**

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

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Chris Fuchs, Ginny O'Neill, and many Town residents.

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called the regular monthly meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: First Selectman Don Lowe read 4 letters of correspondence. The first was a thank you from Housatonic Valley Association for Sherman's renewed pledge of support. The town's donation of \$250 to renew our membership and donations from neighboring municipalities helps to continue supporting environmental stability.

Another letter of correspondence was from Merialis Lewis, Sherman's tourism representative, offering a letter of resignation effective immediately from her position. She was thankful that Sherman gave her the opportunity to represent the town for 15 years.

First Selectman Don Lowe then followed up the letter by stating Sherman will be looking for a new representative to the Western Connecticut Tourism District.

CIRMA sent a letter of thanks to the Town of Sherman for our valued partnership. Along with their letter of thanks they gifted Sherman with a check amounting to \$4,180 from the President David Demcheck and First Selectman Jaime Stevenson from Darien, who is the chairman of CIRMA Board of Directors.

The final letter of correspondence was submitted by Marilyn Dwyer offering acknowledgement to her son Patrick Dwyer of Sherman's Troop 48 for receiving highest rank of Eagle Scout on May 11, 2020. Patrick's Eagle Scout project was to help emergency responders locate resident's homes, he promoted the awareness of the Town's house numbering ordinance, provided house numbers, and installed numbers for seniors in the community. He coordinated with the SVFD and Senior Center, he will be recognized at an Eagle Court of Honor at a time when it is safe to gather in a large group. Patrick was sent a Proclamation in a letter from the BOS.

Administrative:

A) Approval of Minutes:

BOS Regular Monthly Meeting 6/25/2020

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

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

BOS Special Meeting 7/8/2020

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

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

B) Tax Refunds: The Town has a total refund of \$440.26

Motion to Approve Refund by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

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

C) Financial Review: Business Manager Liz LaVia summarized that the Town is in the first month of the new fiscal year. She supplied the BOS a summary of the year end 2019/2020, she remarked that the Town has realized a saving of approximately \$90,500 in Covid related savings in the surplus. The Covid savings are related to payroll and benefit savings, cancellation of programs, services, inspections, field work, and commission meetings. Saving were also captured due to employees being paid their base pay only during the March through May shutdown, reduction in utility spending, ongoing Saturday closure resulting in payroll savings. Liz LaVia also noted that nonattendance of spring meetings resulted in dues and fees and mileage savings. Gas and diesel savings were documented because of no school bus runs, no Senior Center van and Subaru trips, and the mild winter presented lesser Town truck usage. The town had reduced fees to the state for applications and permits. She also noted that two town referendums (budgeted within the registrar's lines), the budget vote and the spring's Presidential primary did not take place that are also Covid related savings. The Town accumulated Covid related expenses such as higher utilities in the ESF Building due to more foot traffic and more and frequent disinfectant cleaning, and accumulated expense of \$5400 in Covid related supplies. Lastly, she added that the Town audit will be taking place within the next couple weeks and will be conducted remotely which will require more information, along with the audit a Covid questionnaire has been supplied to all departments. The Town received a refund from CCM of \$1,017 due to Covid relief.

D) Appointment: Motion to appoint Ginny O' Neill as an alternate Commissioner for a 2 year term that would expire January 1, 2022 to the Wetlands Commission.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

All in Favor: Unanimous

The appointment fills all positions on the Wetland Commission.

Information & Discussion:

A) SVFD: First Selectman Don Lowe began this segment by acknowledging that the SVFD had a change in chiefs, which is a standard operational procedure every two years. Mr. Lowe went on to thank former Chief Bob Acosta for his service and great leadership during this time of Covid. Chris Fuchs will be taking over the position of chief and First Selectman Don Lowe congratulated his promotion. In turn, Chief Fuchs extended his gratitude to former chief Bob Acosta and then provided a review of upcoming activities and agenda. He went on to discuss upcoming plans for the SVFD such as training plans despite Covid challenges, the department will be resorting back to Monday evening drill schedule and regular monthly meetings. He also reminded the board and residents of the upcoming Roast Beef Dinner, take out style, August 1, 2020 from 4-7 p.m. He encourages all residents to come out and support the department as well as take part in a safe, family friendly activity.

B) Covid 19 Report: First Selectman Don Lowe thanked the community for their diligence and ability to adapting to the current tough times. He noted that the Town was able to adopt some normalcy by the opening of the Town beach and summer camp. He commended Park and Rec for moving forward with plans to host summer camp. First Selectman Don Lowe commented that the Town's next noteworthy plan is the reopening of the Sherman School, he attended the BOE meeting in which the board covered their plan for the school's reopening. He also stated that Selectman Bob Ostrosky is on the school committee for school reopening. He reiterated that the school has plans to reopen and have come up with several different strategies should there be any new issues due to Covid. First Selectman Don Lowe updated the cumulative Covid case count to 16, the two new cases were not properly reported in the time spanning February through March. He goes on to mention that Sherman has not had a reported new case in two months. Mr. Lowe importantly added that due to Governor Lamont's executive order 7S, allowing governing bodies the discretion to approve Town items without the input of constituents, he felt that a couple of items coming up for discussion he wanted to possibly entertain in-person meetings for those key items. He addressed the Selectman on their thoughts in doing so. In turn, Selectman Bob Ostrosky commented that if we are following proper regulations an in-person meeting can be successful but also noted that big ticket items draw a larger crowd and can pose logistical problems, i.e. properly socially distancing.

Treasure Eric Holub offered an opinion that the in-person meeting can be offered in unison with ZOOM. The Selectman continued discussing the viability of the suggestion, Selectman Kevin Keenan interjected by stating that the BOS is looking for a larger sample size of opinion in order to make proper decisions reflective of Town residents. The BOS is in agreement that large items

should be agreed upon with Town input not just by the BOS. The BOS will continue to devise a solution in order to incorporate residents.

Lastly, First Selectman Don Lowe wrapped up conversation on Covid stating that 31 states have been identified in Connecticut's travel advisory and those traveling to/ from the 31 states must quarantine for 14 days.

C) Happy Acres Report: First Selectman Don Lowe reiterated that the property looks in order and well maintained. Dave Jellen has been doing an exceptional job with the farms upkeep, his cows as well as the Lescynski's cows are in the pastures. Dave has also planted a substantial garden and is also selling the produce. First Selectman Don Lowe extended an invite to two agriculture interns at WESCOG, Hamsa Ganapathi and Chadwick Schoeder, to tour the farm which they accepted. Lowe was later informed that the interns thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the farm and nominated David Jellen for a PBS documentary chronicling 6 young people in interesting businesses in which David was ultimately chosen. A film crew will be filming the first week of August. Lastly, First Selectman Don Lowe concluded the Happy Acres report discussing the barn repair and repainting of the house. He stated that the board approved the bids for farm repairs but never approved of the appropriations for painting. He encouraged the Selectman to take a walk through the property to revise the scope of the project. He believes the project is more extensive than initially thought. Lowe outlined that the repainting estimated bid is \$ 48,000, \$5,880 for gutters with no contingencies. He believes another \$20,000 should be added to the budget with an appropriation not to exceed \$75,000 for the project. Selectman Bob Ostrosky was seeking clarification if this point of discussion was an item that would be presented at a town meeting. In turn Lowe responded yes. Selectman Kevin Keenan commented asking if the additional \$20,000 was incorporating siding repairs and windows.

Treasurer Eric Holub commented on whether the project needed to be rebid. He also suggested that the current contractor Dan Havens can rebid the project with new specs covering windows. First Selectman Don Lowe concluded the conversation adding that a special Board of Selectman meeting will be held in August to discuss the barn repair.

D) Presentation from Network Support on regarding ransomware: Representatives Kyle Ely and Buddy from Network Support gave a lengthy PowerPoint presentation on the effects of ransomware. The presentation primarily discussed how municipalities are targeted by threat actor's that are looking to dismantle town operating systems and maintain control. The threat actor's goal is to steal credentials, compromise other devices, attack authentication databases, decrypt passwords, and delete backup systems. Following the conclusion of the presentation First Selectman Don Lowe thanked the representatives and commented that the item would be added to the next monthly meeting for discussion on whether an action plan will be put in place or if the item will be considered in next years budget.

E) Update on ADA compliant doors at Mallory Town Hall: First selectman Don Lowe stated that the board approved \$12,000 for the purchase and installation of doors. The bid

specs are on the Town website, local contractors have been contacted if they would be interested. All bids will be due August 13, 2020 by 2:00 p.m. The contractor will be responsible for opening up the space, ready the space for Stanley, and do the finishing work once Stanley installs the doors.

F) Traffic Safety Initiative: Sherman's Resident State Trooper Wayne Tate has been making himself more visible in high traffic areas where speeding is troublesome. First Selectman Don Lowe met with Rick Hudson, who is a former member of the Traffic Safety Commission, and prioritized problem roads in Town. New signage will be strategically placed to capture the attention of drivers.

G) Park and Recreation: Summer camp is running successfully, beach is open, boat launch is still being monitored but the necessity for multiple employees needed to monitor will be cut down.

H) Happy Acres Silo/ Cell carriers update: There are three participants, the Town of Sherman, AT&T, and T-Mobile. First Selectman Don Lowe mentioned the Silo has structural issues but AT&T equipment is up and working in a firm spot. The Town of Sherman is collecting money from both T-Mobile and AT&T but T-Mobile has yet to assemble its equipment. First Selectman Don Lowe remarked that T-Mobile has gone silent on the discussion of equipment. The Town of Sherman has been patiently and methodically working with all parties to continue the partnership and a positive working relationship. The Town will continue to apply pressure to ensure all parties continue with the agreement.

I) Playhouse/ ESF/ Mallory Town Hall well installation update: First Selectman Don Lowe provided an update on the approval. He stated at the previous BOS monthly meeting that the state requested another water test. Currently the Town has not received any results of the new test. The hook up will be done swiftly once the Town gets the greenlight from the state.

J) Sustainable CT: This organization is an environmentally conscience group, from food, to solar, to conservation of land. The organization inquired on whether the Town would be interested in joining their group. A brochure was supplied by the two WESCOG interns, Hamsa and Chadwick, that walked the Happy Acres farm with First Selectman Don Lowe. Mr. Lowe urged the selectman to examine the literature and that the topic will be added to next month's agenda for further discussion.

K) Property tax reform for disabled Veterans: The Town of Sherman has 8 Veterans that could potentially benefit from this tax program. The agenda item was discussed at previous meeting but was deferred due to Covid. First Selectman Don Lowe gave an overview of what benefits Veterans in Town can currently apply for but nothing specifically addressing disabled Veterans. First Selectman Don Lowe suggested putting together a proposal that would examine the topic further. All selectman were in an agreement to explore the idea. This idea would be considered in the next fiscal year.

Other Business: First Selectman Don Lowe took the opportunity during this segment to request the possibility of a special meeting to discuss the Happy Acres barn repainting. He also noted that the school will be presenting the board a request for funding for plans of a new playground. Board of Ed Chair Kasey Diotte offered to submit in advance to the BOS the schools plans for the playground as well as present an indebt presentation during the scheduled special meeting. A tentative meeting is scheduled for Tuesday August 4, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss, this meeting would bring each topic to a Town meeting. Lastly, First Selectman Don Lowe mentioned that he will have an agenda item about the public works truck in the August BOS monthly meeting.

Public Comment: None

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

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe

All in Favor: Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted July 27, 2020 by Margaret Beatty