

**Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman
Regular Monthly Meeting
September 24, 2020 at 7:00 pm via ZOOM**

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, and Selectman Kevin Keenan (note: Selectman Kevin Keenan joined at 7:03 p.m.)

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Ed Hayes, and members from the community.

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

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

Public Comment: Stan Greenbaum offered comment in response to correspondence he sent to the BOS. His comments are reflected in the Correspondence segment of the agenda.

Correspondence: Stan Greenbaum petitioned an opportunity to read aloud a letter he submitted to the board and First Selectman Don Lowe awarded him the platform. In his letter, Stan Greenbaum discussed the potential for having a proposed cell site on land privately held near Coote Hill Rd stating the Town will be getting an application in the near future. He referenced that the NCLC (Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy) acquired a property that would be viable for a cell site. At length he discussed the hardships Sherman endures with the quality and reliability of cell connectivity. He cited information from a study commissioned by Sherman called the Cellular Communication Coverage Study done in 2013. He stated the study determined that Sherman offered another location for increased cellular coverage. He believes Sherman needs additional service to provide adequate connection to residents.

First Selectman Don Lowe responded stating that he has corresponded with Mr. Greenbaum several time on topic and reiterated that the NCLC has no interest of getting into the tower business. He cautioned the public not to be misled by Mr. Greenbaum's letter.

Administrative:

A) Approval of Minutes: 8/27/2020 BoS Regular Monthly Meeting

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

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

B) Tax Refunds: Accept an amount of \$667.17 in refunds

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

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

C) Financial Review: Business Manager Liz LaVia gave a brief synopsis. She stated that the Town ended its first fiscal quarter and that we are at/or under budget in almost all areas. The Town is still tracking Covid related expenses as well as damages from Storm Isaias. She also noted that the State Trooper fringe rate was finally submitted by the state and came in lower than budgeted saving the Town \$10,000. QuickBooks Payroll has not been meeting the Town's needs and we are currently talking to Paychex about transitioning.

Selectman Kevin Keenan commented on the accrued public works overtime as well as part-time employees.

Business Manager Liz LaVia clarified that the overages were due to storm cleanup from Isaias and that the expenses are being tracked and will be submitted to FEMA or any other disaster relief funding.

Information & Discussion:

A) SVFD monthly report: Fire Chief Chris Fuchs gave a review of September, he noted that September was a much quieter month than the previous month of August, the SVFD responded to 19 calls in September and 100 calls in August. He informed the public that an emergency call box was installed on the front of the SVFD building. He explained that due to the power outages and storm damages from Isaias many residents were unable to contact emergency services and a 911 call box was installed to provide additional help to residents. A new home access program was implemented called the Knocks Box Service, it is a key box that is secured on the outside of your home or business allowing for first responders to access a key during an emergency without causing destruction to property. A secure system is used to release the key, the system tracks the key when released, who released the key, and for how long. If anyone in the community has any questions please contact the fire house or the Senior Center for additional information. He also noted that due to the extreme dry weather there is a high risk for fire danger and that there are no open burning permits at present time. He also welcomed the public to call the SVFD with any questions. (Note: agenda item was discussed out of order in the meeting)

B) Covid 19 report: Sherman has 1 reported new case, the state has new mandates for listing new infections. The cases are recorded as confirmed cases and probable cases. Sherman is recorded at having 21 cases, 16 cases with 1 that is currently active and 5 probable cases and 4 or which are not active. Both statistics are cumulative and never are deleted from the books. Sherman continues to exercise care when it comes to help mitigate the spread of the virus. Veteran's Field has been cause for concern for some residents, if patrons are able to socially distance properly and safely mask wearing is not necessary. Open air regulations are more flexible than indoor settings. If people are keeping their distance masks are not required. As of

October 8th the Governor will move to a Phase 3 reopening, indoor establishments can accommodate up to 50% capacity. Certain outdoor restrictions will also be loosened.

Question: Al Zeisler inquired on the breakdown of age demographic of those who have contracted Covid in Town. First Selectman Don Lowe responded no. Mr. Zeisler wanted to know if that information was available to the public. First Selectman Don Lowe directed that inquiry to James Reilly. Mr. Reilly replied that the Department of Public Health has the information but no information is available for release due to HIPPA privacy law. He did offer to follow up on the topic and report back to First Selectman Lowe.

C) Happy Acres barn repair (siding, cupolas, and window) bid: 4 bids were submitted all of varying prices. Bids submitted from highest to lowest are as followed: \$92,000, \$46,950, \$46,320, and \$34,400.

Motion: Contract awarded to Dan Havens of Fine Homes and Woodworking with a bid of \$34,400.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

Treasurer Eric Holub inquired if the scope of the work fell within the parameters of the approved \$92,000 from the Happy Acres Fund. First Selectman Don Lowe concurred.

D) Happy Acres Farm report: The barn repainting and repair should be completed by the end of October. The last remaining capital projects on property will be repainting the remainder of the buildings, the projected work will be put out to bid next spring. A STEAP Grant has been applied for to cover the expenses of the projects, which can cover up to \$128,000. The Town has received an email from Martin Heff, from the OPM office in Connecticut, that the Town should have an answer early October regarding the STEAP Grant. The grounds of the farm have been maintained impeccably, the cattle are grazing, and the farm stand is still operational and anyone is welcome to purchase produce.

E) Discuss the and vote as per the Executive Order 7S [item 7] on \$12,000 funding from LOCIP grant for Phase II of the ADA Doors project at Mallory Town Hall: First Selectman Don Lowe recapped the project, he noted Phase I was the purchase of the doors and installation by the Stanley Co. Phase II is the readying of the space and the finish work once doors have been installed. The bid was awarded to Joe Beatty of Beatty Builders. An approval is needed from our Capital Fund and will be replaced by the LOCIP Fund.

Business Manager Liz LaVia noted that the item has been previously discussed at an amount of \$11,500 and a clarification is need to proceed with the new amount at \$12,000. First Selectman Don Lowe responded by adding a new motion be submitted on record.

The scope of the work should amount to one working day done mid-October, all work needed to be done for project will be coordinated between Joe Beatty and the representative from Stanley.

Motion: Rescind the previous \$11,500 allocated for the prep work on the ADA doors at Mallory Town Hall

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe

All in Favor: Unanimous

New Motion: The Board moves to appropriate an amount not to exceed \$12,000 from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund to be reimbursed by LOCIP, as per Executive order 75 [item 7], for the prep and finish work for installation of the ADA compliant doors at Mallory Town Hall.

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

F) Review generator proposals for Mallory Town Hall and Public Works garage and decide on further action: Selectman Bob Ostrosky commented that he was unable to review the proposal and requested more time before he could give an adequate response.

Treasurer Eric Holub offered comment that the proposal to install generators would not fall under the scope of an emergency situation and First Selectman Don Lowe agreed. Mr. Holub also commented that proper protocols should be followed and the proposals should be warned and go out to a bidding process.

The potential expense could amount to \$50,000. The Selectman discussed the importance of securing Town Hall systems as well as providing Public Works the access needed to ensure critical function, such as access to gas, allowing trucks and machinery to continue working during emergencies. Business Manager Liz LaVia also mentioned the Dave Lathrop worked on the proposals and had suggested the option of a grant reimbursement for any potential expense from DESPP. All Selectman agreed to the bidding process.

G) Playhouse/ESF/ Mallory Town Hall well installation update: The well was official hooked up, the water is within standards of chlorides and salt and produces about 8 times more than the previous well. First Selectman Don Lowe expressed his gratitude towards those who persevered through any setbacks with the state. He thanked Trish Viola and Tim Simpkins for their patience with the state.

H) Emergency management report: The Town is always looking to improve its response to emergencies. The Town is looking to start a CERT team, citizen's emergency response team. The Town is looking for citizens who are interested in volunteering, this team would do wellness checks on elderly people, meal deliveries, walk pets, and provide assistance for anyone in an emergency. Please contact First Selectman Don Lowe if you are interested in

joining. First Selectman Don Lowe also addressed the inability to use the school during the last tropical storm Isaias but due to Covid and the inadequate ventilation system. The school generator is unable to accommodate the Town's need, it's outdated and does not meet environmentally safe standards. Consideration for replacing the existing generator can aid in providing a safe place for our neighbors to congregate, to charge electronics and communicate with our families and neighbors. Lastly, James Reilly, Sherman's Emergency Management Director, discussed filling the Assistant OEM position and changing the job description of the Town's constables. He would like for the constables to help out during emergencies.

I) Sherman Veterans Association's request for an organized headquarters: First Selectman Don Lowe prefaced the agenda item by reading a letter submitted by Ed Hayes, the Commander of the Sherman Veteran Association. The association approached the board about exploring the idea of finding a property that would serve as a meeting point for the Veterans. The facility would allow for a safe place for Veterans to meet and discuss a shared and common bond of patriotism. Mr. Hayes was present at the meeting and expressed a few words as to the importance of providing a home for our local Veterans to congregate and expressed interest in the first building located to the left of the driveway at Happy Acres Farm. All Selectman were in agreement to continue pursuing idea and will explore in future agendas.

Public Comment: Art Von Plachecki added that the gazebo located at Veteran's Field was bought and built by the Veterans and encouraged support for future endeavors.

J) Candlewood Lake Authority presentation on watercraft needs: The agenda item was tabled and will be discussed in a future meeting.

K) Agenda items for October 17 Annual Town Meeting: First Selectman Don Lowe stated this was an opportunity for Selectman to offer suggestions to be discussed at the meeting. Selectman Ostrosky, Selectman Keenan, and Treasurer Eric Holub did not have any suggestions for items. First Selectman Don Lowe suggested the potential utility easement for Paul Russo of Cedar Lane would fall under consideration. He would confirm from prior meeting notes if a motion was granted to bring topic to Town Meeting. The annual Town Meeting will be done via ZOOM.

Other Business: None

Public Comment: Richard Lenihan of 15 Osborn Rd was looking for clarification on bid estimates given for the Happy Acres barn repair. First Selectman Don Lowe replied RFJ Associates came in at \$92,000, Dan Havens of Fine Home and Woodworking at \$34,400, Rainbow Shine Construction at \$46,950, and Scholar Painting and Restoration provided two estimates, one priced at \$46,320 if work needed completed immediately and another estimate at \$41,850 pushed until spring.

Al Zeisler of 4 Rising Sun Trail inquired what the acronym for LOCIP and STEAP referred to for those who were not well versed in the programs. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that LOCIP

stands for Local Capital Improvement Plan and STEAP refers to Small Town Economic Assistance Program. Mr. Zeisler circled to the topic of generators and suggested poignant questions about the cost of maintaining the generators, how long the generators can run in the event respective fuel deliveries cannot be made i.e. propane, speaking to multiple propane companies about deals in price, and lastly the potential for leasing generators. First Selectman Don Lowe acknowledged all questions would be considered but stated that leasing was too expensive and not an option.

Terri Hahn of 13 Pepper Pond Rd directed her question towards First Selectman Don Lowe and emergency services representatives on advising the community that the emergency call box is available to the public. First Selectman Don Lowe assured Mrs. Hahn that information will be provided explaining the location and significance of the box.

Susan Seeger of 5 Farm Rd inquired about the Town providing links with pertinent information regarding agenda items on the Town website. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the Town can look into possibly providing appropriate links.

Kasey Diotte of 30 Hubble Mt Rd was seeking clarification as to the formal process and protocol to move and discuss a proposed item, such as the school playground, to Town meeting. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the item must be motioned and approved to Town meeting, and that from there the Town Meeting would be adjourned for a referendum. He also offered to have a private meeting with the BOE on a future BOS meeting to discuss plans moving forward on the school project. He said he would be will to add the item to the October BOS Monthly Meeting. Treasurer Eric Holub interjected and stated a Town Meeting with a referendum is warned as such. He also stated that the Town often goes to referendum for items that are of high cost or items that create debt.

Art Von Plachecki of 10 Sail Harbor Dr. raised a question on protection against ransomware and whether the Town had an adequate systems in place to protect the Town from a possible attack. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the Town is sufficiently protected but would be willing to revisit the topic at a future BOS Monthly Meeting. He referenced the presentation done at a previous meeting and is willing to follow up with the tech company.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:27 p.m.

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

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