

Draft

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Special Meeting
May 8, 2021 10:00 a.m.
Via ZOOM Teleconferencing

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

Members Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Dr. Jeff Melendez Sherman School Superintendent, Kasey Diotte BOE Chair and members from the community

Clerk: Liz LaVia

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Item:

In consideration of the upcoming referendum, this meeting serves to discuss and take action on the Board of Ed's budget and move the budget request to town meeting.

First Selectman Don Lowe opened the meeting and gave a recap of the results of the town budget referendum of 05/01/21 where the town budget passed and the BOE budget was tied 147/147 with recount having followed. He stated that this meeting was to focus on question #2 of the original town referendum;

Shall the Sherman BOE budget \$9,380,166 as proposed by the BOS/BOF 07/21-06/22 be approved and brought to town meeting?

With that he invited Kasey Diotte, BOE Chair to provide an introduction of the BOE budget and changes. She then turned the discussion over to Superintendent Melendez to present the BOE budget. Dr. Melendez presented the revised budget noting that there were justified reductions and additions to the following line items due to post budgeted actual figures that were late coming:

Reductions:

<u>Line #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Reason for Saving</u>	<u>Amount</u>
180	Benefits	Lower rate confirmed than anticipated	\$25,442
227	SPED	Public High School Student moved out of Sherman	\$17,897
230	SPED	Post-Secondary Student moved out of Sherman	<u>\$26,430</u>
		Total Reduction (.075%)	\$69,769

Additions:

<u>Line #</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Reason for Adding</u>	<u>Amount</u>
119	Staff	Registration and Fees to permit a Tri-State Visit	\$9,000

Total all changes \$60,769

Dr Melendez explained the increase noting that with anticipated surplus from above reductions, he recommended transferring \$9,000 from other lines into line#119 to allow a visit by the Tri-State Consortium. He further noted that this expenditure was originally eliminated by administration for two reasons;

- (a) They were unsure if the Consortium would be conducting visits next year, and;
- (b) They were looking to reduce costs to ensure a flat budget. He stated that the unanticipated surplus and reconfiguration had afforded them the opportunity to explore this possibility.

Following the presentation, Selectman Ostrosky thanked Dr. Melendez and the BOE for their transparency. He noted that low voter turnout makes it hard to predict how voters want adjustments to be made. He stated concern regarding past years' surpluses and wondered if \$60,769 was enough of a reduction. He noted that the town would cover any unforeseen overages if the budget were adapted and be too low. He further noted that if the BOE's amended budget with the \$60,769 reduction fails, that funding would default to last years' budget and that it would in fact be higher than what has been currently presented. He noted that he was aware of a public survey that Dr. Melendez performed where he polled some residents on their thoughts. Selectman Ostrosky asked for those results to be shared with the BOS at an upcoming meeting.

Adding to that, First Selectman Lowe stated that the reduction is logical and seems to be enough. He asked if the Tecton Architectural study was still going on as planned. Dr. Melendez stated that this would be an item to be recommended by the Capital Plan Committee and therefore he was unsure at this time.

Selectman Keenan further added that he agreed with Selectman Ostrosky in that if the school needs more funding the town would rise and vote for it. That the town wants a "tight, transparent" budget suiting the needs of the school while eliminating the surpluses. He also wondered if \$60,769 was enough of a reduction. With that he agreed to go with the current proposal.

First Selectman Lowe noted that after much consultation with the Town Clerk, Town Attorney and State of Connecticut the town would only be sending the BOE budget for revote, not both Town and BOE.

Resident Art Von Plachecki, 10 Sail Harbor, raised concern that in past revotes, both town and BOE were revoted.

First Selectman Lowe acknowledged past practices but clarified by stating that we are not a charter town and there is nothing in the state statutes, nor a town ordinance stating that we have to revote both. With that, he asked the Boards' opinion of the revote. Both other selectmen agreed to move only the BOE budget to revote.

With that, Lowe Motioned:

Shall the Sherman BOE budget \$9,319,821 as proposed by the BOS/BOF 07/21-06/22 be approved and brought to town meeting?

Lowe was in favor, Ostrosky seconded, Keenan agreed and the motion passed all in favor.

Lowe noted the ensuing timeline:

05/22/21 Town Meeting

06/05/21 In Person Referendum Charter Hall 8:00am to 8:00 pm.

Business Manager Liz LaVia noted that there would not be a second mailer, rather, there would be a newspaper insert, Nixle Alert, and website posting. All Selectman were in agreement.

Treasurer Eric Holub added that there were two options for the proposed changes:

To leave the planned \$245K Surplus Transfer in the calculation and further reduce the mill rate from 18.73 to 18.64; or

To reduce the Surplus transfer by ~\$60,769 and leave the mill rate at 18.73 as first proposed.

Holub was in favor of further reducing the mill rate.

First Selectman Lowe noted that the BOS would take up the discussion directly following the referendum by BOS special meeting that same week.

Public Comment:

Art Von Plachecki stated that he believed the mill rate could be established before the vote.

With no further Public Comment, First Selectman Lowe adjourned the meeting at 10:32 a.m. Selectman Bob Ostrosky seconded and Selectman Keenan agreed.

All in Favor: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned.

Notes respectfully submitted by Liz LaVia on May 11, 2021.
