

**Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Monthly Meeting
December 16, 2021 at 7 pm
Mallory Town Hall**

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Kevin Keenan, and Selectman Bob Ostrosky joined at 7:45 pm.

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Fire Chief Chris Fuchs, Selectman-Elect Joel Bruzinski, and residents from the community.

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance: First Selectman Don Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm, he also informed everyone present that Selectman Bob Ostrosky would joining the meeting late. He then followed his remarks with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: None

Administrative:

A) Approval of Minutes: 11/18/2021 Board of Selectman Monthly Meeting

Motioned by: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe **All in Favor:** Unanimous

B) Tax Refunds: Approve a refund of \$707.17

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

C) Financial Review: Business Manager Liz LaVia noted that the Town is currently in the midpoint of this year's budget and tracking as expected. Some lines are tracking higher such as Building Inspector wages due to the volume of permits. She also noted that ongoing litigation is also running high due to heightened activity this half of the year. Budget season is coming and requests will be going out in January. The Public Works part-time wages is high due to the fact that a full time employee is out on short term disability and additional part time help needed. Fuel prices have been locked in for the 2022-2023 season, heating oil for \$2.38 per gallon, \$2.77 gasoline (includes all taxes)f, \$2.42 for diesel, and propane for \$1.89.

D) Approve 2022 holiday calendar: Before approval of the calendar Treasurer Eric Holub raised a question about paid holidays on Saturday when town Hall is closed. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the building department is most affected by the policy and that there will be a discussion to address the issue the first of the year.

Motion to approve calendar: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe **All in Favor:** Unanimous

E) Appointments/Reappointments:

Park/Rec: Motion to appoint Fran Frattini for a 3 year term expiring 1/1/2025.

Motion to appoint Rachel Booth for a 3 year term expiring 1/1/2025.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

Inlands/Wetlands: Motion to reappoint Michael Humphries for a 4 year term expiring 1/1/2026.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

Motion to appoint Ginny O'Neill as Alternate Commissioner for a 2 year term expiring 1/1/2024.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

Motion to appoint Merialis Lewis (Alternate Commissioner) to replace Ernie Dech as Full Commissioner for the remainder of his term, expiring 1/1/2023.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

Commission on Aging: Motion to reappoint Linda Lee Arnold, Carol Sperling, Art Von Plachecki and Ed Hayes, all for a 3 year term expiring 1/1/2025.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

Western Regional Tourism District: Motion to appoint Ginny O'Neill a Sherman's representative, term runs concurrent with First Selectman's.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

F) Acknowledgements: First Selectman Don Lowe thanked Kevin Keenan for his work as Selectman for 4 years. Wished him the best in his future endeavors.

Information & Discussion:

A) SVFD monthly report: Chief Chris Fuchs addressed the crowd stating that the department had responded to 374 call to date. He noted that there has been an uptick in Covid related calls. The Christmas tree sale was a success resulting in 125 trees sold in 2 weeks, which is a department record. He was happy to report that 4 members will be going through Fire Fighter 1 training beginning the first week of January and shortly after that the department will be hosting a regional fire/officer training course. Lastly, he commented that the department is looking forward to a nice, hopefully quiet, holiday.

B) SVFD Chief's presentation on SVFD recruitment and SVFD member tax abatements: Fire Chief Chris Fuchs provided an indepth presentation on the importance of fire/EMS services in Town. He highlighted the goals of the department to recruit and retain current volunteers. He provided bulleted sections on volunteer demographics, response tactics, recruitment, and challenges of the department. He emphasized solutions that could encourage sustainability such as tax exemption incentives for active members, tuition assistance for post-high school education, pension programs, and incentives for Town employees, as well as federal /state funding for training. His presentation illustrated the need for continued awareness of the department's success to help maintain and draw new, enthusiastic members.

C) Covid 19 report/vaccination report: First Selectman Don Lowe reported that the Town is experiencing its highest infection rate from the onset of the pandemic. He encouraged everyone to be safe during the holidays. There will be a vaccination van in New Fairfield on Saturday December 18, 2021 for boosters at the high school, no appointment necessary. Sherman is looking into bringing the vaccination van to Sherman, details are being discussed.

D) Happy Acres Farm report/proposed change to Property Management Agreement: David Jellen is currently working on equipment maintenance as well as maintaining the property. Secondly, First Selectman Don Lowe mentioned the possibility of allowing David the right to allow hunting on the property. The Town lawyer drew up a potential agreement addressing the topic. First Selectman Don Lowe added that it isn't up for approval today but for future discussion. Selectman Kevin Keenan added that addressing the potential to charge those looking to use the grounds can pose some level of conflict. The topic will be revisited in future BOS meetings. Treasurer Eric Holub inquired on more work that needs to be done at the farm. First Selectman Don Lowe addressed the question stating that bid spec will be going out in February 2022 for minor repairs, repainting and resurfacing of the other building on the property. Also, there has been some new movement on the cell tower equipment on the silo. Once issues have been resolved between AT&T and the silo company more information will be provided to the Town.

E) Discussion on further action with regard to last month's solar presentation: All Selectman agreed that there was a lot of work to be done with little savings to the Town. At the current moment the model does not reflect any real benefit to the Town. First Selectman Don Lowe suggested the possibility of adding a green energy position to Town that can help navigate the new push towards green energy. A description of the job can be added as an agenda item to the next meeting for discussion.

F) ARPA funds: First Selectman Don Lowe added that the most recent items that have been approved at Town Meeting do fall in the scope of ARPA funds. He also asked the Selectman to come up with ideas for projects to satisfy the use. Selectman Bob Ostrosky noted that he would like to pursue the sidewalk project in front of the firehouse, improvements to Town Hall, and improve Wi-Fi in various town buildings.

G) New Public Works supervisor vehicle: First Selectman Don Lowe provided the Selectman with a quote of a new truck to replace the current one driven by the Public Works supervisor. He added that the condition of the current vehicle is poor and opened up the topic for discussion on whether to approve the request to bring to a Town Meeting. The Selectman agreed to bring the topic to a Town Meeting.

Motion: To bring to a Town Meeting for an amount from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund for an amount not to exceed \$50,000 for the purchase of an F250.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

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

H) Troopers radar- discussion to purchase a new radar speed instrument: The Town is responsible for the purchase of this equipment not the state. The quoted price for the radar is \$3,080. The Selectman agreed that the purchase is necessary.

I) To possibly bring to Town Meeting an amount not to exceed \$7,500 from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund for certified studies of Town bridges less than 20 feet long for state reporting: Business manager Liz LaVia noted that 3 bridges in Town fall under observation, Spring Lake Rd, Mauweehoo, and Greenwoods Extension.

Motion: Bring to Town Meeting an amount not to exceed \$7,500 from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund for certified studies of Town bridges less than 20 feet long for state reporting.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

J) Progress report: proposed new Senior Center: First Selectman Don Lowe provided a brief update on the project stating that the focus will be on Volunteer Field. Selectman agreed that the project should be looked at comprehensively, looking at potential projects that can be

added on in the future. The plan moving forward, the Town would be responsible for doing a majority of the work unless outside professional help is needed.

K) Speed indicators and traffic report: First Selectman Don Lowe requested permission from the respective Selectman about purchasing 6 traffic cones at the cost of \$85 per cone. He feels there are several locations that their visibility would benefit, the crosswalks by the school and Senior Center. He also mentioned that the speed indicators will be revisited in January. Money left over from a previous traffic safety committee budget line from the Capital Nonrecurring Fund can help cover most of the costs.

L) CLA base building: CLA representatives from Sherman approached First Selectman Don Lowe about Sherman's level of interest for keeping the CLA base camp in Sherman. Housing the CLA in Sherman provides many advantages to the Town. The buildings in question are in need of renovation but would not be the sole responsibility of Sherman to rehab. The topic will be discussed further at future meetings.

M) Dog park: All Selectman were in agreement that a dog park is more trouble than its worth.

Other Business: None suggested by Selectman. Selectman Bob Ostrosky took the opportunity to thank Kevin Keenan for his service to the Town and wished him the best.

Public Comment: Rick Hudson Of 22 Crooked Furrows also expressed the same sentiment, as previously stated by Selectman Ostrosky and First Selectman Lowe, thanking Kevin Keenan for his service to the Town.

Selectman Kevin Keenan moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm.

Motioned by: Selectman Keenan

Seconded by: First Selectman Don Lowe **All in Favor:** Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on December 20, 2021.