

**Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Special Meeting
January 2, 2021 at 10:00 am
Via ZOOM Teleconferencing**

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

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Public Health Director Tim Simpkins, Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, and residents from the community

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: The special meeting was called to order promptly at 10:00 am followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda: To discuss and decide whether to join with New Fairfield for Covid 19 vaccination services:

A document was provided laying out the budget breakdown of services associated with the roll out of the Covid 19 vaccination program provided by New Fairfield.

Services and budget breakdown:

Vaccine Services- \$120,000

Videos/ Communication- \$4,000

Mailers- \$7,500

Adds (newspapers)- \$1,000

Miscellaneous (signs, flyers)- \$500

Cleaning Service fees- \$2,000

Testing- \$4,300

Emergency Management- \$17,000

Contact Tracing- \$47,300

First Selectman Don Lowe began the meeting by explaining that the Town can choose what segment of the Covid 19 vaccination plan Sherman wants to participate. He emphasized that there are some aspects that Sherman wants to participate and some not necessary. He then turned the conversation over to the Public Health Inspector Tim Simpkins to breakdown the budget items and what he feels is most applicable to Sherman needs.

Tim Simpkins began by acknowledging that there are currently 2 approved vaccines ready for administering to the public, the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. He stated that in November he began meeting with the Second Selectman Chris Hall of New Fairfield to plan for the distribution of vaccines to the local area. He determined that in the process of devising a plan with the Second Selectman that there will be need for funding. The Town of New Fairfield approved a \$200,000 budget to fund the costs. He also added that the numbers presented in the budget are rough numbers and that Sherman does not need to participate in every line item presented. Tim Simpkins noted that he applied for and received a state grant in March of \$23,000 that he used to focus on contact tracing but funds have dwindled. He does suggest that Sherman team up with New Fairfield. Sherman would be responsible for 20% of costs for items that the Town would participate.

First Selectman Don Lowe suggested that Sherman participate in the vaccination and contact tracing aspect of the budget. He opened up dialogue to the other selectman for thoughts and discussion.

Discussion: Selectman Kevin Keenan agreed that Sherman should participate in the vaccination program with New Fairfield. He believes it is up to the local level to provide for the community and where ever the Town can share the costs it would be more beneficial to residents. He also would like to see a vaccination site in Sherman but overall has no problem appropriating funds.

First Selectman Don Lowe asked Mr. Simpkins if joining the arrangement with New Fairfield would preclude the Town of Sherman from potentially offering our own site for vaccination distribution. Tim Simpkins responded no and that he did envision Sherman eventually providing its own site. He wanted to reassure residents that Sherman has a voice in the process.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky questioned whether the labor costs referred to paying volunteers and confirmed the actual vaccines are free. Tim Simpkins reaffirmed vaccines are free and the labor costs refers to the administering of the vaccine. He also noted that there might be potential for reimbursement costs associated with the administering of vaccine in the future.

Selectman Kevin Keenan asked who is responsible for receiving the shipment of vaccine, the health district, or hospital. Tim Simpkins responded that he was responsible for receiving the vaccine at the police department stating security reasons and because there is a generator that would ensure the vaccines viability and access to proper refrigeration. Tim clarified that the current shots are a 2 step process but new vaccines will be added that require basic refrigeration with only a one shot requirement.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky asked Tim Simpkins what determines priority and eligibility between Sherman and New Fairfield residents. Tim Simpkins relied that the federal and state level are determining who is eligible, he also mentioned that no resident would take priority over another and relies on scheduling. The roll out consists of phases starting with 1A through 1C then phase 2 would begin. He also noted that residents will be using a system called V.A.M.S

which stands for Vaccine Administrative Management Services. It is a web based platform that allows for individuals to register. The objective is to get the vaccine out to everyone.

There has been a positive response from the public to volunteer services from the administering stand point as well as volunteers interested in other aspects to facilitate a seamless process.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky questioned the role pharmacies in the process, is the community responsible. Tim Simpkins responded that he hopes the clinics in the area will participate in the vaccination effort. He clarified that the partnership between Sherman and New Fairfield is the only option for possible vaccination.

Ed Hayes just wanted confirmation that Sherman was only responsible for 20% of funding of any category that the Town participates. Tim Simpkins responded yes and that it was determined by population.

First Selectman Don Lowe extended the conversation to Treasurer Eric Holub and Business Manager Liz LaVia for comment and input.

Treasurer Eric Holub wondered if participating on a per vaccination basis was an option or idea. His concern highlights the funding of staff and clinics with open time slots and no vaccines being administered. Tim Simpkins reiterated that all vaccines would be done by appointment only and that there would be no clinics offered if there were no participants registered. First Selectman Don Lowe commented that he would bring the idea of paying per vaccine at the next vaccination meeting he has scheduled with New Fairfield.

Business Manager Liz LaVia inquired about the potential for new grant money, when, and where the Town can look to apply. Tim Simpkins replied that there is some money presently that can be applied for but the funds are limited and spread out over 3 years and cumbersome to apply for. He is applying for more funds for contact tracing.

First Selectman Don Lowe took the opportunity to share his feeling on the matter and the direction he would like the Town to pursue. He would like to join the partnership with New Fairfield and make the topic an ongoing BOS agenda item moving forward providing progress reports and new information to residents. Treasurer Eric Holub suggested that if the Town moves forward, that funding be appropriated through the Capital Nonrecurring Fund which would not affect spending in the General Fund. The Board can warn a Town meeting and approve under the Executive Order.

Comments from the Public: Arthur Von Plachecki of 10 Sail Harbor Drive commented that priority for vaccination is assigned by category based on age and medical condition. He wanted to know if enough vaccines were available by need. Tim Simpkins responded that if you are registered for a vaccine the vaccine will be available to you. The vaccines will not be dispensed as first come first serve, if you have an appointment you will be vaccinated.

Barbara Ackerman of 5 Anderson Road East had filed paper work through the Senior Center and wanted confirmation if that was the route to go through for vaccination registration. Tim Simpkins clarified that the Senior Center paperwork compiled was a survey that disseminated what category a person fell under, it was not a vehicle for registering for a vaccination appointment. The paperwork from the Senior Center was a needs assessment. Information will be updated through the newspaper, Town website, and adds with specifics for registering by category.

Selectman Kevin Keenan questioned if there was a date in mind when clinics will be up and running. In turn, Tim responded that by mid-February he is hoping that category 1B will be eligible for vaccination and clinics are operating.

Ro & Al Burgasser of 1 Short Lane pointed her first question to First Selectman Don Lowe how he was planning to address the cleaning fees since the budgeted number did not fall under the parameters of vaccination services. First Selectman Don Lowe commented that he would need to do more research to understand what the cleaning line item entails before making a plan for funding allocation. The second question was pointed towards Tim Simpkins wondering if non-medical volunteers with appropriate training volunteer to do contact tracing. Mr. Simpkins responded yes but also mentioned the need for contact tracing might fade because the community will largely vaccinated.

Phyllis Fox Schaer of 6 Oak Drive touched upon the fact the senior community is not technically savvy and would willing to volunteer with that segment of the population. She hopes flyers for PR purpose are distributed to help facility participation and she applauds the Town's effort to consider partnering with New Fairfield.

Terri Hahn of 13 Pepper Pond Road was confirming the acronym V.A.M.S and whether individuals should familiarize themselves with the V.A.M.S website or is there a timeline to access it. Mrs. Hahn answered her own question as she was discussing with Mr. Simpkins about limited access and Mr. Simpkins concurred. He also mentioned that the vaccine was government produced and that no one was prohibited from receiving one.

Al & Ro Burgasser of 1 Short Lane wanted to know what the individual's responsibility is to pick the proper vaccine. Tim Simpkins replied that the Pfizer vaccine will not be an option to our area and that it is up the individual, he also mentioned the possibility of screening questions that can aid in distinguishing which vaccine is appropriate for the person.

Janet Wayne of 7 Brookside Lane inquired if there will be transportation service provided to seniors that are unable to drive. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the topic will be addressed at social services along with helping seniors navigate the internet for information and/or registering for the vaccine.

Al & Ro Burgasser of 1 Short Lane wondered if consideration for vaccination was extended to volunteers that transported seniors to vaccination clinics. Mr. Simpkins responded that those who directly work in clinics are eligible for vaccination but wasn't sure about those who are not.

Rick Hudson of 20 Crooked Furrows Lane commented on the importance of reaching out to neighbors, helping those who may not have access to the internet. He expressed interest volunteering to help those in need.

Lastly, First Selectman Don Lowe extended a gracious thank you to Tim Simpkins and Jim Reilley for all their hard work providing information and organizational effort to help move the Town towards a seamless vaccination opportunity.

All Selectman are on board to move forward with joining New Fairfield's vaccination effort, all agree some issues need to be discussed and resolved. First Selectman Don Lowe noted he will give a verbal confirmation to New Fairfield as Sherman settles any funding.

Motion: To join New Fairfield in the Covid 19 vaccination process and in that process Sherman has the right to discern, as we go along, what parts of the vaccination process that we take part in.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

First Selectman Don Lowe adjourned the meeting at 11:00 am