

**Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Monthly Meeting
Thursday February 25, 2021 at 7 pm
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, Fire Chief Chris Fuchs, representatives from Julia's Wings Foundation, and residents from the community.

Clerk: Margaret Beatty

Call to Order/ Pledge of Allegiance: The meeting began at 7 pm followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky took a moment to remind participants to remain on mute and that he would monitor the chat for any comments/questions pertinent to the conversation.

Public Comment: Rick Hudson of Crooked Furrows acknowledged a letter written by Stan Greenbaum in the Town Tribune and encouraged others to take the time and read his comments regarding the cell tower in Coote Hill.

Correspondence: Judith Weinstock of Sherman wrote a letter advocating the importance of cell service in Town. She wrote in great detail the hardships the community face with lack of service in Town putting all lives at risk. She feels that having adequate cell service throughout Town outweighs minor adjustments to the landscape.

Steven and Loretta Quaranto of 14 Coote Hill Road wrote a letter to Planning and Zoning but requested that First Selectman Don Lowe read the letter during the BOS monthly meeting. The letter strongly objects to the proposed cell tower on Coote Hill. Both Mr. and Mrs. Quaranto explained the hardships associated with construction of the tower on Coote Hill and expressed that they did not choose to retire in Sherman to be neighbors with a tower that can have potential health implications. They object to the tower and believe that the tower poses a significant negative effect to not just residents but wildlife and nature.

Charlie Gerard of Sherman wrote a letter addressing the misconceptions of harmful rays emitted by cell towers. He cited information reported by the American Cancer Society debunking the effects of harmful RF rays. He expressed that the danger to people as a result of lack of service is real i.e. medical emergencies and accidents but that the danger from cell towers is imaginary. He believes sound decisions should be made on facts.

Comment: Peter Kuring of 5 Coote Hill Road wanted confirmation that the balloon was flown at the proper height of 170ft. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that he had no way of actually confirming the height but was reassured that it was flown at the proposed 170ft. Mr. Kuring also asked why an opportunity to utilize a tower in New Fairfield was never followed up on a few years ago. First Selectman Don Lowe responded that the initial arrangement for that service was strictly for emergency services equipment and not general cell tower services. He added that no financial agreement was able to be reached. First Selectman Don Lowe also noted that the Town briefly looked into putting equipment on the Aquarian Tower in Timber Trails but the land owner would not grant easement on the property to install cable.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky interrupted the conversation, in a point of order, to bring the meeting back on topic.

Administrative: A) Approval of Minutes:

1/28/2021 Board of Selectman Regular Monthly Meeting

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

2/2/2021 Board of Selectman Special Meeting

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

B) Tax refunds: Approve a refund of \$332.32

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

C) Financial Review: Business Manager Liz LaVia noted that we are reviewing an 8 month snapshot of the general fund expenses, the figures will be used in the budget projections. She noted that some salary lines are running slightly over, and that overages are noted in P&Z fees to the state and building inspector fees, which are permit driven expenses. Collections and recycling is slightly over budget due to increased fees and hazardous waste day participation (higher than anticipated). There are overages in pavilion maintenance and winterization due to water issues and system repairs in the restrooms. The ESF maintenance is tracking high in part to expenses related to service contract items, and repairs to water system/HVAC/washing machine/elevator.

D) Julia's Wings and Operation Wear Red Proclamation: First Selectman Don Lowe read a proclamation honoring Julia and the Foundation's tireless work to bring awareness to Aplastic Anemia. The week of March 1-7, 2021 will be recognized as Aplastic Anemia Week in the Town of Sherman and Operation Wear Red. Town employees and residents are encouraged to

participate in awareness activities. The Julia's Wings Foundation has helped raise awareness to the disease and donations beneficial to families suffering as well as to the medical community. Red ribbons will be available to the public to display as one sees fit.

Information & Discussion:

Before First Selectman Don Lowe initiated discussion on items related to the Information & Discussion segment of the agenda he moved to add Executive Session following the Public Comment portion of the agenda.

Motion: To Move into Executive Session at the end of the meeting to discuss the current union negotiations regarding the teachers union with Sherman employees.

Motioned by: First selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

All in Favor: Unanimous

A) SVFD: Fire Chief Chris Fuchs noted that to date the department has responded to 61 calls. A majority of members have been fully vaccinated, most members reporting mild to no side effects. In person training will resume as well as in person meetings. Recruitment efforts are ongoing, discussion is in place to reach out to the community for volunteers as well as retain current members so that the department can function as a volunteer service.

B) Covid 19 report: There are 6 new cases reported in Sherman but case load has declined substantially. State wide has seen a decrease in infection. Continue to practice diligence.

C) Vaccination report: As of March 1, people 55+ can register on VAMS to be vaccinated. There are no firm statistics on the amount of Sherman residents that have been vaccinated to date. Emergency management Director Jim Reilly commented that teachers have been given the greenlight to be vaccinated starting March 1. He encourage everyone to continue social distancing and wearing a mask. Lastly, he added that a third vaccine by Johnson & Johnson has been added. First Selectman Don Lowe also added that the New Fairfield vaccination clinic has been working diligently and of the 530 vaccinations 70 were Sherman residents.

D) Happy Acres Farm report: David Jellen doing pre Spring organizing, fixing machinery, preparing for farming. He is selling beef, pork, chickens, and eggs. David Jellen has also took on a mentor teaching farming to a high school student interested in agriculture. Davis Jellen is also exploring outreach options to integrate the community.

E) Consideration of waiving one month (June) of pre-school: To date the pre-school program has logged 16 lost school days due to Covid closures. The pre-school does not log on remotely during closures so the program is asking to waive the June's tuition payment to make up for lost time. One family has paid in full for the year and would need to be reimbursed their payment if the tuition is waived by BOS members.

Comments: Selectman Bob Ostrosky not opposed to idea but would like to know how the process would work.

Selectman Kevin Keenan was concerned this would send a precedent for the future and what would constitute a refund.

The Selectman discussed and agreed to approve waiving June's pre-school tuition.

Motion: Due to experience of Covid 19 and school closures that the tuition is waived for the month of June for pre-school parents with the exception of one set of parents being refunded for their payment.

Motioned by: First Selectman Don Lowe

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

F) Storage space for Town organization: First Selectman Don Lowe announced that he has located units priced at \$3500 per unit for purchase. He also added that zoning must be approved before the Town moves forward with the idea. He has solicited the organizations in Town to provide an inventory list of what the organizations would like stored. The units are used but have been refurbished measuring 20x8x8.

Comments: Selectman Bob Ostrosky commented that the Town should think long term and be open to discussion on the number the Town decided to purchase.

Jenn Freed of Church road commented whether the Town would provide assurances that neighbors were not going to be given the green light to have units on their properties with the zoning changes. First selectman Don Lowe responded that the zoning would only pertain to one change focused only for municipality use on Town property not Town wide.

G) An inventory and plan forward to deal with Public works and Happy Acres equipment that is no longer used: First Selectman Don Lowe put together an inventory plan to deal with old, un-used equipment. Happy Acres has 2 tractors under consideration and public works has several items, these items would be put out to auction and provide extra revenue to the Town. After discussion, 1 tractor proposed for auction at Happy Acres is being reconsidered for sentimental reasons.

H) Update on Public Works capital needs as per last month's discussion: Progress update on the discussed items are as followed

- 1) Tanker- refurbish and will be put out to bid next week
- 2) New Holland field mower- that will go into state bid process
- 3) wood chipper- will also go into state bid process
- 4) Ford 550- also state bid process
- 5) Del Marino road side mower- the Town will seek 3 quotes
- 6) new trailer- the Town will seek 3 quotes

The items will then go to Town Meeting and the public will make the decisions.

I) Consideration of an ordinance prohibiting the depositing of snow, debris, and obstacles in the Town roads and right-of-way: Public Works has brought to the Town's attention that residents have been disposing snow in the roads effecting Public Works ability to effectively remove snow from Town thoroughways. There is consideration to create an ordinance addressing the issue. The topic has been proposed to create dialogue amongst residents. The topic will be discussed in depth in upcoming agendas.

J) Zebra mussels on Candlewood Lake: First Selectman Don Lowe provided a public service announcement addressing zebra mussels aimed at informing lake residents the negatives of the species. He encouraged those who live on the lake to visit the CLA website now that we are heading towards boating season.

Other Business: None

Public Comment: Rick Hudson of 22 Crooked Furrows inquired whether the items considered for auction at Happy Acres and Public Works will be posted to the Town website. First Selectman Don Lowe confirmed yes.

Alexandra Morocco of 16 Coburn Road East she expressed her opposition to the cell tower on Coote Hill. She commented that she was drawn to move to Sherman for its beautiful rural nature and is disappointed in the tower's possibility. First Selectman Don Lowe encouraged her to express her concerns to the Siting Counsel of CT.

Stan Greenbaum of 9 Peacepipe Lane encouraged residents to read his trilogy of letters in the Town Tribune regarding the cell tower. He noted he is not in opposition of a tower but rather the location proposed. He hopes that residents educate themselves on the proposal and be involved in the process.

Molly Garcia of 22 Church Road wanted to know the specifications for roads to be designated scenic. First Selectman Don Lowe commented that width is the defining factor as scenic. A scenic road can only be 20ft maximum.

Jenn Freed of 61 Church Road expressed support to neighbors opposed to the cell tower. She also highlighted the state is looking to pull local authority when dealing with zoning. She encouraged residents to get involved and provided the name of an organization called CT 169 Strong that is looking to fight for the preservation of small town zoning.

Susan Zietler of 8 Curtis Drive also expressed her support to neighbors fighting the cell tower approval. She provided a website and literature to participant to engage in independent research on the topic of cell tower emissions. She also reiterated the concerns of government over reach and its effects on small town business. She encouraged residents to get involved and make their voices heard.

The meeting ended to the public and moved to Executive Session.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 pm.