

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectman Monthly Meeting
May 26,2022 at 7 pm
Mallory Town Hall

Member's Present: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky, and Selectman Joel Bruzinski

Member's Absent: None

Audience & Invited: Treasurer Eric Holub, Business Manager Liz LaVia, Fire Chief Chris Fuchs, CLA representative Martin O'Connor, 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 pm followed by the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment: Stan Greenbaum of 9 Peacepipe Lane raised concerns over the lack of tree maintenance on his road. He noted that Peacepipe will be home to a new electric box providing electricity to over 430 houses and he is concerned about potential tree issues affecting maintenance of the new lines and boxes. He suggested that the Selectman become familiar with the locations of the new boxes in the event weather contributes do downed trees.

Susan Zeitler or 8 Curtis Drive implored that elected officials take steps in protecting their constituents from the harmful effects of 5G. She strongly believes 5G is being forced on the general public and that there are steps that can be taken to protect citizens from its harmful rays. She also acknowledged the information provided by the Selectman from the previous BOS Monthly Meeting and reiterated that all sources that she has been presented are from reliable and reputable individuals from the science/health industry. She strongly encouraged residents to take the time and conduct their own research.

Correspondence: Lisa Rey of the Social Services department submitted her letter of resignation to Lynne Gomez, the Social Services Director. She expressed her gratitude for many years of service to the department.

Administrative Items:

A) Approval of Minutes:

4/28/22 Board of Selectman Monthly Meeting

Motioned by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski

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

5/ 5/22 Board of Selectman Special Meeting

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski **All in Favor:** Unanimous

5/12/22 Board of Selectman Special Meeting

Motioned by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski

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

B) **Tax refunds:** None

C) **Financial Review:** Business Manager Liz LaVia provided the Board with an 11-month summary of the Town financials. She noted that the Town is tracking as expected currently but paving, roadside mowing, Resident State Trooper, and large expenses still to come. Lastly, the Town has started the first of three audits.

Information & Discussion:

First Selectman Don Lowe began the segment of the meeting by motioning an additional agenda item. The item will be added to the end of the Information & Discussion section.

Motion: Move forward on the repair or replacement of sidewalks at Town Hall.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski **All in Favor:** Unanimous

A) **SVFD:** Fire Chief Fuchs reported that the department has responded to 153 emergency calls to date in the calendar year. The floor refinishing has been completed, the department recruited a new member, and the members are preparing for the Memorial Day Parade preparing the vehicles.

B) **Adopt Sherman's Municipal Annex to be joined with WESTCOG's affordable housing "Regional Toolbox" to satisfy CT statutory requirements concerning affordable housing:**
The state is requiring all towns to make a report/statement on affordable housing and Sherman supplied an annex that represented Sherman. Residents can access Sherman's submitted version on the WESTCOG website under the Sherman Affordable Housing.

Motion: Accept our annex to be joined with WESTCOG's affordable housing Regional Toolbox.

Motioned by: First selectman Don Lowe

Seconded by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski **All in Favor:** Unanimous

C) **New CLA facility discussion based on last month's presentation:** Representative Martin O'Connor surmised that if Sherman is interested in housing the CLA headquarters the CLA will move forward and reach out to neighboring lake towns for funding. The CLA will also engage in fundraising to ease financial burden. The Board did have various location and elevation questions but will be addressed in the future if the project gains approval and momentum from neighboring lake towns.

D) **Happy Acres:** First Selectman Don Lowe took the opportunity to address some concerns raised by residents regarding Happy Acres. It has been brought to the Board's attention

that many in agriculture, competing with the farm, believe that the current farm manager has an unfair advantage by way of Town resources to better himself financially. First Selectman Don Lowe concluded, after meeting with Dave Jellen, that Mr. Jellen has been keeping separate receipts for farm use and private use. Any activity out of the scope of Happy Acres has been privately funded with personal funds. Jeff Lyscenski raised concerns over the release of funds out of the Restricted Fund and its use for paying the farm manager's salary. He noted that Restricted Fund was in place strictly for the purpose of building and property maintenance. Mr. Lyscenski concluded that the farm manager position does not adhere to the state's Independent Contractor Clause and believes that the manager should be on the Town's payroll or leasing the property with a stipend for mowing and maintenance. The Selectman concluded that he agreement with the farm is contractual and based on performance not hourly. They thoughtfully heard Mr. Lyscenski's points and will continue to investigate the matter.

- E) **Bring to Town Meeting: Authorize an appropriation of \$20,000 funded from the accumulated cell tower revenue for the farm related maintenance and expenses for the fiscal year of 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023:** The meeting will be warned for June and is done every year as a standard administrative move to streamline the farm's needs.

Motion: Bring to town Meeting: Authorize an appropriation of \$20,000 funded from the accumulated cell tower revenue for the farm related maintenance and expenses for the fiscal year of 7/1/2022 to 6/30/2023.

Motioned by: Selectman bob Ostrosky

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

- F) **Bring to Town Meeting: Authorize an appropriation transfer of \$35,000 from the Happy Acres Restricted Fund to the Happy Acres Operating Fund for Contracted Property Management Services for the fiscal year 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023:**

Motion: Bring to Town Meeting: Authorize an appropriation transfer of \$35,000 from Happy Acres Restricted Fund to the Happy Acres Operating Fund for Contracted property Management Services for the fiscal year 7/1/2022 through 6/30/2023.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

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

- G) **School Building Committee:** A Town Meeting, yielded unanimously, permission to form a school building committee. The members of the committee are as followed, Pam Bonner, Christian Decunha, Joe Viola, Dave Fabbraio, Kerry Merkel, Tim Laughlin, Bob Gamper, Carrie DePuy, Matt Vogt, and Joel Bruzinski. The committee reports to the First Selectman's office.

- H) **Public Works and Happy Acres auction:** The Town owns several pieces of equipment that has served its purpose to the Town that will be going up for auction. A weekend will be

picked to show the equipment and those offering a bid will have a week, bids will be sealed and silent. Information for the upcoming event will be sent via Nixle.

- I) **Proposed new Senior Center at the Schneckenburger House:** The property is under consideration, with adaptations, for the new home of the Senior Center. A third party has offered to be a bridge financially for the sale if the Town chooses to move forward with the idea. First Selectman Don Lowe met with the Director of the Autobaud Society, she provided him with invaluable information on the course of action to take to address any adaptations to make the house up to code/suitable for a Senior Center. The property poses hardships but can be adapted cost prohibitively. The property provides an alternative to the Town that has little too few options. Selectman Bob Ostrosky raised his concerns about the overall maintenance of a pre-existing building if issues arise in the future as opposed to a new build. He also understands there are challenges associated with both options. Selectman Joel Bruzinski questioned why the Board is still involved if a third party offered to take the risk. Treasurer Eric Holub suggested that the meeting open to the public be structured as more of a forum because no vote will be rendered for or nay. The Selectman agreed that a Town forum would be the best course of action to gauge the sentiment of the public. Ed Hayes commented that prior to the forum, a serious engineering study be done so that no questions are left unanswered.
- J) **Repair or Replacement of sidewalks at Town Hall:** All Selectman agreed to move forward with obtaining bids. Will revisit during future meetings.

Other Business: Selectman Joel Bruzinski suggested looking into a more reliable vehicle for the Senior Center. He had been contacted by Suzette Burger from the Senior Center about the current condition of the Subaru. Friends of the Senior Center had offered to help fund some of the cost of a new vehicle. Selectman Bob Ostrosky is open to replacing the car but would love to know the trade-in value of the current vehicle.

Public Comment: Rick Hudson of Crooked Furrows inquired on the year and mileage of the Senior Center vehicle. Selectman Joel Bruzinski replied that he did not have the information in front of him.

Scott O'Neill of 7 Big Trail inquired on the timing of construction for the CLA building and whether it would interfere with summer camps, traffic. Selectman Bob Ostrosky replied he has a host of questions for the CLA if the project is approved. The Selectman agreed that these concerns will be considered. Mr. O'Neill wondered were the money generated from the equipment auction will be allocated. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that a portion will be placed in the Happy Acres Restricted Fund and the remainder into the General Fund. Lastly, Mr. O'Neill stated that the school was scrutinized heavily for desired projects and that it was the right course of action for the residents to scrutinize the potential purchase and renovation of a building for the Senior Center. He wanted to see the floors fixed at the school before Town Hall sidewalks are considered.

Stan Greenbaum of 9 Peacepipe Lane brought up the lack of Park and Receptions involvement in the CLA project. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that he has contacted Fran Fratini to address her concerns.

Amanda O'Neill of 7 Big Trail wondered if there is any grant money gifted by the government that can be used to improve P&R department. She lamented the outdated forms that were sent to her recently. She likes what P&R offer but could use some improvements. The Selectman encouraged her to attend a P&R meeting to offer up any suggestions.

Susan Zeitler of 8 Curtis Drive asked if its standard procedure to supply documents in meeting notes if an individual supplies material. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that documents discussed by an individual during Public Comment do not have to be footnoted in notes. Notes are a summarized review of the meeting and an individual on their own time can research topics discussed. Mrs. Zeilter referenced studies about the harm of 5G radiation on a developing brain and the Firefighter Organization that has concern about 5G. Selectman Bob Ostrosky replied that third party documents are not applied to the Town website. She explained the effects of radiation poisoning has dire effects on the human body.

Jeff Lyscenski commented about the upcoming equipment auction and whether the Town investigated the prospect of an online auction. He noted that some online auctions can bring in more bids. First Selectman Don Lowe replied that the Town needs to be able to legally warn the auction, but he offered to look into the idea.

Rick Hudson of Crooked Furrows reminded of the Memorial Day Parade and encouraged all to come.

Selectman Bob Ostrosky motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm.

Motioned by: Selectman Bob Ostrosky

Seconded by: Selectman Joel Bruzinski **All in Favor:** Unanimous

Notes respectfully submitted by Margaret Beatty on May 15, 2022.