

# FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

DATE

We will hold a Town Meeting on Wednesday, March 15 at 7pm in Mallory Town Hall to seek voter approval for the following to items: One, approval of an amount not-to-exceed \$7,000 for equipment to improve the water pumping system at Charter Hall, and two, approval of an amount not-to-exceed \$9,000 for building and site plan designs and renderings of the proposed new Senior Center.

Regarding the proposed new Senior Center, the money spent on the renderings will provide visual material for Town forums and presentations on the merits of a new Senior Center, which will ultimately lead to a referendum. Along with visual renderings will be some idea of the project's cost. I can tell you that the proposed location is in the Colonial Field vicinity fairly near the Community Gardens. The gardens will not be displaced by this building. The shape of the gardens will possibly change slightly and, if so, the square footage will also increase slightly. However, nothing will happen unless the voters ok this in referendum. It's important that I stress that so no one feels something will be pushed forward without consideration for taxpayers. This project is in the hands of the voters. It's my board's job and the building workshop's job to bring this to the voters.

Tonight the Board of Selectmen/Board of Finance holds its first budget workshop wherein we look at all of the budgets that have been presented to us. By the end of the week we should have some idea of what the total budget for 2023/24 might look like. I hope to offer a peek into that in next week's column.

The month of March is Board of Education Appreciation Month and this is a reminder to appreciate the critical roles our Board of Education volunteers fulfill in serving Sherman. Many hours are dedicated by those on the BOE towards the care and management of all aspects of the Sherman School. Along with the monthly meetings are many hours of Special Meetings, committee meetings, budget workshops, and other practicums that BOE members attend to be better equipped for changes in education and for what faces them every year. Again, they are all volunteers. Thank you, Board of Education.

A few people have inquired about the Town making our Board of Selectmen (BOS) meetings and possibly our Town Meetings available remotely on ZOOM. Holding BOS meetings solely on ZOOM worked fairly well, and holding them solely in-person works quite well. But what is being asked is that we offer both simultaneously in what is referred to in our post-covid world as a "hybrid" meeting. As simple as this sounds, it's not so easy and requires a certain degree of ZOOM monitoring for it to be interactive equally between in-person viewers and remote viewers. But we are in the process of securing the proper technology to make this happen.

Town Meetings, because there is a hand-in-the air voting process, are especially tricky. We can make the Town Meetings hybrid, but I'm afraid the voting will only be for in-person attendees. This will, I'm sure, also bring about complaints. But it is difficult to ascertain remotely whether the people voting are Sherman taxpayers. This is why, if you have attended a Town Meeting, our registrars check your identification and then hand you a blue "voting slip." All of this hybrid meeting stuff is being presently addressed, but when it is put in practice is not known yet.

March is also Difficult Fishing Appreciation Month for there is no ice for ice fishing and it's too darn cold for regular fishing. Somehow, we fisherman manage and carry on. We know that a person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road. Keep smiling!



DON LOWE

TOWN OF SHERMAN