

FIRST SELECTMAN COLUMN

03/23/23 ISSUE DATE

The Board of Selectmen's (BOS) regularly scheduled monthly meeting is this Thursday, March 23 at 7pm in Mallory Town Hall. Among the agenda items, which is posted online, is a presentation by the Sherman School Building Committee (SSBC).

This marks the first face-to-face between the two entities and the main topic of conversation will be about the 6,000 square feet of Sherman School building space that the SSBC is proposing to eliminate from its building plans in order to make the square footage of the Sherman School smaller. The reasoning behind this, according to the advisors to the SSBC, is that the reduced square footage will qualify the Sherman School for a larger reimbursement from the state towards its building repair project. If the upcoming school building repair referendum passes, the school is possibly looking for the Town to take over this 6,000 sq. ft. of space. Did I get your attention?

Yes, this is a curious development. The topic of the 6,000 sq. ft. of space first came up last week at the Town Meeting in which money (\$9,000) was approved for building and site renderings of the proposed new Senior Center to be located near Colonial Field. Much of the meeting's discussion centered on this idea as a few individuals in the audience of about 40 people questioned why the BOS would go ahead with funding for these renderings when there might be a place for a Senior Center at the school within the 6000 sq. ft. space.

Ultimately, the request for the \$9,000 passed nearly unanimously with only one vote against, but this idea of a Senior Center in the school will no doubt come up again on Thursday. Although the Sherman School along with 14 other Sherman locations has been vetted and deemed unsuitable by the Senior Center building workshop group, our BOS will keep an open mind and listen to all ideas coming forward.

In addition to the discussion about the jettisoned space, the BOS will be expecting to learn a little bit more from the SSBC about the possible cost of the entire school repair project, which as the recent architectural drawings indicate, features some significant renovations and changes to the building. These changes, as presented by the SSBC, include and incorporate all of the necessary repairs for the Sherman School facility along with a comprehensive maintenance plan going forward.

Also on the BOS agenda will be an update on the current proposal for a new Senior Center. In addition, I'd like to remind voters that the public hearing on the budgets – Town and Education – will be held on Wednesday, March 29 at 7pm in Mallory Town Hall. This is an opportunity to learn more about the budget specifics, ask questions, and make comments.

Spring has officially arrived and I don't know if it's because I'm a little further down the yardstick of life, but it seems to be more exhilarating and refreshing each year that the change from brown to green rolls around. Maybe I've just grown sick of winter; I'm not sure. But I digress...I'm always available to answer questions or take your concerns. Feel free to stop by my office or give a call at 860 355 1139. It's a privilege to be your First Selectman and this job is never boring.



DON LOWE

TOWN OF SHERMAN