Selectmen’s Meeting Minutes December 4, 2019 BSE School 6:30 pm

**Call to Order**: Select Board Chairman Marchese called the meeting to order. Others present: Andrew Baker, Robert Manners, and Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz.

Shelburne Finance Committee members: Jackie Walsh and Deborah Andrews.

Meeting Participants:

Ashfield Select Board members: Thomas Carter, Steve Gougeon , Todd Olanyk.Ashfield and Town Administrator, Kayce Warren.

Finance Committee members: Carl Sandisfield and Melinda Gougeon.

Buckland Select Board members Barry Del Castilho and Zach Turner and Town Administrator, Heather Butler.

Buckland Finance Committee members: Karen Blom and Larry Langford.

Senior Center Expansion Committee Chair: Sylvia Smith

Members of the Shelburne Select Board invited the Senior Center Consortium’s member town officials for some much-needed dialogue regarding the Senior Center Expansion Project. Chairman Marchese envisioned this meeting as an opportunity to have a candid conversation regarding an ownership model, a financial model, and a proposed location for the Center.

Ownership Model:

Shelburne Select Board member Andrew baker feels that a joint three-town ownership model is the best option however; it leaves the question of management. Ashfield Select Board member, Steve Gougeon shared the sentiment of some of their residents at two Ashfield forums. He stated that while Ashfield does not intend on leaving the Consortium, they might not be interested or able to invest in a “brick and mortar” structure outside of town. With limited financial resources, Ashfield would prefer more in-town services, like health, wellness and support to age in place. Buckland Select Board member Zach Turner suggested a regional model. Buckland Select Board member, Barry Del Castilho recommended looking for other cooperative agreement models that might better suit the three towns. Buckland Finance Committee member Larry Langford expressed concerns for unforeseen risks. He did not think that the towns should look at an ownership model without looking at a funding model.

Financial Model:

For purpose of discussion, representatives from the three-towns discussed the possibility of collectively contributing $1 million towards the Expansion Project. Ashfield Select Board member Tom Carter stated that he was embarrassed that his Town has not been able to contribute $15,000 in planning funds this year noting that their Broadband Project is priority. While each town agreed in theory that raising $1 million over a ten-year period might be feasible, Buckland Finance Committee member, Karen Blom did not want to commit until having an opportunity to look at Buckland’s finances. Throughout the discussion, the group agreed that any municipal contribution secured through a town meeting vote would have contingency language in the event the Expansion Committee is unsuccessful in their fundraising efforts. Ashfield Finance Committee member Melinda Gougeon noted that in addition to capital costs, operating costs would increase as well. She noted that Ashfield is having a hard time maintaining their own buildings and is uncomfortable making a long-term commitment to fund a building outside of their town. Select Board member Andrew Baker cited the John Olver building as an example of cooperative ownership. Shelburne Finance Committee member Jackie Walsh suggested the need for each town to figure out what they want before going any further. Select Board Chair, Matt Marchese suggested that each town fundamentally step back and see if everyone is in agreement that expanded services are needed in our communities. Both Deborah Andrews and Karen Blom suggested that the new Center be multi-purpose (Community Center) particularly when demographics and the need for services may change in the future. Buckland Select Board member Barry Del Castilho suggested that Jones Whitsett Architects reduce the size of the building to 6,000 square feet with the hopes that annual operating costs are less. Senior Center Expansion Committee Chair, Sylvia Smith noted that there are less funding opportunities for Community Centers. Ashfield Select Board member Todd Olanyk asked if the Expansion Committee had considered any other underutilized sites. Sylvia Smith stated that BSE is no longer an option now that the preschool program has expanded.

Proposed Locations:

Jones Whitsett Architects will compile the results of the Expansion Committee’s survey results on Friday. The Committee is hopeful that the results will provide them with direction moving forward.

Closing Remarks:

Select Board member Robert Manners reserved his comments until the end. He believes that the three-towns are putting the cart before the horse. He suggested addressing the Center’s immediate need for more bathrooms as it might take years to identify, fund, build or renovate a Center. He also noted that neither Ashfield nor Buckland have not contributed $15,000 in planning monies this year.

Other concerns noted was the need to relocate Senior Center services and the costs associated with said move if the survey results reveal that the Masonic Building is the preferred site.

Sylvia Smith introduced Daniel Pallotta of P3, the sole proposer for the Planning Coordinator position. The Expansion Committee and the COA will recommend that the Shelburne Select Board award the contract on Monday evening. Mr. Pallotta heard the discussion amongst town officials and believes that his firm can help. He acknowledged the need for a formal Agreement.

Ashfield Select Board member Tom Carter would like to have a much better handle on the ownership and governance of the proposed Expansion.

Public Comments:

Richard Feury suggested that the Senior Center look into renting luxury portable toilets in the short-term.

Mike McCusker touted the Senior Center as the busiest in the region. He would love to see a vote of confidence from member towns.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Narkewicz

Town Administrator