**Selectboard Meeting Minutes March 11, 2024 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order**: Andrew Baker called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard member Rick LaPierre and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Rick to approve the minutes of February 26. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Police Department** – Rick reported that the Chief has reached out to officials from Shelburne and Buckland to start the lengthy process of creating a shared police advisory committee.

**Emergency Management** – The emergency management committee will be meeting this month. Rick had searched through Selectboard minutes and found when the committee had been established He will present that information to the EMD and the committee so the committee can get organized.

**Town Hall** – Terry said there had been a plan to share accounting services with the Town of Whately. She had met with the Whately Town Administrator a few times and they had created an IMA agreement. Now the Whately administrator has left for a new job. FRCOG has agreed to carry Shelburne for another year and the town will maintain its relationship with the current FRCOG employee at a level funded fee. In the future the accountant would prefer to contract with individual towns rather than becoming a shared employee. This will be something to study for next year.

**Highway Department** – The crew is getting ready to start the full rebuild of Old Greenfield Road from Route 2 to the town line. This project will be paid with a MassWorks grant. Another project will be a mill and pave project on Mechanic Street to Hope Street and on Church Street to Maple Street. Funding is $111,000 from Chapter 90. The state will be doing a similar paving project on South Maple Street to Church Street and on Bridge Street to Mechanic Street. Another paving project being considered is to repave the paved portions of Cooper Lane. The Mechanic Street radar signs could be installed this week.

**Pocket Park** – The Franklin Tech students are back at work and progress is being made. It is hoped the project will be complete by early May.

**Memorial Hall** – Andrew reported that some progress has been made in matching the grant for the theater restoration. The Memorial Hall Association is in conversation with an architect.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Jeff Boettner RE: Green Communities Application** – Jeff has been working with FRCOG on a Green Communities grant for streetlight conversion. The details of the grant are not yet clear. He asked for Selectboard permission to continue with the grant application. A motion was made by Rick to authorize Jeff Boettner, on behalf of the Town of Shelburne, to apply for a Green Communities grant for the purpose of streetlight conversion. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Jeff said he was getting close to having solid numbers regarding the cost of the conversion for discussion with the finance committee and for a warrant article. There will be a public discussion on streetlights on April 17, with details of place and time to be determined.

**6:00 pm Shelburne Free Public Library Budget Presentation** (Ted Sicker, Tom Hale, trustees, Betsy Antaya, librarian) – Ted said the budget was based on 2024 expenses and was up by 3 %. The assistant librarian’s hours were increased from five to seven per week. Otherwise, expenses were pretty much flat. Eventually the library would like to be able to have more than one person working at a time for the security and comfort of people working alone, in an isolated location. That is a long-term plan, not part of the FY25 budget.

**6:30 pm Joseph Judd, Town Clerk Budget Presentation** – As presented, the budget for election expenses would rise since costs continue to go up and elections keep becoming more complicated. Joe said the town has great election workers and needs to treat them right.

Turning to records preservation, Joe said there are many dozens of records that need to be preserved. Recently two books were preserved at a cost of more than $6,000. Andrew suggested that in the future CPA funds might be used for historic preservation.

The town clerk expense budget included $4,000 for an assistant. Joe felt it would be beneficial to have extra help during election periods and during census time. The assistant would work on an as-needed basis and would also learn basic town clerk duties such as how to do a death certificate and how to register someone to vote. Joe was not sure if the upcoming year would be the best time to start an assistant as it will be very busy with several elections. The other thought is that a busy time would be a great time to learn a lot.

The town clerk salary is low, and has always been underpaid. Shelburne is probably one of the lower paid towns. Rick agreed that the town is behind the curve compared with other towns. He had done the math and noted that the town clerk is paid less per hour than the library director. He felt the town clerk should at least be paid at a rate comparable to the library director.

**7:00 pm John Walsh RE: Cowell Gym Capital Needs** (Norman Beebe, Rec Committee Chair)– John wanted to discuss priorities in regard to the building itself, rather than the rec program. He said nothing had been done to the structure in many years. There are still single pane windows in the basement. The cost of replacement windows is about $9,000, without installation. The outside of the building needs to be painted. John has scheduled appointments with painters to get quotes. The handicap access bleacher is not working property. It will cost $1,100 just to get someone to come and look at it. In addition to those three priorities, John said there is some roof and wall rot, some windows likely have lead paint, and the gym floor has many dead spots. He urged the Rec Committee to come up with a five-year capital plan. Andrew said that John and the committee needed to make a plan together and come to the Selectboard with a joint recommendation. Norman said he felt the committee’s role was to do programming, while the building was the responsibility of the town. He added that the committee agreed with John’s recommendations and said the building also needs a deep cleaning and the outside courts are starting to get cracks. All of this will be on the agenda for the next recreation committee meeting. Andrew said that the committee should empower itself to be stewards of the building and come up with operating and capital expense plans. Andrew also said that the CPA fund would have money for recreation activities. John said since he became gym director the committee has made a lot of progress towards what Andrew had suggested. Terry asked that firmer numbers be provided for possible warrant articles.

**Old Business:**

**Proposed Solar Array for Highway Pole Barn Roof** – A draft RFP, with Selectboard comments, has been given to the FRCOG procurement officer. There has been no response as yet.

**Roselli, Clark & Associates RE: Offer to Meet GASB 34 Compliance** – The auditors are willing to do this work, but were indefinite as to its need. It was the opinion of the board that meeting this requirement is not necessary until the town needs to get a bond. No one can remember the last time the town tried to get a bond. Andrew felt the requirement was an unfunded mandate from the state. The board still wants an opinion from the finance committee. As there was no quorum of the finance committee, this item will need to wait for another meeting.

**MTRSD RE: Use of Surplus Funds for Enhanced 911 System** – Terry spoke with Town Counsel who reviewed the district agreement and said there was nothing in it about surplus funds. Counsel did not believe the Selectboard could authorize spending surplus capital funds without town meeting approval. Rick thought the surplus should be returned to the town, and a new request made for the enhanced 911 project. Andrew agreed with that. A motion was put forth by Rick to deny the request to retain surplus capital funds for the enhanced 911 project and that the surplus funds be returned to the town. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**New** **Business:**

**Arms Academy Alumni Association RE: Request for Funds to Paint Flag Pole – Two Quotes Provided** – Due to the height of the flag pole, a lift would be needed to paint it. The alumni association is hoping the town would pay for the work as it is located on town property. In the past the cost of similar maintenance has been shared. The alumni association said it no longer has the funds, at least $3,000, to pay for this painting. Rick thought the town could pay if there were available funds. Terry said there was no account that had that much surplus and said it should be placed on town meeting warrant. Terry will find out of the alumni association could share in the cost.

**Juli Moreno, Senior Center RE: Request to Hire Part Time Custodian** – Following the resignation of the former custodian, the position was posted internally. Two people applied, Juli checked references and her recommendation was to hire John Heddens at $19.25 per hour. The person who cleans other town buildings was approached but was not interested in taking on more work. A motion was made by Rick to hire John Heddens as custodian for the Senior Center. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Fees Collected in Addition to One’s Salary** – State law allows the Town Clerk and Treasurer to collect and keep fees. Andrew objects to that as a way of compensating employees. He would prefer that salaries be clearly identified without having to guess if, and how many, fees are included. Rick said he did not favor adjusting salaries for just a few people, but would prefer to see a comparison of Shelburne’s salaries across the board as compared with other area towns. Town bylaws allow the collector to retain municipal lien fees. The town voted to approved that. To change it would require a town vote rescinding that portion of the bylaws. It could then be proposed to raise the salaries of the town clerk and treasurer with the understanding that they would no longer retain any fees. Terry will speak with the town clerk and town treasurer and come back with more information at the next meeting.

**Any Other Business:** None

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on March 25, at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

**Correspondence:**

**Jennifer Bauman RE: Resignation from Shelburne Cultural Council** – The resignation was acknowledged and Jennifer was thanked for her service

**Joe Palmeri RE: Resignation from Zoning Board of Appeals effective June 30, 2024** ­– Joe will not accept reappointment to the ZBA when his terms ends. He was thanked for his 20-year service and impressive longevity. His extensive knowledge of zoning issues will be missed.

**Public Comment:**

Rick said he had forgotten one liaison report. It was mentioned that MEMA funds were not given to Shelburne following the flooding of July 2023. EMD Tom Williams sought the answer to that and found it was an oversight. The town will now be receiving $20,000.

**Adjournment**: At 7:40 a motion was made by Rick to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary