**Selectboard Meeting Minutes September 9, 2024 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order**: Rick LaPierre called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Andrew Baker and Tricia Yacovone-Biagi, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Andrew to approve the minutes of August 26. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Arms Library** – Andrew said that the Office of Disability grant program may be able to supply some funds for replacing the library lift. Perhaps the stage lift for Memorial Hall can be bundled into the grant application.

**Streetlight Committee** – Kudos were given to the committee for applying for, and receiving, a $75,000 Green Communities grant. This will make the streetlight conversion affordable.

**Memorial Hall** – The Memorial Hall committee has been approved for a match of a Cultural Facilities grant. The next step is to work on bid specs for replacing the floor, tin ceiling, and seats.

**Highway Department** – The Bridge over Dragon Brook at the intersection of Bardwells Ferry and South Shelburne Roads has been closed by MassDOT due to structural deficiencies.

**Town Hall** – The Primary Election last Tuesday went well. Some issues arose following the server getting switched the week before, but everything is back up and running now.

**Emergency Management** – Six members of the Emergency Operations Center team recently attended a training session.

**Police Department** – Rick said the Request for Proposal document for a wage study for the police department has been finalized and sent to several vendors.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Public Hearing Le Peacock, 10 Bridge Street RE: Entertainment License** – The hearing was opened by Rick at 5:45 pm. Le Peacock is seeking an annual entertainment license to allow live acoustical music between the hours of 9 to 11 pm weekdays and 9 to midnight on Saturdays. Sundays are excluded Michael Wescott, owner of Le Peacock was present for the hearing. There would very little or no amplification. Andrew noted that it was a small underground space and the sound can’t really travel. There was no public comment. At 5:48 a motion was made by Tricia to close the hearing. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

A motion was then put forth by Andrew to grant an annual entertainment license to Le Peacock at 10 Bridge Street. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**6:00 pm School Committee Members Willow Cohen and Jason Cusimano** – Jason, who has been on the School Committee since 2016, said he thought communication with the Selectboard had been lacking over the years. He would like to have regular monthly or quarterly meetings with the Board. He said school opening went smoothly. BSE enrollment remained at 268 pupils. Mohawk went up to 331 from 314. Overall there are 892 students enrolled in the district compared with 890 last year. Jason said if regular meetings were scheduled, perhaps each one could focus on a topic. Willow said she would like to send at least monthly emails to the Selectboard and Finance Committee. She mentioned that the solar installation was up and running, several new classes are being offered, and 12 AP classes will be offered depending on enrollment. BERK12 has several reports up on the website and more will soon be added. Willow will send the links. BERK 12 will be meeting with Selectboards and Finance Committees in late September or October. Rick said Willow and Jason should reach out to Terry to make future appointments and he asked that the Finance Committee be included in those meetings. Andrew posed several questions to Jason and Willow, which will be answered via email.

**6:20 pm Tom Williams, EMD RE: Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan** – The purpose of the plan is to describe how town leaders and emergency management people work together as a team to get a job done, said Tom. He is planning a table top exercise facilitated by MEMA coordinator Nathan Moreau in mid-October. The exercise will get everyone working together so if an emergency occurred everyone would be ready to go. Rick said some parts of the plan have not been completed, but he was ready to sign off on it once all the blanks were filled in. Tricia said she would like the tabletop exercise to be done first, then if any problems or gaps arise the document could be adjusted, then finalized and signed. Tricia said ICS (Incident Command System) training is very important and that some town employees should take it and the town should pay them for their time. Tom will send information on how to take the training to the emergency management team Rick mentioned he was surprised at the number of emergency shelters that were listed. Tom knew some were valid and others should be contacted. Tom noted that the Emergency Operations Center team has been training.

**Old Business:**

**Knotweed Management Plan RE: Old Greenfield Road** – A lot of information on this issue had been passed around. One expert recommended using herbicides, another recommended the cover and smother approach. Highway Superintendent Jeff Johnson felt hand-pulling, followed by cover and smother, was the most logical choice. Any spraying would also affect surrounding vegetation. Part of the knotweed problem is located on property owned by Connie Clarke. She felt the quality of the fill, which contains rocks, tree trunks, and heavy clay soil could present a problem. Connie felt that spraying at this stage of knotweed growth would not solve the problem. Knotweed is also found in an area near a culvert which was referred to as the “rock fall.” It was thought that smother and cover would not work in that area. Tricia was concerned about how much staff time would be needed to hand-pull the invasive plants and also about safety, citing the steepness of the areas. Andrew thought smother and cover might be best for now, with perhaps another approach used in the future. Due to the presence of wetlands in the area, the Conservation Commission must rule on whatever option is used. Rick said a special meeting of the Con Com would be requested rather than waiting until that board’s October meeting. A motion was put forth by Andrew to authorize Jeff Johnson to move forward with a recommendation to the Conservation Commission for an appropriate method for addressing knotweed that can be implemented this fall. There was no second to the motion. Tricia said there were still too many “moving parts.” Rick suggested a combination proposal or dual requests to Con Com. Jeff said he would also need to get permission from the Mass Department of Agricultural Resources in order to use herbicides on a road right of way. A motion was made by Andrew to authorize Jeff Johnson to bring both options [spraying and cover and smother], as appropriate, to the Conservation Commission. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**ARPA Fund Update** – Andrew had hoped to get some cost estimates for landscaping at the pocket park and for repair of the pothole overlook deck. He has made phone calls but has received no responses.

**Transfer Station Operations RE: Proposed Changes –** Andrew has spoken with the attendant about window stickers for vehicles using the station. Possible issues include people with more than one vehicle and people who do not reside in Shelburne but are bringing trash for people who do live in town.

**Solar Array Installation @ Highway Pole Barn** – Rick reported that Eversource initially wanted an additional $10,300 to upgrade a transformer. It was then pointed out to Eversource that a new transformer was only 40 feet away from the pole barn. Soon after that Eversource granted approval for the project. The panels have been delivered. The next steps will be to get the necessary electrical and building permits.

**New** **Business:**

**FY’25 Community Compact Program RE: Wage & Classification Study for Police** – Town Meeting had appropriated $10,000for a study. Terry reported that when the FY Community Compact Program came out she learned that a wage and classification study could be funded by a Best Practices Grant. If a grant was secured the money appropriated at Town Meeting could be saved. Terry would also like to apply, at a later date, for an IT Grant for a cyber-security assessment. A motion was made by Andrew to authorize the Town Administrator to apply for both a Best Practices Grant and an IT Grant. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Melissa Elie RE: Moonlight Magic Event & Use of Pocket Park** – The request is to put up a community tree in front of the pavilion and decorate the pavilion. The tree and decorations would be put up just before Moonlight Magic and remain in place until mid-January. Tricia wanted to be sure the tree and decorations were generic and not focused on any one faith. Rick thought a few more details were needed. He thought the tree should not be placed in front of the pavilion and thought leaving it up until mid-January might be too long. Andrew’s sense was that the time was similar to the timing of all the other town holiday decorations. This topic will be further discussed at another meeting. In the meantime, Terry will reach out to Melissa Elie for more details regarding proposed decorations, and the location of the tree.

**Shelburne Falls Oktoberfest RE: Request for One Day Beer & Wine 9/28/24** – Organizers of the event have requested a one-day beer and wine license to allow Pioneer Valley Brewing to serve alcohol on September 28, on the grounds of BSE. A motion was put forth by Andrew to approve the request for a one-day beer and wine license for Oktoberfest, on September 28. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**Use of CPA Funds** – Andrew would like to apply for CPA funds to be used to demolish the barn on the town-owned property on Mechanic Street and to do an environmental review of the town-owned Main Street property. He felt the town would be better served by cleaning up those properties so they could be donated to Habitat for Humanity who would then build affordable housing. Habitat will not take the properties until they are ready to be built upon. Andrew has learned that such a request is CPA-eligible. Rick said other things would also be needed to make the properties buildable and that enough money had been spent already. Rick also thought that since the Selectboard appoints several members of the CPC, the Board should not be bringing proposals to the committee. Rick thought it was fine for other boards and committees to bring proposals, but didn’t like the idea of the Selectboard doing it. Tricia said she had initially shared Rick’s concerns about the Selectboard bringing proposals, but has been reassured by CPC Chair Will Flanders that it was fine for the Selectboard to bring a proposal. A motion was made by Andrew to apply to the CPC for a demolition project for pre-development of the Mechanic Street property for $50,000 and for an environmental site review for the Main Street property for $10,000. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – no; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 2-0-1.

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on September 23, at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

**Correspondence:**

**Robert DiNicolantonio, Custodian RE: Resignation** – Following the resignation, Terry interviewed John Heddens, who is the custodian at the Senior Center. John toured the Town Hall, Cowell Gym, and the Arms Library. Given his schedule, he agreed to work two evenings a week at the Town Hall and two days a week at Cowell Gym. He has no time for the Arms Library or the Shelburne Free Public Library. Terry recommended hiring John for Town Hall and Cowell Gym. She will look for someone else for the libraries. A motion was put forth by Tricia to hire John Heddens to serve as custodian for Town Hall and Cowell Gym. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Department of Energy Resources RE: Green Communities Grant Award $75,734** – The funds will be used for windows blinds for Cowell Gym ($27,550) and for the streetlight conversion ($48,184).

**Christopher Curtis RE: Seeking Rep for Deerfield River Watershed Association** – DRWA is trying to create a Deerfield Wild and Scenic Study Committee and would like a representative from each affected town. Terry has reached out to Open Space and Conservation Commission seeking a volunteer. There have been no responses so far. This will be discussed further at another meeting.

**Northern Tier Rail Proposal** – A motion was made by Andrew to support this proposal. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Public Comment:**

John Walsh said that in addition to the Green Communities grant he was pursuing getting extra funds from Eversource for the Cowell Gym. John also said that it was speculative that the fill brought knotweed to Old Greenfield Road. It is everywhere. He also urged the Board not to push abutters into a corner.

**Adjournment**: At 8:30 pm a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes; Tricia – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary