**Selectboard Meeting Minutes December 16, 2024 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

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

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

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Highway Department** – Jeff Johnston has sent in the Chapter 90 reimbursement for Cooper Lane. The guardrail company has not yet installed the guardrails on Old Greenfield Road. Line painting on that road will wait until spring. Jeff expects there will be between $20,000 and $30,000 remaining in the MassWorks grant. He will use that to purchase rip rap for erosion control. The temporary bridge is now in place. Grant writer, Terry Walker, will be applying for an engineering grant to replace the temporary bridge with a permanent bridge. Gill Engineering has submitted drawings to DOT for the bridge near the library, hoping to get an implementation grant for that bridge. Jeff is exploring rubberized, permeable tree well materials for the Bridge Street trees. The overtime policy is a continuing issue, Jeff would like to discuss it with the Selectboard.

**Police Department** – The stuff a cruiser event was well supported by the community. Not only a cruiser, but also a sprinter van was stuffed with gifts. The three local fire departments, the State Police, and several other groups partnered in this event.

**MTRSD Personnel Subcommittee** – Rick met with the subcommittee, which discussed the paraprofessional’s contract. It was an executive session so there are no details to report except that the process has started.

**Mohawk Budget Subcommittee –** The committee has invited Selectboard and Finance Committee members to a meeting on December 18, at 6 pm. Andrew hopes to be able to attend.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm John Wheeler & Will Flanders RE: Part-time Clerical Positions (Planning Board and Community Preservation Committee)** – Part-time Planning Board clerk, Faye Whitney, said, over a year ago, that she would like to give up the position, due to her over-booked schedule. She also said she would stay on until her replacement was found. Despite advertising, no one has stepped forward, wanting the position. Meanwhile the CPC is looking for a clerk. Faye suggested advertising for a CPC clerk and if applicants wanted more hours, see if they would like the planning board position as well. It was thought that advertising only for a CPC clerk was the best idea. Will said the planning board had thought a new person might overlap with Faye until Town Meeting to learn the job. Andrew said he had no problem with the overlap, adding this was a responsible step-down plan. The position has been advertised in the past but the planning position is only budgeted for about four hours per week. Will thought the CPC position might be only 5-10 hours per month. Andrew said the position should be advertised as 10 hours per week, non-benefitted. A motion was made by Andrew to establish the position of CPC Clerk. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0. Will said the CPC budget had funds available for advertising.

Will and John said that two of the proposed bylaws, which the Planning Board will be bringing to Town Meeting, will be general, not zoning, bylaws and will require the Selectboard and Town Clerk to become involved. The next Planning Board meeting will be on January 7 and they are hoping for Selectboard feedback by then. Discussion of the proposed bylaws will be put on the agenda for the December 30 meeting.

**Finance Committee RE: FY’26 Budget Directives** – (Finance Committee members Todd Dubreuil, Terry Mitchell, Jim Burnham) – For the past two years 4% salary increases were given to town employees. Andrew noted that had been an attempt to get even with the CPI, which is now under 3%. Rick wondered what inflation factor the FRCOG was planning to use. Terry said the town had tried to move away from COLA and instead try to have competitive salaries. Treasurer Angel Bragdon said she thought the cost of health insurance would be going up but won’t know for sure until January. Last year health insurance costs rose by 8%. The consensus of the Finance Committee was to offer a 3% salary increase Andrew thought that was fair, but competitiveness could move him to agree to 4%. A motion was made by Andrew to adopt a preliminary salary increase guideline of 3% for budgeting purposes. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

The Board typically asks department heads to create realistic budgets and justify them with prior and current year’s spending. It was decided to follow this practice again this year.

**Old Business:**

**Memorial Hall Theater Renovations Phase 2** (Jim Kessler, Joe Mattei)– Two bid projects are being finalized. Phase 2 will include repairing the tin ceiling, and the wooden floor, repainting the ceiling and walls, and replacing the old seats. Jim said estimates have been requested and he thinks enough funding is available to start the bid process, but the town’s approval to move ahead is needed. Joe said he had done cost estimates and thinks the Phase 2 cost will be $426,000. Andrew said the theater currently has over 400 seats, that number will be reduced to 301 plus 20 to30 temporary sets. The seats will be angled for better viewing and staggered for better sight lines. The aisles will be wider. A motion was put forth by Andrew to authorize the town to contract with FRCOG to prepare public bid specs for Phase 2 projects of Memorial Hall Theater capital campaign renovation project, including repair of the tin ceiling, repair to the floors, painting the ceiling and walls. Cost for these repairs is estimated at $226,000. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0. A motion was made by Andrew to authorize the town to enter into an OMNIA contact with Highland Seating/Ervin Seating to remove the existing seats in Memorial Hall Theater and produce and install 301 new seats in the theater at a cost of$200,000. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**New** **Business:**

**Planning Board Proposed Bylaw RE: Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)** – An updated version of this proposed bylaw was just received so the item was passed over for this meeting.

**Bob Dean RE: Review of Priority Project List** – This list gives the COG guidance as they look for grant funding opportunities. After discussion the top four priority projects were 1) a generator for Town Hall; 2) Cowell Gym energy efficiency projects and a generator; 3) Memorial Hall renovations; and 4) Arms Library windows and an ADA lift.

**Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission RE: Seasonal Population Vote** – This vote is taken annually to affirm that the town’s seasonal population does not vary too much. A motion was made by Andrew to approve the seasonal population estimate provided by the ABCC. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Winter Parking Ban is in Effect (12/1/24 thru 3/31/25)** – Four vehicles were towed during the last storm with their owners saying they were unaware of the parking ban. Notice of the ban is on the town website, the blue lights go on when the ban is being enforced, people who sign up get a call via Blackboard Connect, the information has been in the *Recorder* and will be in the *Two Town News*. The Board could think of no other ways to get the word out. Owners of two of the towed vehicles asked the town to pay their towing bills. Those requests will be denied as the towing was the result of violating a town bylaw. It was unfortunate that their landlords did not explain the winter parking situation.

**Arms Library Custodial Position RE: Davis Bates –** Davis Bates has applied for the position, which is for about three hours a week at a rate of $23.51per hour. A motion was put forth by Andrew to approve the hiring of Davis Bates as Arms Library custodian. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0. Andrew questioned why Shelburne pays the full cost of custodial help and thought Buckland should contribute. This will be discussed later in the budget process.

**Shelburne Free Public Library RE: Request to Hire Carrie Healy, Substitute** – This is a part time, as needed position. A motion was made by Andrew to hire Carrie Healy as a substitute at the Shelburne Free Public Library. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**Cowell Gym Elevator** – The elevator needed a service call after it was noticed that the motor was running constantly and there was an odor of hydraulic fuel in the car. The technician said the motor had to run more often to keep the fluid warm in the cold temperatures. There was no real problem. The service call cost $500. The technician suggested that the hydraulic oil be changed and the drum which holds it be scraped and cleaned. That cost would be $4,900. Since this is not urgent, Terry will wait until Spring to see if the elevator budget can handle the expense. If not, the funds will be budgeted in the coming year.

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

**Correspondence:** None.

**Public Comment:** None.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary