**Selectboard Meeting Minutes March 24, 2025 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, Tricia Yacovone-Biagi, and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Tricia to approve the minutes of March 10. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0. (Andrew had not yet arrived.)

**Appointments with Finance Committee Members: (**Jim Burnham, Terri Mitchell, Finance Committee)

**5:35 pm John Taylor, Fire Chief RE: Proposed Town Address Bylaw** – This bylaw comes from the Commonwealth. Towns must assign street addresses and this would put that task into bylaw form. This bylaw has been approved by the Assistant Assessor, who is responsible for maintaining the master address table for the town. The 911 Coordinator oversees the numbering process, passes the information on to the Assessor, where it eventually gets shared with Mass GIS. If this bylaw passes, the Selectboard would then vote on specific regulations and the process. A motion was made by Tricia to put the address assignment article on the warrant for Annual Town Meeting. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0

**5:45 pm Weston & Sampson RE: MVP Action Grant** (Janet Moonan, Weston & Sampson; Allison Gage, FRCOG) – The action grant being proposed would be a plan to mitigate flooding in the Dragon Brook watershed. Culverts and bridges would be inventoried so the town can prepare for changes. The plan is to apply for a two-year grant. No match is required. The plan would create resilient drainage infrastructure improvements, land use plans, and roadway improvement plans. Priorities would be identifying stream flow pinch points, finding nature-based solutions to those pinch points, and conducting landowner and community outreach. At the end of the project in June 2027, a drainage resilience plan, complete with costs, would be presented. Janet said this project addresses a lot of the MVP core principals and should be very competitive. The average MVP grant,last year~~,~~ was $750,000.~~,~~ this grant will be for around $350,000. This will just be for the study, not the implementation. Janet said the intent is to work in conjunction with the bridge replacement project. Allison said the FRCOG would be helping with grant administration and coordinating on outreach. If reappointed, Tricia will continue as MVP Coordinator. A motion was put forth by Andrew to authorize Weston & Sampson and FRCOG to move ahead on submitting the MVP action grant application. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Tricia – abstain; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-1.

**6:00 pm MTRSD Budget Presentation** (Sheryl Stanton, Superintendent; William Lataille, Business Manager; Jason Cusimano, Willow Cohen, School Committee members) – Sheryl said the goals of the budget were to build programming aligned with the strategic plan, use resources strategically, and work on sustainability. Bill explained how the budget came about. The total budget, using all funds, is up by about one million dollars. Contractual increases, transportation, salaries, insurance, etc., were up by a million dollars, while state aid remains flat. More than $851,000 was cut from the budget, primarily in the area of instruction (salaries, stipends, supplies.) Tricia asked for more details on instructional cuts. Bill said the cuts were in things such as copy paper, teacher longevity, tutoring, and professional development. No positions were being cut. Shelburne’s total assessment is expected to rise by 2.11%

**6:30 pm Jeff Johnston, Highway Budget Presentation** – Starting with the maintenance budget, questions were asked about the increase in equipment repair from $40,000 to $65,000. Jeff said that would cover 14 vehicles, only two of which were still under warranty. Gravel costs went from $7,000 to $60,000. That includes crushed stone, loam, rip rap, etc. Jeff said prices were projected to rise by 11%, but he thought he could lower the amount requested. He said that the town’s gravel roads were now lower than the shoulders and need to be re-graveled. He also said that after last year’s issue with knotweed, more clean fill will be needed. Jeff asked for $5,000 for uniforms, saying that a uniform company would be able to provide the uniforms as well as keep them clean. He added that the crew represents the town and decent uniforms should be provided.

Jeff has asked for an increase in wages for two employees. Ray Townsley is skilled in welding, wiring, and fabricating. He has been doing the work of a mechanic and Jeff proposed an hourly wage that is the average of what area highway crew mechanics are making. Steve Hoar does not want the title of foreman, but has been doing the work of a foreman and Jeff has proposed that he be paid the average wage of area highway foremen.

Moving on to capital requests, Jeff is asking for $326,000 for a 2025 Western Star truck, which had been spec’ed for Shelburne last year. This truck would replace the 2015 International, which would then become the backup truck. The current backup truck~~,~~ would then be auctioned. Terri Mitchell felt more than one quote was needed for this large an expense. Jeff is also asking for $196,038 for a 2025 CV 515 truck to replace the 1-ton Chevy 500, which has a lot of problems and which Jeff feels is too small for highway work. He has tried, without success, to get more than the one quote. The final request is for a Boss plow, at $7,519. That would replace a worn-out plow that can no longer be welded. Jeff said if the CV 515 truck were approved, he could withdraw his request for a new plow. When asked to prioritize, Jeff said he would choose to get the Western Star truck. Andrew pointed out that a five-year financing plan had been proposed for the Western Star and that Chapter 90 money could be used for part of the CV 515.

**7:00 pm Greg Bardwell, Police Chief Budget Presentation** – The operating budget is expected to rise by about $3,000. Some discussion was held on the amounts budgeted for electricity~~,~~ and propane. Following the recent wage and classification study, wages were raised to be comparable with similar towns. The increases would raise the total personnel cost by about $113,000. Buckland pays for about half of the total budget, including capital expenses. Buckland’s share, if the budget were approved as presented, would be $441,461. For capital expenses, replacing the 2014 cruiser is part of the replacement schedule. The cost of a new cruiser would be about $70,000. Also on the list of capital expenses is $9,000 for the replacement of expired bullet proof vests. The cost is just over $1,400 per vest and six are needed. The vests have a five-year life before being considered as expired. Vests are acquired by using a Federal grant that reimburses at least 50% of the cost. That grant is not guaranteed this year, but Greg said there had been no discussion that funds would not be forthcoming.

**7:30 pm Franklin County Tech School Budget Presentation** (Ross Cobris, FCTS Business Manager;~~,~~ Liz Bouchard Business Manager-elect;~~,~~ Robert Miller, school committee) **–** The budget for the school is $16,568,353, with $7,383,955 coming from assessments from the 19 member towns. This year the average assessments are rising by 5.5%. Russ said that for the past 26 years, assessment increases have averaged just above 3% per year. This larger increase was driven by the state formula. Shelburne’s operating assessment would be $196,487. The town has 11 students attending the school. Shelburne’s capital assessment would be $6,574. Russ said a feasibility study is in the works for expanding the school as it is “bursting at the seams.”

A discussion was held on a student, who actually lives in Buckland, being charged to Shelburne by mistake. Shelburne is being reimbursed for the expense. Buckland did not have the funds to pay for the student. The FCT school committee had voted to get~~s~~ the needed funds from another revenue source. Jim Burnham pointed out that meant all the towns were partially paying for that student.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Police Department:** The department is actively planning for several upcoming events that will impact traffic throughout the village, including the Bridge of Flowers Road Race, the Bridge Dinner, and the Arms Alumni Parade. Priority is to ensure safety and maintain smooth traffic flow for both residents and visitors. With the warmer weather, the department would like to remind everyone to stay alert, as we’re seeing an increase in pedestrians and cyclists of all ages around town. A little extra caution from motorists can go a long way in keeping everyone safe.

Below is a report generated from the records management software.

Records Analysis Report (01/01/2025 - 03/18/2025)

Case Activity Statistics

* Total Offenses Committed: 17
* Total Felonies: 6
* Total Crime-Related Incidents: 3
* Total Non-Crime Related Incidents: 17
* Total Arrests (On View): 1
* Total Arrests (Based on Incident/Warrants): 2
* Total Summons Arrests: 3
* Total Arrests (Unspecified Type): 0
* Total Arrests: 6
* Total P/C's: 0
* Total Juvenile Arrests: 1
* Total Juveniles Handled (Arrests): 0
* Total Juveniles Referred (Arrests): 1
* Total Hearings: 0
* Total Summons: 0
* Total Open Warrants: 3
* Total Open Default Warrants: 0
* Total Orders: 1

**Franklin Regional Transportation Authority Advisory Board:** Next meeting this week, March 20.

**Mohawk Trail Regional School District Personnel Negotiations Subcommittee:**Executive session meetings with the Unit B - Paraprofessional~~’~~s Team are in progress and will continue frequently until negotiations are complete.

**Police Services Advisory Committee:** Next meeting April 16.

**P.V. Veterans Services Advisory Board:** Next meeting October 7.

**Town Hall:** Tricia will be meeting with the Treasurer as we approach end of FY25.

**Emergency Management:** An article wassubmitted to the *Two Town News* for April.EMD Tom Williams met with the Rec Committee which voted to approve designating Cowell as an emergency~~,~~ and warming/cooling center shelter for the town.Tom visited the print shop at Franklin County Jail to check on availability of support. He found ample resources of inexpensive printing to support distribution of educational materials to town residents. Tom is working on three-year plan to include impacts of climate change. Emergency management operations will continue shifting from seasonal to year-round efforts as the frequency and severity of various disastertypes increase, and response and recovery efforts become more complicated. The warming atmosphere makes weather events more extreme, there's an increasing likelihood of wildfires and floods, and the geographic areas affected by certain types of natural hazards are shifting. Communities must routinely reevaluate the risks they face and appropriately update their hazard mitigation and preparedness plans for all natural and human-caused threats.  The latest Situational Awareness Information: as seen in *Greenfield Recorder* article from 3/17/2025, MA is still in critical drought, and wildfires remain a concern (akin to last year when 4,500 acres burned).

**Senior Center:** An updated budget has been submitted.

**Highway Department** – The crew is coping with mud season and is working on the dirt roads. The MassWorks grant has $89,000 remaining. Jeff will use it for line painting, loam and other costs of mitigating the knotweed problem.

**Memorial Hall Association:** Andrew said that one contractor and two painters attended a bidder’s walk thru. Bids for the work are due April 18.

**Community Preservation:** Andrew said the Board’s request for funds related to tax title property were not approved by the committee. It was felt that other available sources of funding should be used first.

**Pratt Memorial Committee:** Did not meet last week.

**Old Business:**

**Highway Laborer Position – Schedule Two In-person Interviews** – Four applications had been received. It was decided to interview the two applicants who have licenses and DPW experience. Interviews will be held on April 3 or 4.

**New** **Business:**

**Ingeborg “Bing” Waldsmith RE: MTRSD FY’26 Capital Request – Water Heater** – Jim Burnham expressed concerns about this request. He said this was not a capital expense as defined by the regional agreement. Further, he felt that the $36,713 cost could easily be funded from the existing budget. Jim stressed that capital expenses are supposed to be planned, and this is a maintenance cost. The school has asked that an article be placed on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant to cover the costs. Jim said he would speak against it at Town Meeting.

**Eversource Energy Efficiency Incentive Offer – Lighting at Cowell Gym** (John Walsh) – Eversource is offering a $3,275 incentive for replacing lighting fixtures at Cowell Gym. The total cost of the project would be $8,934. The town would then need to pay the remaining $5,659. Eversource offers a two-year payment plan with no interest. John said 50+ fixtures would be replaced in the building’s basement. The Energy Committee will be asked to support this and to shepherd the project through to completion. A motion was made by Andrew to support the lighting incentive project. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Parade Permits**

**Arms Academy Alumni** – This event will be held on June 28. Two detail officers have been approved. A motion was put forth by Tricia to approve the parade permit for the Arms Academy Alumni event on June 28. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**45th Bridge of Flowers Road Race** – This event will be held on August 9. It has been approved by the Police Chief. A motion was made by Tricia to approve the street use permit for the Bridge of Flowers Road Race on August 9. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**2nd Annual Oktoberfest** – This event will be held at BSE on September 27, with a rain date of October 4~~.~~ It has received the approval of the Police Chief. A motion was made by Tricia to approve the event permit for Oktoberfest. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Proposed Special Town Meeting Warrant – April, 2025** – The three-article warrant includes an article rescinding the Opioid Settlement Stabilization Fund and an article creating an Opioid Settlement Special Revolving Fund. It also includes an article allocating community preservation funds to be split equally into three required accounts. It was decided to hold the meeting on April 22. A motion was made by Tricia to approved the Special Town Meeting warrant as presented. This was seconded by Andrew. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**Sewer Commission Appointment** – Matt Larabee has expressed interest in serving as a Sewer Commissioner. Speaking as a Sewer Commissioner, Andrew said he had met Matt, who wants to serve. Andrew was eager to fill the long-empty third spot on the Commission. A motion was put forth by Andrew to appoint Matt Larabee to the Shelburne Sewer Commission. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Consultant for Tax Title Properties –** Andrew would like to put an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to use funds from the Housing Trust Fund to hire a consultant to assist with determining if the Mechanic and Main Street tax title properties are buildable lots. Rick asked why the town would spend money, thinking it would be better to consult with the Building Inspector, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission first. Andrew said if those boards were consulted and the lots were found to be unbuildable, the request for consultant funds could be withdrawn. He added that a bylaw allowing affordable housing to be built on non-conforming lots had been passed. Andrew had asked for $12,000 from CPA funds, which was denied. Tricia suggested talking with the Building Inspector and Con Com this year, so that by next year there would be answers about buildability, then funds for a consultant could be sought if needed. The Board agreed to continue this discussion at the next meeting.

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on April 7, at 5:30 pm via Zoom.

**Correspondence:**

**Energy Committee Chair** – A solar company has been going door-to-door asking people to sign contracts for solar panels, then appearing with the panels in a few days. The police have been consulted and people should be aware of this activity.

**Mary Lou Gallup** – Mary Lou has submitted her letter of resignation from the Rec Committee.

**Public Comment:** John Walsh said Window Depot has lowered its quote for Cowell Gym windows from over $45,000 to $41, 675.

**Adjournment**: At 9:12 pm a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Tricia. Roll call vote: Tricia – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary