Selectboard Meeting Minutes April 14, 2025 5:30pm Shelburne Fire Station

**Call to Order**: Chair, Rick LaPierre called the meeting to order at 5:30pm. Others present: Selectboard members Tricia Yacovone-Biagi, Andrew Baker, Finance Committee Members Todd Dubrueil, Terri Mitchell, Jim Burnham, and Town Administrator, Terry Narkewicz.

**FY’26 Budget Review**: The purpose of the meeting was to review the proposed FY’26 Budget with members of the Finance Committee.

Omnibus Budget – following review of the proposed omnibus budget, the following changes were recommended:

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Other Post-Employment Benefits Trust

Action: No changes made. Terry will reach out to Treasurer to see what the Town’s unfunded liability amount is to date. She will also recommend that the Treasurer seek strategies for funding this account without drastically impacting the town’s financial standing.

Audit of Town Records

Action: No changes made however, members of the Finance Committee would like the town to comply with GASB requirements.

Town Clerk’s Salary

Action: Reduce budget by $3,500 to reflect only the Town Clerk’s salary.

Town Clerk’s Expense

Action: Add $3,500 to personnel costs for proposed assistant to the Clerk.

Record Preservation

Action: No changes made; however, Andrew recommended that we remind the Town Clerk that record preservation is an eligible expense under the Community Preservation Program.

County Retirement, Un-Employment, Health Insurance, Life Insurance, Medicare

Action: No changes made; however, members of the Finance Committee would like explanations for said increases.

**PUBLIC SAFETY** – No changes.

**EDUCATION** – No changes. There was general discussion regarding the overall budget, declining enrollment, and whether to “hold out” the line item for discussion at town meeting.

**HIGHWAYS** – No changes. Terry will forward questions/comments to the Highway Superintendent pertaining to use of Chapter 90 funds, vehicle/equipment fleet, and breakdown of operating expenditures.

**HEALTH-SANITATION** – No changes.

**RECREATION**

Cowell Maintenance

Action: The proposed budget of $35,852 was increased to $40,000 to cover unanticipated costs relating to HVAC repairs, electrical issues, etc.

**HUMAN SERVICES**

Arms Library: In a previous meeting, members of the Finance Committee voted unanimously to reduce Shelburne’s share of the Arms Library budget by $6,469. By doing so, Shelburne’s appropriation in FY’26 would be $35,044. The amount represents 50% of the total amount that the library is requesting from both the towns of Buckland and Shelburne. The Town of Shelburne has always funded their share of the Arms Library budget despite the fact that the Town of Buckland has not.  For the last several years, both the Selectboard and Finance Committee have repeatedly requested that the library revisit the formula used to assess each town and to provide an accurate accounting of membership based on residency and not mailing addresses.  To date, nothing has been done.

Until there is a Memorandum of Understanding in place clearly delineating the financial responsibility of each town and a method of collecting data to reflect actual residency of users, Shelburne cannot continue to fund the Arms Library budget at the level it once did.  Further, in future years, we would like the Arms Library to include “income” from other sources on their budget submission sheet (estimated state aid, estimated interest, endowments, and grants).

Capital Budget

There is $698,227 in capital requests for FY’26, some of which were obligated in prior years. After reviewing each of the capital requests and the variety of funding sources recommended by the Town Administrator, all capital requests were approved using the following funding sources:

Unrestricted Stabilization: $286,652 Cowell Fees Reserved for Approp: $ 21,000

Vehicle Stabilization: $ 35,000 Housing Trust Funds: $ 30,000

Equipment Stabilization: $ 83,130 Chapter 90: $150,000

Debt Exclusion: $ 52,945 Reimbursed by Buckland: $ 39,500

It was noted that in future years, Departments, Boards, and Committees submitting capital requests must also submit supporting documentation to substantiate the dollar amount requested to ensure that dollar amount requested is sufficient.

Vote to accept budget as presented: Andrew presented a motion to accept all changes to the proposed FY’26 budget as discussed. Tricia seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote. Andrew- yes; Tricia – yes; and Rick – yes.

Closing Remarks: Finance Committee Jim Burnham asked the Town Administrator for her thoughts on the overall budget. Terry indicated that this is the first year that she has had concerns regarding how close the FY’26 budget is to the town’s levy limit. In prior years, the budget has had an excess taxing capacity of $300,000 or greater before hitting the levy limit. This year’s budget has just over $100,000 in excess capacity. Terry attributes this trend to rising costs, less new growth, and delinquent taxes. She recently read in a Massachusetts Municipal Publication that 46 cities and towns in the Commonwealth are facing overrides this year. Terry does believe that this year’s proposed budget is reasonable. However, if the Town is not able to collect or increase anticipated revenue capacity, most likely Shelburne will be faced with budget cuts or an override. Jim Burnham added that next year it may be important to review the budget from the perspective of having a shortfall, needing to curb costs, or having to request an override, arguing that such a review would be different than a regular one.

Adjournment: Tricia presented a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:18pm. Andrew seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously 3 to 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Narkewicz

Town Administrator