**Selectboard Meeting Minutes July 28, 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 and Rod McBride and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Rod to approve the minutes of July 14. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – abstain. Motion passed 2-0-1.

**Department Liaison Reports:**

**Highway Department** – Highway Superintendent Jeff Johnston has agreed to make repairs to the pothole deck. Andrew plans to explore if replacing the 30-year old deck might qualify for CPA funding. With the exception of the insulated shades in the gymnasium, the Cowell Gym project (phase 1) is almost complete. New employee, Seth Gerard, started work today. There has been some erosion on the Old Greenfield Road bank near Connie Clarke’s property. Warner Brothers has been contacted for an estimate about how to prevent road silt from washing into the wetlands. The Finance Committee has approved funding to repair the department’s tractor. The crew has been spreading 800-900 tons of gravel on the dirt roads. Once the final numbers for Chapter 90 funding are received larger projects will be planned. Skim coating will be done on Smead Hill Road.

**Pratt Building Committee** – The group will be meeting later this week. They are working on a memorandum of understanding with the library to clarify maintenance issues.

**Energy Committee** – A grant has been received to allow Weston & Sampson to do an energy audit on the police building. The committee is looking into exploring Climate Leader designation to see if that is something the town would like to pursue.

**Memorial Hall** – The tin ceiling has been repaired and replaced. It has been discovered that the subfloor is somewhat punky. It has been suggested that the floor in the balcony be covered with quarter-inch plywood and a laminate so seats may be securely attached to the floor.

**Town Hall** – The air conditioning is working again. A bat was seen inside the building. Andrew said they roost behind the stage curtain. He said there were not as many bats inside the building as there once were. It is not an easy job to seal all the bat entrances. That would be best done during Phase 3 of the Memorial Hall renovation.

**Police Department** – More than 20 applications for the administrative assistant position have been received. Rick, Terry, Chief Bardwell, and a Sergeant will select 3 to 5 applicants for a preliminary interview.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Christopher Curtis RE: Deerfield River Wild & Scenic Initiative: Next Steps** (Joan LaPierre ad hoc committee representative) – Chris is the vice president of the Deerfield River Watershed Association. His group had a Woodlands Partnership grant to study the Deerfield River and its eligibility to receive National Wild and Scenic River designation. Chris gave a presentation of the study and asked for support to continue the process. The Deerfield River is special due to its recreation opportunities, the nearby trails, excellent trout fishing, nearby old growth forest and large areas of wildlife habitat, and the area’s colonial and Native American history. The majority of the river and its tributaries are eligible for the designation, with a few segments ineligible due to the number of dams. Letters of support for the designation have been received from 14 towns and 12 Federal or state organizations. All seven members of the Massachusetts and Vermont Congressional delegation support this. While the Deerfield is considered to be one of the most heavily dammed rivers in the country, Chris felt the areas in between the dams functioned as free-flowing, thereby qualifying for the designation. When asked if the designation would put any further restrictions on what the town might be able to do, Chris said no existing structures would be affected. A new Federal culvert or bridge project would need to be reviewed by the National Park Service. The benefits of the designation include Federal funding. A motion was made by Andrew to endorse the study and proceed with the request for National Wild and Scenic River designation. This was seconded by Rod. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Old Business:**

**Pocket Park – Landscaping Proposals –** Two quotes had been received. The high bidder had provided more information but the low bidder also had favorable references. Andrew wanted to have a preliminary meeting with the contractor, and someone needs to do project oversight to ensure that ADA grades are met. Rod was willing to be the Clerk of the Works for the project. A motion was put forth by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to award the contract for landscape grading and re-contouring of the pocket park to Earth Moving Solutions, for $31,900. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Visitor’s Information Center – Painting Complete –** The painting has been done and the repair job is now complete.

**New** **Business:**

**Jeff Johnston, Highway RE: 2007 New Holland Tractor Repair** – Repairs to the tractor are estimated to be $9,430. The Finance Committee approved the repair on July 17. The tractor is scheduled to be replaced, but in the meantime, it still needs to be repaired.

**Buildings, Facilities & Grounds Position RE: Schedule Interviews** – If possible, interviews will be scheduled for August 7.

**J. Rae, Sweetheart Restaurant RE: Letter of Support for Mass Historic Tax Credits** – Joe Rae is seeking a second round of historic tax credits to be used for the final phase of renovations to the Sweetheart Restaurant. He requested that the Board write a letter of support. A motion was made by Rod, seconded by Andrew, to approve a letter of support for Joe Rae regarding historic tax credits. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**Cowell Gym Projects** – Terry reported that all but two windows have been installed at the gym. The remaining two windows are on back order. The shade project should be starting soon. Former Cowell Gym Director John Walsh said he is willing to stay on to get quotes for the tab room project.

**Community Preservation Committee** – The committee is looking for someone to serve as the historic preservation representative. It also needs a representative from the Conservation Commission.

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting will be on August 11, via Zoom.

**Correspondence:**

**Christian LaPlante RE: New Downtown District Coordinator (18-month pilot program)** – Christian is the new downtown coordinator, He will be working with not only Shelburne Falls (Shelburne and Buckland), but also with Northfield and Turners Falls. He hopes to be able to complete two or three priority projects during the next 18 months. The Board will be thinking of priority projects. Andrew brought up replacing or repairing the pothole deck or reviving the Shelbunre.com website.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment**: At 6:43 pm a motion was made by Andrew to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Rod. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Faye Whitney, Recording Secretary