**Selectboard Meeting Minutes September 8, 2025 Zoom Teleconference 5:30 pm**

**Call to Order**: Rick LaPierre called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Others present: Selectboard members Andrew Baker and Rod McBride (joined 5:37 pm) and Town Administrator Terry Narkewicz.

A motion was put forth by Andrew to approve the minutes of August 11 and August 26. This was seconded by Rick. Roll call vote: Andrew – yes; Rick – yes. Motion passed 2-0-0.

**Department Liaison** **Reports:**

**Highway Department** – The crew had been focusing on preparing Carpenter Road for paving, which is now scheduled for the end of October. If any Chapter 90 remains it will be used to start work on Smead Hill Road. That will be a $600,000 project, which may be done in three or four sections. It is estimated that the cab and chassis for the new small truck should be ready in November and the body should be ready in April. The current one-ton truck will be traded in once the new small truck is ready. Jeff is working on the vegetation management plan and the annual operating plan for herbicide treatment. He is waiting to hear from MDAR for approval. Jeff has been helping with boundary line issues on Baker Avenue. Some guardrails will be removed on Old Greenfield Road to allow a landowner to have access for logging. A discussion on overtime will be held at a future meeting, with the Finance Committee also in attendance.

Rod asked what sections of guardrails would be removed and would there is liability for the town. Jeff Johnston said the sections were marked where the landowner had requested and where Jeff felt it was safe. Board members agreed to check the area where the guardrails would be removed and discuss it further at the next meeting.

**Police Advisory Committee –** No meeting has been scheduled.

**FRTA** – Rick said that all member towns have participated in a stakeholder meeting with MassDOT to discuss a five-year update of the regional transportation plan. Some towns are asking for more regular service. It is also thought that the FRTA should coordinate services with the PVTA.

**Police Department** ­– Three of the expired safety vests have been replaced. The remaining three will be replaced soon. A letter of commendation for Officer Jeffrey Bellanger has been received from the Mass State Police Division of Investigative Services. Officer Bellanger was cited for being first on the scene at an emergency involving a two-month old child. The letter cites the “truly outstanding work performed by Officer Bellanger… his professional competence under pressure reflects great credit on himself, the police department, and the community.”

**Sewer Commission** – The commission has interviewed three candidates for the clerk position and is close to making a decision.

**Appointments:**

**5:45 pm Jim Kessler, Memorial Hall Association RE: Renaming the Theater** – Jim is the President of the Memorial Hall Association. He reported that the renovation is going well, seats are going in this week, the ceiling has been repaired, the floor has been repaired and refinished. A free opening party will be held on October 19 and a ribbon cutting ceremony will be held that afternoon. The Selectboard was invited to attend the ribbon cutting. Jim said that he has learned that even local people don’t always realize that there is a theater in Memorial Hall. He thinks the theater should have a name, and suggested Shelburne Falls Theater at Memorial Hall. The name would be used on printed materials and on the website. Shelburne Falls has a lot of name recognition and it would help to promote the theater. Jim asked for the Board’s support since it is a town owned building. The support was given. Jim said that sometime in the future the association would like some sort of sign or banner on the building.

**Old Business:**

**Pocket Park – Landscaping Proposals for Pocket Park Change Order #1 –** Terry, Andrew and Rod met with the contractor, Earth Moving Solutions, to discuss options for the park. A new quote of $9,422 to make the discussed changes was received. This would be in addition to the $31,900 quote already received. The change order involves planting shrubs instead of trees and installing a border along the walkway to keep the gravel in place. Rick thought planting shrubs instead of trees was an even trade. The upcharge is for organic gravel and delivery at a cost of about $5,300. The original design called for stone dust for the walkway. Other new costs include $950 for project management and $204 for a bond. It was agreed that the specs for the work had not been very specific. Andrew asked if it was possible to change contractors. Terry said the job could be rebid, but the town only has until December 31 to spend the money. It is also possible to go back to the original bid. The Board discussed various ways of keeping within budget, while still getting what is needed. Finally, a motion was made by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to amend Change Order #1 to remove the purchase and installation of 10 trees, which were in the original bid, and specify that a wheelchair-friendly product be used for the walkways. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Buildings, Facilities & Grounds Position –** An offer has been made to an applicant. Now it’s up to the applicant to decide whether or not to take the position.

**Police Department Administrative Assistant Position** – This item was postponed until New Business.

**Hill Cemetery RE: Burials & Lot Procedures** – This item was tabled until after September 11 to give the Cemetery Commission time to discuss the situation.

**New** **Business:**

**Board of Health RE: Request to Appoint Lynn Dole** – Lynn, a Shelburne native, has recently moved back to town after living in Ashfield for many years. While in Ashfield she served on the Board of Health and was also a Selectboard member. A motion was put forth by Andrew to appoint Lynn Dole to the Board of Health. This was seconded by Rod. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Will Flanders RE: Request to Appoint Phil Bragdon to CPC (Historic Preservation)** – The CPC had voted to request that Phil be appointed. A motion was made by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to appoint Phil Bragdon as the historic preservation member of the Community Preservation Committee. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Police Department RE: Officer Request for Family Medical Leave** – An officer is requesting leave for four weeks starting about October 17. He will use accumulated sick time during the leave. A motion was put forth by Rod, seconded by Andrew, to approve the request for family medical leave. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Tom Williams, EMD RE: Great River Hydro Warning Siren for Dam Failure** – The plan had been to place a warning siren in the center of town to go off in case of an upriver dam failure at Harriman Dam, Sherman Reservoir, or Bear Swamp Reservoir. Great River has had complaints about an existing siren that goes off as water levels in the Deerfield River change. The company did not want more complaints so they proposed notifying EMDs by cell phone. Since cell phones are known to be unreliable in this area, the Emergency Management Committee felt that a siren was warranted and asked the Board to send a letter to Great River Hydro, asking them to install a siren. Tom said once there was an impending dam break, water would rise within six hours in Shelburne Falls. It was assumed the siren would go off before an actual break occurred. Tom also assumed that warnings would be received after certain triggers wee reached and that the siren would be the final warning to evacuate. A motion was made by Rod, seconded by Andrew, that the Board supported a letter to Great River Hydro asking that they reconsider installing an emergency warning siren. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**John Taylor, Fire Chief RE: Fire Prevention Week Proclamation** – The theme of this year’s fire prevention week, October 5-11 is “Charge into Fire Safety, Lithium-ion Batteries in Your Home.” A proclamation, listing ways of safely using lithium-ion batteries, was presented for the Chair’s signature. A motion was put forth by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to approve having the Chair sign the proclamation of Fire Prevention Week.

**Police Administrative Assistant Position RE: Recommendation for Hire** – Twenty-two applications had been received, with five applicants scheduled for interviews. By the day of the interviews only two applicants remained. It was clear that one applicant had the experience and an extensive background. Chief Bardwell recommended her hire and received a unanimous consensus from the ad hoc hiring committee. A motion was made by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to offer the position to Rebecca Wells-Robinson for 20 hours per week, at $25 per hour. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Joseph Judd, Town Clerk RE: Public Records Guidelines** – Requests for public records have risen significantly in the last few years. The process is quite complicated, but Shelburne has never had a written policy. The Town Clerk is the records access officer and all requests go through that office. The process has now been defined and a document will be distributed to all department heads. The existing request form has been clarified and now provides links to state regulations. The new document has been screened by the police chief, town administrator and Selectboard chair. A motion was made by Andrew, seconded by Rod, to accept the materials presented regarding public record requests. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Any Other Business:**

**One Day Liquor License Requests** – Apex Orchards has requested two one-day licenses. Phantom Brewing Company of Greenfield would need a license for the Apple and Cheese Festival on September 14. Home Fruit Wine, of Orange would need a license for Apex’s Fall Festival, on October 19. The Board said that the events at Apex have always been well handled. A motion was put forth by Rod, seconded by Andrew, to approve the one-day liquor licenses for Four Phantom Brewing Company on September 14, and Home Fruit Wine on October 19. Roll call vote: Rod – yes; Rick – yes; Andrew – yes. Motion passed 3-0-0.

**Community Preservation Application** – Andrew reported that the Highway crew has secured some of the loose deck boards on the pothole deck. Given the overall condition of the deck, Andrew indicated that he plans to submit an application to the CPC for funding for repair/replacement of the pothole deck.

**Next Meeting** – The next Board meeting was to be on September 22.

**Correspondence:**

**Clay Connor RE: Resignation as Cowell Gym Director** – Clay has resigned as Cowell Gym Director. The Board accepted his resignation with regret and said they were sorry the position didn’t work out for Clay. Another applicant had applied for the position, but is no longer available. A replacement will be sought.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Adjournment**: At 7:02 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