

SHAFTSBURY SELECTBOARD MINUTES
JANUARY 6, 2010
Cole Hall
BUDGET WORKSHOP

Board Present: Lon McClintock, Bill Pennebaker, Karen Mellinger, Cinda Morse, Craig Bruder; **Others present:** Margy Becker, Town Administrator; Town Officials: Treasurer, Henri Billow; Lister Larry Johnson.

1. Call to Order

Lon McClintock called the meeting to order at 6:05PM. The Board reviewed proposed highway improvement projects and the purchase of a new grader. Chairman McClintock explained that the balance in the grader reserve fund will be used for the down payment on the grader to be paid for over 7 years. Karen Mellinger suggested deleting the proposed \$10,000 into the grader reserve fund. The Board concurred. After further discussion the Board agreed to budget only for improvements to Murphy Hill and Paran roads. East Road improvements were deferred.

The proposed solid waste budget was reviewed. Cinda Morse then inquired what budget increase would be acceptable to the Board. Lon McClintock pointed out that expenses had been increased just by bringing the Cemetery and Howard Park budgets into the general fund. He cautioned that even if the Board attempted to level-fund the budget, it would still see an increase.

Cinda Morse drew attention back to the proposed budget for culverts. It was agreed a new operating transfer line item should be created with a proposed set-aside of \$3,000. Said funds will be dedicated to funding the local share of a future culvert grant.

Henri Billow noted third party insurance payments will go directly into the Fire Department reserve funds and hence such income should not show up as general fund income.

Cinda Morse inquired as to how to pay for architectural and design services for the Cole Hall/town garage project? Lon McClintock said the present draft budget included \$15,000 in such expenses, split among the 2010 and 2011 budget years.

Cinda Morse noted the Board's budget priorities seemed to be facilities planning, highway capital improvement projects, staff raises, and funding an external audit. Karen Mellinger stated she was not in favor of budgeting for an external audit in FY2011 and encouraged the Board to wait another year. Cinda Morse stated the compensation issue warranted attention across all departments.

The Board discussed the Constables' proposal for \$1500 to fund part-time certification for law enforcement. The Board discussed the fact that the proposed budget lacked other expenses that would be necessary to support part-time law enforcement capability, including the need for communications equipment. Board members expressed concerns regarding the personal safety of the Constables, noting that routine traffic stops can turn deadly. An Agreement with the State Police will be needed in the future that provides oversight of Constable law enforcement actions if and when they are called in for 'back-up'. The Board also took note of the fact that Constables are elected annually, and that funding law enforcement training would be unwise until such time as a longer term of office was addressed by the voters. It was also noted that the Town has been able to purchase 4 years of additional patrol hours from the Bennington County Sheriff's Department, due to the COPS grant subsidy. After further discussions the Board agreed that it did not support granting law enforcement powers to the Constables at this time. The Board agreed to delete the proposed \$1500 expenditure from the proposed budget. A meeting with the Constables will be arranged.

Other elements of the proposed law enforcement budget were reviewed and adjusted. Additional items in the highway budget were discussed and earmarked for more research. The issue of how to finance the purchase of land for a new town garage was discussed. Karen Mellinger asked that more analysis be done of the cost savings of constructing a new garage at the landfill site versus purchasing land for a new garage adjacent to its present location. Lon McClintock suggested a financing plan was needed in case the Board's decision was in favor of purchasing land. He suggested a short-term note could be paid off in 5 years. An estimated \$100,000 at 3% interest calculates to be an estimated \$24,000/year in payments. During that time the Board would have time to gather public support for a bond vote. The Board did not take action of this recommendation.

Karen Mellinger stated concern that the reappraisal fund was being over-funded. Craig Bruder agreed to follow-up with a meeting with the Listers.

2. Adjournment

Bill Pennebaker made the motion to adjourn at 8:35PM. Karen Mellinger seconded. The motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Margy Becker