

**Town of Shaftsbury
Selectboard SPECIAL Meeting
Minutes
Monday, December 30, 2013**

Members Present: Karen Mellinger, Mitchell Race, Ken Harrington, Tim Scoggins,
Others Present: Margy Becker, Town Administrator
Members Absent: Carl Korman

1. Call to Order

Called to order by Karen Mellinger 5:12 P.M.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes for November 25th, 2013. It was noted the minutes had been approved December 18th. It was further noted that incorrect reference to approval of the Clean Harbors' bid acceptance had been removed. The Selectboard agreed the Selectboard's letter to the Editor concerning support for the garage facilities bond vote should be attached to the minutes for archiving.

Motion to approve Selectboard Minutes for December 5th, 2013 as written. Moved by Mitchell Race/Tim Scoggins 2nd. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Motion to approve Selectboard Minutes for December 9th, 2013 with a change as noted to correct "concurrent" to "concurred". Moved by Mitchell Race/Tim Scoggins 2nd. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Motion to approve Selectboard Minutes for December 12th, 2013 as written. Moved by Mitchell Race/Tim Scoggins 2nd. Motion carried 3-0-1, Mitch Race abstaining.

Mitchell Race mentioned he had been absent and that Tim Scoggins had been present, and the minutes need to be corrected to reflect corrected attendance.

Motion to approve Selectboard Minutes for December 16th, 2013 as written. Moved by Mitchell Race/Tim Scoggins 2nd. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

Mitchell Race noted Tom Huncharek, Paul McGann, and Bob Perry were present at the December 16th meeting. Ken Harrington asked for clarification in section eight with regards to Constables being elected. He also inquired about the proposed set term for Constables. Mitchell Race noted the language for proposed March ballot articles concerning election versus appointment of Constables, future roles, and term lengths is

still being worked out.

Motion to approve Selectboard Minutes for December 18th, 2013 with changes to references to White Creek base improvements. Mitch Race asked that his inquiry to the Treasurer about the feasibility of more frequent tax payments (i.e. quarterly or semi-annual) be noted in the minutes. **Moved by Mitchell Race/Tim Scoggins 2nd. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.**

4. Warrants

Motion to approve payroll RETIREMENT warrant #13R in the amount of \$121.46. Moved by Mitchell Race/Ken Harrington 2nd. Motion carried unanimous 4-0.

Motion to approve payroll warrant #13 in the amount of \$19,020.19. Moved by Mitchell Race/Ken Harrington 2nd. Motion carried unanimously 4-0.

5. Conflict of Interest

There was no Conflict of Interest.

6. Public Comments

None recorded.

7. FY15 Budget Preparation Workshop

The Selectboard was provided with a line item budget revised December 23rd, 2013. The draft FY15 budget worksheet notes to-date a 1.8% total budget increase. It also noted a 6.2% increase in the amount to be raised in taxes.

Karen Mellinger reminded Selectboard members of a \$390,000 fund balance and noted that \$120,000 has been reserved as revenue towards the budget year of 2014. If all of the \$120,000 is used, and the FY14 budget is over-expended, the fund balance as of June 30, 2014 would be \$270,000. She further explained that if \$70,000 of the fund balance was brought in for the FY15 budget, this would further reduce the fund balance to \$200,000 or less as of June 15, 2014.

The Selectboard focused on the section of the budget entitled “transfers to reserves” and noted that the amount to propose as a transfer to the garage reserve fund still needed to be discussed and worked out. Karen Mellinger asked the Selectboard how much it would be willing to tax the voters to build up the fund. Ken Harrington noted in the previous Selectboard meeting that residents approached him suggesting a 3 to 4 cent increase in taxes as the possible solution to raise funds for a town garage project in the future. It was pointed out by other Selectboard members that a 1 penny increase in taxes raises approximately \$40,000 and that Mr. Harrington would therefore be advocating for a \$120,000 to \$200,000 set-aside into the garage reserve fund. It was noted that if the bond

vote had passed, the FY15 payment towards the bond would have been approximately \$75,000.

The Selectboard discussed the Cole Hall reserve fund. The current balance is \$33,000, \$10,000 of which the voters authorized to be spent in FY14. Karen Mellinger noted that voters had also approved a \$10,000 set-aside for the current budget, therefore the balance in the reserve fund would be \$43,000 after the Treasurer made the transfer. Board members agreed Cole Hall would continue to be a priority for 2015. Margy Becker has prepared a long list of possible repairs, and she emphasized the need for the original Facilities Committee to convene to prioritize repairs.

Tim Scoggins asked the Board to do its best in the short-term to estimate repairs to Cole Hall. The Selectboard discussed necessary immediate improvements needed to Cole Hall, including the need for air cooling on the second floor and repair work to the bathroom facilities. Karen Mellinger noted a prior (c. 2010-11) estimate she had received to paint the interior of the building for \$12,000 and prior estimates to provide 2nd floor cooling. The line item with regards to maintenance work on Cole Hall was set to \$10,000. Voters will be asked to replenish the reserve fund with a \$10,000 set-aside for FY15.

The Selectboard discussed funding for the Reappraisal fund. Mitch Race commented that the expense of a professional reappraiser is overtaking the expense of Lister wages. He also requested that Mr. Boyle, the professional appraiser, send the Selectboard a copy of error reports as they are found in the course of proofing the data to be offered on the new parcel mapping website.

The Selectboard announced that the lease for the 2009 International highway truck was paid off. The budget currently includes a down payment to replace the 2006 highway truck. Ken Harrington noted he would like to know more about why the truck continues to break down. Mitch Race commented the hub shears off the rear wheel. The rear-end torque is off. The hub has had to be replaced more than once.

The Selectboard discussed the town fire truck reserve fund. It was noted the Fire Chief had not requested a set-aside into the reserve fund. Karen Mellinger pointed out that she recalled a prior equipment replacement schedule noted \$40,000 set-asides into the fire truck equipment fund beginning in the current budget. The Selectboard did not ask the voters to set-aside money for the current year. It was agreed that the voters would be asked to resume set-asides of \$40,000 into the fire equipment reserve fund beginning in FY15.

It was noted that \$56,000 was currently set-aside in the garage reserve fund at the present time. Tim Scoggins suggested a FY15 transfer into the garage reserve fund of \$75,000 to reflect what the bond payment would have been. The Selectboard further discussed its concerns regarding the condition of the existing garage. It was noted that Margy Becker had asked the Town's insurance carrier for a safety audit in 2010-2011. The inspection report was complied with. Margy Becker also noted she had briefly spoken

with Jim Secor regarding the structural integrity of the building. He had reminded her of the 2009 engineering assessment of the garage and the report that was included in Keefe & Wesner's report on Cole Hall and Garage Facilities. Tim Scoggins suggested, and Board members agreed, that the garage be re-inspected by the same engineers and that the insurance carrier be asked to perform another safety audit.

The Selectboard agreed to delete the proposed \$7,500 or 50% of the expense of installing the generator at the elementary school. The \$8,000 repair budget to further retrofit the Surplus forklift was deleted. It was agreed the piece of equipment should be sold. It has not been used since it was purchased.

Ken Harrington inquired about the need for gravel as requested by the highway department. After some discussions a \$5,000 reduction in the proposed gravel budget was made. The proposed budget stands at \$60,000. Ken Harrington commented that different grading practices need to address potholes. Building up the amount of gravel on a road does not necessarily mean potholes will be removed. He said 18 inches of gravel is not needed on each road.

The Board made a subsequent reduction to the budget for proposed highway capital improvement projects. Mitchell Race cited a personal concern that reclamation of State Park Road remain in the budget.

The Selectboard suggested a presentation be conducted for the residents of the Town of Shaftsbury to explain the current budget and areas of need which require the attention of the residents.

The Selectboard cited an urgent need to focus on solutions to the problems facing the town garage and suggested repairs be made in the current year as opposed to figuring out funding it in the next budget year.

The Selectboard concluded FY15 budget review with total expenditures at \$2,008,727. This reflects an 8.3% increase. The proposed amount of property taxes to be raised stands at approximately total \$1,429,293 – which is an increase over last year of 9.8%. Karen Mellinger asked each Board member to carefully review the budget prior to the final budget meeting on January 7th. She stated her discomfort with budgeted expenditures in excess of \$2 million. Further budget reductions will be a top priority for the next and final budget meeting.

10. Adjournment

Ken Harrington made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:45PM. Mitch Race seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Shawn Sterling