

Annual Town Meeting Minutes
Monday, March 6, 2006
Shaftsbury Elementary School
150 Buck Hill Road, Shaftsbury, Vermont

Select Board Present: Chairman Wynn Metcalfe, Vice-Chairman John Fagerholm, Jim Mead, Karen Mellinger, and Cinda Morse

Moderator: Thomas Dailey

Others Present: Town Administrator Aaron Chrostowsky, Town Clerk Judy Stratton, Meeting Recording Secretary Susan Swasta, and approximately 130 Shaftsbury residents

Moderator Dailey called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Those present observed a moment of silence in honor of our servicemen and servicewomen all over the world.

Moderator Dailey introduced Select Board members, Town Administrator Aaron Chrostowsky, Town Clerk Judy Stratton, and Meeting Recording Secretary Susan Swasta.

Moderator Dailey gave the floor to Select Board Chairman Wynn Metcalfe, who thanked all of the residents who had participated in the pre-meeting pot luck. Chairman Metcalfe introduced Art Whitman of the Economic Development Committee, who presented certificates of appreciation to representatives of new Shaftsbury businesses: Bernstein Display, Peckham Industries, Shaftsbury Country Store, Green Mountain Log Homes, Happy Dog Flower Farm, and Katie M's Kitchen.

Chairman Metcalfe recognized the following Shaftsbury volunteers for their services: Florence Beebe for her RSVP and genealogy efforts, June White for her work in the town office, Ernie Harwood and Ed Corey for mowing town property, Barbara Buxbaum for office support work, and Gerry Mattison for his tremendous contributions as town emergency management director.

Chairman Metcalfe presented a mug and check to Assistant Road Foreman Tim Greene for 25 years of service. He also recognized retiring Select Board Vice-Chairman Skip Fagerholm's three years of service on the board and presented him with a mug.

Chairman Metcalfe announced that a hometown welcome will be held for Olympics cross-country skier Andy Newell in April. He called on Vermont Rep. Alice Miller to read the House Concurrent Resolution she had drafted congratulating Mr. Newell.

Rep. Miller also noted Shaftsbury athletes Steven Vargo, state cross-country ski champion; Christopher Haynes, state track and field champion; Mt. Anthony wrestling coach Scott Legacy with his 18th consecutive state championship; and state champion wrestlers Mike Becker, Scott Legacy II and Seth Coulter.

Chairman Metcalfe introduced Fire Chief Joe Vadakin to make a presentation. Chief Vadakin recounted his work with Aaron Chrostowsky on a Homeland Security grant, and read a letter of appreciation to Mr. Chrostowsky from the fire department for his hard work and professionalism in winning the \$50,000 grant. Fireman Ian Taylor modeled some of the equipment acquired with the grant.

Moderator Dailey announced that the United Methodist women's group would hold their traditional lunch and bake sale at the fire house tomorrow. He then presented Rep. Alice Miller to deliver her legislative report.

Rep. Alice Miller reminded residents to fill out the Doyle survey, and to file their Homestead forms by April 15.

Rep. Miller reported that Shaftsbury has won major funding this year. This includes a \$249,000 sidewalks grant, for which she lauded the work of Ed Armstrong and Karen Mellinger. A \$50,000 Homeland Security grant was due in large measure to Mr. Chrostowsky's work. The legislature awarded the town \$110,000 for landfill closure; Bill Pennebaker contributed much research for this effort. There is a possibility for an additional \$40,000 in landfill funds for 2007. Shaftsbury received over \$200,000 in emergency funds for road repair last year.

Rep. Miller summarized other funding she has sponsored that awaits legislative approval in areas of education, child care, family support, and mental health treatment for returning National Guard veterans. She noted the challenges that Medicare Part D has presented to the state, and asked residents to read her Legislative update for details on these topics and others which she did not have time to touch upon.

Chairman Metcalfe came forward to make the Select Board presentation. Using Powerpoint slides to illustrate major points, he began with a "state of the town" overview for 2005-2006, with fiscal highlights and Select Board report. The latter focused on activities of the Highway and Fire Departments, Policies and Procedures Committee, Economic Development Committee, and Solid Waste Committee. He particularly noted the work on culverts accomplished by the Highway Department.

Chairman Metcalfe stated that the Development Review Board will begin April 1, and that it will be a positive change for applicants to only have to deal with one board. He reported that the Select Board has been working diligently to close the landfill, and that the process has been "a nightmare," but things are looking more hopeful. The Solid Waste Committee worked very hard in researching and deliberating to reach its recommendation for a pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system, which has been voted in by the Select Board. There are as yet no details to report, but a special public meeting will be held as soon as more specifics have been determined.

In his discussion of the upcoming year's budget, Chairman Metcalfe described the work of the budget committee, which included citizen representatives, and stated that these representatives had provided a different point of view that led to useful exchanges. He detailed the effect of the budget on the taxpayer, listed new expenditures and revenues, and presented goals for 2006-2007. Chairman Metcalfe discussed reserve funds, stating that in the past these funds were have not been funded, and that it is important to now do so. There will be no contributions to the sidewalk fund this year because there is enough set aside for the village project. He noted that \$72,500 in revenues are projected from PAYT, to begin in April. Chairman Metcalfe encouraged residents to come out and vote tomorrow.

Ed Colvin asked for the floor, and reported on efforts to establish a Stanley Tools Museum. Two years ago the new Stanley owner had agreed to donate the stone square shop for a museum, but had said that this would have to be delayed for a year in order to get a tax write-off. During this time the museum group had the property surveyed and went through the subdivision process. When the owner was asked to sign subdivision papers he stated that he had sold the business. Mr. Colvin will meet with Anthony Tripoli of Bernstein Displays, the new property owners, to discuss the museum. \$250,000 in artifacts and a \$100,000 painting were given by Stanley for the museum, and Mr. Colvin and his group are "still on the trail" to establish a museum.

Rep. Miller stated that she had forgotten two people in her comments on athletes' accomplishments: Corey Greene, New England wrestling champion and John Andrews, state wrestling champion.

Moderator Dailey went over the rules for town meeting.

Mr. Colvin made motion to dispense with the reading of the Warning. Alan Watson seconded, and motion passed by voice vote.

Article 1. To hear the reports of the Town Officers and take action thereon.

Arthur Faris moved and Ruth Levin seconded to accept the reports as published. Motion carried by voice vote.

Article II. To Determine:

A. What salary shall be paid to the Select Board?

Mr. Colvin moved and Dr. Faris seconded to pay the Select Board \$800, last year's amount.

Tyler Resch stated that the job of the Select Board is one of increasing complexity and that their salary should be raised to \$1,000 as a token thank-you for all their hard work and time. Bill Hurley agreed.

Mr. Resch moved to amend the motion to raise the amount to \$1,000 and Dave Mattison seconded. Motion carried by voice vote.

B. What salary shall be paid to the Town Treasurer?

Moderator Dailey noted that a \$1,000 raise has been proposed, to \$15,000, and described the Treasurer's duties.

Noel Cardiff moved and Kathy Cardiff seconded to pay the Town Treasurer last year's amount of \$14,000.

Lew Levin stated that Treasurer Henrietta Billow does a lot of work and deserves a \$1000 raise. Ms. Cardiff asked for more details on the Treasurer's duties and compensation, which Chairman Metcalfe provided.

Dr. Faris called the question and Lon McClintock seconded. Motion to call the question carried by voice vote. Motion to pay the Town Treasurer \$14,000 was defeated by voice and standing vote.

Mr. Hurley moved and it was duly seconded to pay the Town Treasurer \$15,000. Motion carried by voice vote.

C. What salary shall be paid to the Town Clerk?

Mr. Watson moved and it was duly seconded to pay the Town Clerk last year's amount of \$8000. Motion carried by voice vote.

D. What hourly rate shall be paid to Board of Listers?

Dr. Faris moved and it was duly seconded to pay the Board of Listers the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. Motion carried by voice vote.

E. What hourly rate shall be paid to Board of Auditors?

Dr. Faris moved and it was duly seconded to pay the Board of Auditors the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. Motion carried by voice vote.

F. What hourly rate shall be paid to the Ballot Clerks?

Rodney Hall moved and Rick Stratton seconded to pay the Ballot Clerks the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. Motion carried by voice vote.

G. What compensation, if any, shall be paid to all other elected Town Officers?

Paul Becker moved and it was duly seconded to pay all other elected Town Officers the current minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour. Motion carried by voice vote.

Dr. Faris pointed out that some elected town officials are not paid anything, and he added the clarification that anyone who was not paid last year will not be paid this year.

H. What stipend shall be paid to members of the Planning Commission and Development Review Board?

Mr. Watson moved and Dixie Zens seconded to pay members of the Planning Commission and Development Review Board \$100, as last year. Motion carried by voice vote.

Article 3. To adopt the Town Budget.

Dr. Faris moved and Mr. Zens seconded to approve the budget as adopted by the Board.

Lon McClintock expressed concern about the \$72,500 tipping fees revenue in the budget. He believes PAYT will increase trash dumped on roads and hurt those on fixed incomes. He does not want to see the system implemented until details are known.

Mr. McClintock moved and it was duly seconded to amend the motion to approve the budget to remove the \$72,500 line item for tipping fees revenue.

Chairman Metcalfe stated that if the \$72,500 revenue is removed there will need to be a tax increase. Mr. McClintock stated that taxpayers will pay for it either way.

Mr. Levin stated that current tax fees for waste disposal are lower than PAYT rates and that PAYT will hurt people with families. Mr. Cardiff agreed with Mr. McClintock that PAYT will increase illegal dumping and stated that he thinks the current trash disposal service should be continued.

Dr. Faris stated that almost every other Vermont community has PAYT, and that he has not seen an increase in trash on roadsides. He believes we have gone far too long with an archaic system of paying for trash disposal with taxes.

Barth Vander Els agreed that it is fair to handle trash as a fee for service utility, and take care of people who can't afford to pay as a separate issue. He stated that "we should each pay for our dirt."

Mr. Resch agreed that PAYT has not increased dumping, but shares Mr. McClintock's concern with predicting revenues when we don't know the ground rules. Chairman Metcalfe replied that the Board had set the tipping fee based on solid waste figures from last year's budget. Bill Pennebaker stated that the fee is revenue neutral and only covers tipping charges.

Michael Algus asked if residents will receive a \$72,500 reduction in taxes. He asked where this sum went in the budget. Ms. Mellinger replied that it had gone to fund various reserve funds. Dr. Algus asked if that meant taxes had been raised by \$72,500, and she replied that one could look at it that way.

Mr. Cardiff stated that the property tax is already income sensitive; why add another layer of complexity that PAYT will bring? Ms. Mellinger stated that the chief reason for PAYT is not financial, but to increase recycling and it has been proven to do so.

Bob Holmes asked how senior citizens who cannot handle heavy bags will be accommodated, and Ms. Mellinger said that these details are being worked out.

Mr. Pennebaker pointed out that the proposed tipping fee is much less than that charged by other towns. In response to Mr. McClintock's view that the projected revenue is speculation, he replied that charges were calculated to generate \$72,500.

Dave Mattison commented that he did not look forward to spending half a weekend day sitting in line at the dump.

Mr. Hall said that he assumes \$72,500 is a good faith estimate and that PAYT is a work in progress that can be

adjusted.

Mr. Becker asked if this amount includes added personnel and Chairman Metcalfe replied that it does not. He also stated that he does not want to give the impression that taxes will go down by this amount. The money has been budgeted for reserve funds this year.

Ms. Cardiff asked if this represented all waste disposal costs, and Chairman Metcalfe answered that it covered only garbage tonnage; management costs are \$30,000.

Sally Sugarman stated that while PAYT may be good in concept, she needs more details. Moderator Dailey stated that this is not an informational meeting on PAYT.

David O'Brien asked what the impact would be of removing the \$72,500 from the budget and not funding the reserve funds. Chairman Metcalfe replied that this would mean a tax increase of 10% instead of 3%. Mr. O'Brien suggested that Mr. McClintock add a second amendment to his amended motion, specifying that the \$72,500 be removed from the budget temporarily, from reserve funds, until PAYT is approved and up and running.

There was a discussion concerning the need for reserve funds, and Phyllis Porio stated that it should be understood the suggested amendment would just delay the funding of the reserves, not refuse to fund them.

Mr. McClintock amended his amended motion (seconded by Ms. Porio) as restated by Mr. O'Brien, to remove tipping fee revenues in the budget, that amount to be taken out of reserve funds and put back in the budget as PAYT is rolled out.

Moderator Dailey clarified that this motion would reduce the tipping fee line item of \$72,500 to 0 and likewise reduce expense line items by that amount.

Ms. Mellinger made the point that reserve funds are not line items, but are voted on in the Australian ballot. Moderator Dailey stated that an amendment having to do with the Australian ballot cannot be proposed.

Mr. McClintock stated that the tipping fee line item could be made 0, to be offset in the budget. Chairman Metcalfe said that he wanted everyone to understand that the \$72,500 would then come out of the overall budget, not reserve funds, and that this would have implications for town services.

Cinda Morse pointed out that the Select Board has already adopted PAYT. Residents can petition the Board to have it put to a vote by the town, but it has been passed, and the goal now is to work out the details. Removing the \$72,500 from the budget is the prerogative of those in attendance, but it will come out of the operating budget.

Ms. Mellinger stated that many meetings have been held on PAYT, and there has been extensive newspaper coverage. She emphasized that the Board and the Solid Waste Committee have done a lot of research, and that "we're not flying by the seat of our pants." She wishes more people had attended meetings and hopes they will attend in the future.

Magdalena Usategui strongly advised approval of the Board's decision on PAYT, noting they have done a lot of work on it. Ms. Sugarman thanked Ms. Morse for clarifying that the Board has already approved PAYT and that it is not up for debate. In that light, she felt that the current motion does not make much sense.

Mr. O'Brien asked if the \$72,500 in revenue is based on projections of fee per bag charges, and Chairman Metcalfe replied that it is based on those projections. Ms. Morse stated that it is not a guess, but based on Mr. Pennebaker's calculations.

Dr. Faris called the question and Mr. Hurley seconded. Motion carried by a voice vote. Mr. McClintock's amended motion to reduce the budget by \$72,500 on the revenue side by changing the tipping fee line item

to 0 was defeated in voice and standing vote.

Moderator Dailey returned to the original motion to pass the budget as presented.

Mr. Mattison called the question and Mr. Stratton seconded. Motion carried by a voice vote. The original motion by Dr. Faris and seconded by Mr. Zens to approve the budget as adopted by the Select Board carried by voice vote from the floor.

Article 4. To Determine: Will the Town vote to have taxes collected by the Town Treasurer?

Audrey Jones moved and Ms. Sugarman seconded to have taxes collected by the Town Treasurer. Motion carried.

Article 5. To Determine: Will the Town vote to set the date for payment of taxes as Friday, November 10, 2006 by 5 o'clock?

Ms. Sugarman moved and Ms. Levin seconded to set the date for payment of taxes as Friday, November 10, 2006 by five o'clock. Motion carried.

Article 6. Article 6 (a resolution concerning the use of state education funds) mistakenly did not appear in the Town Meeting Warning and so was not taken up.

Article 7. We the voters of the Town of Shaftsbury vote to approve the resolution to formally recognize the service of the men and women of the Vermont Air and Army National Guard. We thank them and their families for their selfless dedication to both the State of Vermont and the United States of America.

Mr. Resch moved and Mr. Hurley seconded to approve the Article 7 resolution. Motion carried by voice vote.

8. To transact any other business found proper when met.

Mr. Hurley, of Southwestern Vermont Health Care, commented on the proposed legislation on the Catamount Health Plan. He thinks that the problem must be addressed, but that this solution will only add to the cost shift and further strain Medicaid. Mr. Hurley would like to see a true bipartisan effort on health care. He encouraged residents to read the handout he had brought on this topic.

Mr. Mattison asked why Eleanor B. Smith was not present, and Moderator Dailey replied that she has been ill, and that expressions of concern and well wishes will be passed along to her.

Rep. Miller read and explained the education funds resolution that had to be left out because it had not been warned. She stated her opposition to using education funds for any other purpose.

Ms. Levin moved, it was duly seconded, and motion carried to adjourn the meeting at 10:13PM.

Susan M. Swasta

Meeting Recording Secretary

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Selectboard Member

Thomas Dailey

Selectboard Member

Town Moderator

Selectboard Member