

**Town of Shaftsbury
Selectboard Regular Meeting
Monday, March 18, 2013
6:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Craig Bruder, Karen Mellinger, Billy Obenauer, Kenneth Harrington, Carl Korman.
Members Absent: none
Others Present: Margy Becker (Town administrator), Sandra Mangsen (Recording Clerk), Bill Fisk (Town Treasurer), Deni Mayer, Larry Johnson (Listers) Jim Boyle (Mountain Air Assessor). Visitors: Jeri Schoof, Jay Palmer, Mitchell Race, Megan Donckers, Michael Foley, Barry Mayer, Tim Scoggins, Michael Gardner.

1. Call to Order

Craig Bruder called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

2. Announcements

Margy Becker reminded everyone about the upcoming Tour of the Dragons Bicycle Race, scheduled for May 4. Twenty-eight volunteers are needed to staff the course in Shaftsbury. A donation is made to the town if, this number of people is recruited. Details will be discussed at a later meeting.

4. Conflict of Interest Statement

None

3. Public Comments

None

Craig Bruder asked the Board if he might adjust the agenda to consider item 9 immediately after item 5. There was no objection.

5. Financial Reports – Treasurer, Town Administrator

Bill Fisk (Town Treasurer) had distributed a Budget Status Report (Friday 3/15) to the Selectboard members. He noted that, over all, expenses are at 69% of budgeted amount at this point. He reviewed the details of his report and entertained questions about it. Craig asked about rolling over unexpended highway funds, such as those intended for highway maintenance/construction. The Treasurer expects to have projections for the end of Fiscal Year in his next report.

9. Board of Listers: Parcel Mapping – Vendor Selection

Jim Boyle, Professional Appraiser, discussed the features of a mapping program, similar to that which he has put in place for three other communities. Residents and outsiders would have access to tax maps online, and to information about their property assessment, which would offer them more convenience than the procedure now, which requires a visit to the town office. Cartographic Technologies (Putney, VT), is one firm offering mapping services. Cartographic Associates of Littleton, NH is the vendor being considered.

Carl Korman asked about the reasons for having a picture of the house as part of the record available on line. Members of the public expressed concern about having information, such as floor plans, widely available over the internet in view of recent burglaries.

A member of the audience said that the information described is already available from Vermont GIS (Vermont Center for Geographic Information). Craig Bruder explained that ownership of the data has been an issue with the current mapping vendors, which has prompted the Listers to investigate other options.

The cost in the past has been c. \$2000/annum, which gives the town paper maps, which would have to be digitized for use in an online environment. The proposal under consideration would involve a maintenance \$1200/year and an access fee \$1800/year. Start-up costs would range \$5 – 7,000. The advantages would include online access, rather than access to paper records during the two days/week when the office is staffed.

Craig Bruder suggested that there is more research to be done before proceeding on this item; he asked Margy Becker to consult further with Listers.

Billy Obenauer suggested that the Selectboard set a date for revisiting this issue, when the public would be encouraged to attend, and to pose questions. The matter will be considered again at the meeting of April 15, 2013.

6. Bid Award – Cemetery Mowing

Margy Becker reported that there were only two complete bids; she consulted with the Cemetery Committee in considering them. The complete bids are from Sycamore Landscaping and Green Mountain Boys Landscaping.

There was some discussion about criteria for choosing between these two, in particular about the need to ensure excellent care of the cemetery property. Carl Korman and Karen Mellinger affirmed that Sycamore Landscaping has done excellent work for the town in the past. Carl Korman suggested offering them a one-year contract, with an option for a three-year extension.

Mike Foley raised questions about the evaluation process. Karen Mellinger and Carl Korman assured him that that two bids are not very far apart, and the quality of work is well established in the case of Sycamore, but not for the other bidder. In their view, the town's history with the particular vendor weighs in its favor.

Motion. To accept the bid of Sycamore Landscaping for cemetery mowing for one year at \$14,000 with the option of a two-year extension at \$14,000/year, with work outside the contract at the rate of \$70/hr. Moved by Carl Korman; seconded by Karen Mellinger. Carried, 4-1-0 (Obenauer opposed).

7. Approval of Annual Notice of Meetings

Typically, the Selectboard has met on the first and third Mondays of each month; the starting time of 6 or 7 pm was discussed. After a member of the public suggested starting meetings at 6:30 pm, with warrants and minutes considered near the beginning of the meeting, the Board agreed upon the 6:30PM start time. Craig Bruder proposed more efficient meetings, with rough time frames indicated for agenda items, while still devoting the time necessary to discuss topics to their conclusion.

Motion. Move to amend the meeting time of the Selectboard on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month to begin at 6:30 p.m., and to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. unless the Board votes to extend the meeting. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 5-0-0.

Craig Bruder noted that the next meeting (April 1) will begin at 6 p.m. since it has already been warned.

8. Liquor License applications – Thyme Tables

Motion. To approve the liquor license application of Thyme Tables for one year. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Ken Harrington. Carried, 5-0-0.

10. Annual Highway Financial Plan and Paving Grant Application

Margy Becker recommended the item be tabled, until paving estimates are obtained from Peckham Corporation.

11. Town Officer Appointments

A. Development Review Board – one three-year term is available; the incumbent, David Mance, is willing to continue.

Megan Donckers, DRB Chair, spoke in favor of his appointment, and noted that his expertise is particularly valuable in their deliberations.

Motion. Karen Mellinger moved that David Mance be appointed to a three-year term, expiring in 2016. Seconded by Carl Korman.

Billy Obenauer asked why no interviews were scheduled with respect to this appointment. Megan Donckers reported that there have been several interviews with respect to previous appointments. The Development Review Board is now functioning well, with transparency, and its members are working well together. Karen Mellinger agreed. Craig Bruder suggested David Mance could be interviewed, in order to follow usual procedure.

Motion carried, 4-1-0 (Obenauer opposed) in favor of appointment.

B. Planning Commission – two terms are expiring; the incumbents, Bill Pennebaker and Abigail Beck are willing to continue. Margy Becker reported that no other candidates have come forward.

Motion. Billy Obenauer moved that Bill Pennebaker be appointed to a three-year term on the Planning Commission, expiring in 2016. Seconded by Karen Mellinger. Carried, 5-0-0.

Motion. Billy Obenauer moved that Abigail Beck be appointed to a three-year term on the Planning Commission, expiring in 2016. Seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 5-0-0.

C. Trustee of Public Funds

Two members are in place; a third candidate has come forward.

Motion. To appoint Barry Mayer to a three-year term expiring 2016 as a Trustee of Public Funds. Moved by Carl Korman; seconded by Karen Mellinger. Carried, 5-0-0.

D. Annual Appointments - Discussion deferred to allow for proper advertising.

12. Oaths of Office – Approval of Policy for Appointed Officials

Craig Bruder explained that having all officials take an oath of office reinforces their commitment and emphasizes its serious nature. Various questions were raised about which particular officials need to take such an oath.

Motion. That the oath of office be administered to all appointed officials. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried, 5-0-0.

13. Selectboard Liaison Assignments

Discussion deferred.

14. New Town Garage - Status

Karen Mellinger reported on her consideration, in consultation with Margy Becker, of the contracts with MSK Engineering for building design, site development plans and survey, and for production of schematic drawings that were presented to the town prior to the Bond Vote. The Town's contractual obligation to MSK is for \$15,000.

Karen Mellinger suggested bringing together a group of people, especially those who raised specific and important questions about the project, to carry on further discussion with respect to the town's need for new garage facilities. One aspect that this group should clarify is the potential impact on the tax rate of changes in the cost of the project. Communication will be one of the

major challenges posed to this committee. Karen Mellinger has been in touch with Michelle Karas, editor of the Bennington Banner, on the means of keeping the issue before the public.

Ken Harrington introduced information he had acquired online about a large aluminum building that might serve the town's purpose at a cost of just over \$60,000. Craig Bruder and Karen Mellinger suggested that such information would be useful for the new committee.

Carl Korman suggested a reinvention of the Facilities Committee/Garage committee, with an invitation to the public to be more involved. Two or three people from that committee should be designated to handle communications about the garage project.

Motion. That the Selectboard establish a Town Garage Committee consisting of the existing Facilities Committee and other concerned residents of the town. The purpose of the Committee is to carry forward the discussion of the design of a new town garage facility. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman.

Friendly Amendment: that the newly established Garage Committee designate a subcommittee to take charge of communications about the development of the town garage project. Carried, 5-0-0.

Karen Mellinger will communicate with individuals who may be willing to serve on this committee. She noted as well that the Selectboard will at some point need to decide what funds to dedicate to redevelopment of the project.

Margy Becker asked about the need for the committee to report back to the Selectboard, and mentioned the relevant deadlines, especially for municipal bond sales. The committee may need a facilitator to ensure that the various voices are heard. Ken Harrington and Karen Mellinger will serve as liaisons from the Selectboard. Karen Mellinger encouraged Selectboard members to attend committee meetings whenever possible.

15. Town Administrator's Report

Margy Becker is working with Craig Bruder to develop a description for an administrative assistant position.

16. Other Business

Ken Harrington inquired about his request for tracking information on use of machinery by the road crew. Craig Bruder assured him that his request was being implemented.

Billy Obenauer raised a question about how to structure public participation at Selectboard meetings, in particular with a view to running efficient meetings.

He noted as well that the SVSU needs to tell Shaftsbury's road crew if schools are to be closed or delayed.

Billy Obenauer recalled that the tour of the Fire Houses in February had revealed that there may be some storage space available in one of the Fire Houses for some highway equipment, at least in the short run.

Karen Mellinger noted that the flags placed on Route 7A two years ago by the 250th Anniversary Committee are now in need of replacement. The Town will take over the expense of supplying the flags, if the money can be found.

17. Minutes

Consideration deferred.

16. Warrants

Motion. To approve W27R in the amount of \$130.37. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried unanimously.

Motion. To approve PR 37 in the amount of \$10,082.28. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Carl Korman. Carried unanimously.

Motion. To approve CW 27 in the amount of \$38,321.33 Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Billy Obenauer. Carried unanimously.

14. Adjournment

Motion. To adjourn the meeting. Moved by Karen Mellinger; seconded by Ken Harrington. Carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Mangsen
(Recording Clerk)