

Town of Shaftsbury
Select Board Meeting, Monday, December 19, 2016
Cole Hall, 61 Buck Hill Road, Shaftsbury
DRAFT MINUTES

Select Board members present: Tim Scoggins, Mitch Race, Art Whitman, Ken Harrington
Selectman Krulikowski not present.
Others: TA David Kiernan

- 1) Call to order
Tim Scoggins called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.
- 2) Conflict of interest statement
None
- 3) Announcements
Mr. Race asked people to nominate a Shaftsbury Ordinary Hero, by mail, c/o Shaftsbury Historical Society, to the Town hall.
Mr. Scoggins noted several open positions in town government: constable (two openings), town clerk, auditor (two openings), Select Board (two openings), town moderator, delinquent tax collector, lister, grand juror, trustee of public funds, Town agent, Planning Commission (two openings), Development Review Board (two openings and one term expiring), School Board (two openings).
Mr. Scoggins noted that cemetery rates will go up January 1. The rates can be viewed on the town website or at the Town Hall.
- 4) Public comments
Mr. Ed Corey handed out some materials and commented on the town clerk's retirement.
- 5) Approval of minutes, regular meeting, Dec. 5, 2016. Ken Harrington moved and Art Whitman seconded approving the minutes. Mr. Whitman asked about a statement re splitting the vote on the bylaw revisions. Mr. Scoggins read out possible language. A statement that Mr. Whitman seconded a motion was corrected to read that Mr. Harrington moved to second that motion. Mr. Scoggins noted two typographical errors, which were corrected. The amended minutes were approved 3-0-1, with Mr. Race abstaining.
Approval of special budget meeting held Dec. 12, 2016. Mr. Race moved to approve, Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Mr. Scoggins added a phrase "retiring park superintendent" to a note re a plague for Walter Merritt. The motion passed 4-0-0.
- 6) Warrants
#18, \$114,972.96, check warrant
Mr. Race moved and Mr. Whitman seconded a motion to approve. Motion passed 4-0-0.

#12, \$101.01, retirement
Mr. Race moved to approve, Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0-0.

#12, \$19,660.19, payroll
Mr. Race moved to approve, Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0-0.

#16, \$70,410, community appropriations for FY 16 (as approved in March 2016)
Mr. Race moved to approve, Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0-0.

#16, \$29,495.12, purchase of 510 North Rd. property

Mr. Race moved to approve, Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Motion passed 4-0-0.

7) Treasurer report

Total receipts for the reporting period were \$186,354.23 \$1,407,561.72 cash was available as of Dec. 19, 2016. Ms. Dexter has looked into permitting people to pay taxes by credit card, at no cost to the town but at a cost to the taxpayer.

8) Community appropriations

Bennington Rescue Squad, Forrest Weyen director and Bill Carmody, Brian Peat, re request for larger appropriation in amount of \$42,685.

EMS only gets paid for transport to hospital, not for responses at home or in the ambulance, not for being ready and available. One in four calls are non-billable. While insurance reimbursements go down, costs go up, e.g. an outfitted ambulance costs \$300K. For years, Bennington Rescue has survived on generosity of towns, but annually they lose \$55 every time they go out the door. The squad has put in place several cost-saving and fundraising steps, but still the budget is unsustainable. The squad foresees depleting their ~\$3 million rainy day fund in about three –five years. Their solution? Per capita funding from towns, about \$12.13 per capita.

Mr. Kiernan noted that the squad's total request is for the entire town population, including that portion served by Arlington's squad. He said the request should be sized according to the population served by the Bennington squad.

The board discussed whether the request should be incorporated in the town budget and agreed that any number should be so incorporated rather than listed as an appropriation. The board said it will need a final number from the squad for their January 16 meeting, and will discuss it further at that time or earlier. Any number will likely require a tax increase.

Mr. Kiernan reported that a couple of organizations simply sent appropriation request letters rather than follow the process required by the town, including Park McCullough House. Mr. Scoggins suggested adding Park McCullough to the ballot because voters have approved their request in years past. Mr. Race moved to approve Park McCullough as a ballot item. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. Mr. Kiernan reported that the Arlington library asked for \$400 less than last year, and Bennington library \$750 more than last year. All others asked for the same as last year.

9) Town garage and transfer station

Mr. Scoggins reported that the town has purchased the North Road property. A cost estimate from Morton Building won't be ready until mid-January.

Mr. Whitman suggested he and Mr. Harrington could figure out what it would cost for the town to build the road to and the site for the transfer station. He said the estimate given the town is too high. For example, there is no need for 18" of gravel on a road that has seen very heavy use for decades. The garage committee will come up with a revised estimate for the cost of site preparation, using town labor and materials and barter. Mr. Kiernan suggested that the major site work was removal of trees, and perhaps volunteers could be enlisted for that work.

Mr. Kiernan reported that drilling will be done at the proposed site of the garage, to ensure that the site is safe and sound. Morton will instruct the driller as to where and how deep to drill. Mr. Kiernan hopes to have the driller's report by January 2, 2017.

Mr. Kiernan reported that KAS's recent PFOA test was placed in the town's Dropbox file. Mr. Scoggins read from the report, which concludes with "further investigation and/or remedial action is not warranted at this time."

Extension of host town tax agreement with TAM: Mr. Kiernan said, if approved, must be signed by the Board chair before the town clerk. Mr. Race moved to approve extension of tax agreement as it exists until June 30, 2017. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

10) FY18 budget.

Mr. Scoggins said the board has held the line on tax increases for three years, thanks to TA Kiernan. Mr. Kiernan indicated there are no surpluses in the budget such as could support funding for, e.g. the Bennington Rescue squad.

Discussion of employee health benefits. What type of health insurance should be offered to new PW employee. The Town Clerk coverage is also affected. A Town Policy from 1997 prohibits elected officials from receiving health care benefits. The policy was written to give exemption to any official at that time who was receiving benefits. This only affected the Town Clerk. The Board debated what type of insurance should be offered and who should be covered.

Mr. Whitman made the motion that the Town offer only individual health insurance to the new public works employee. Seconded by Mr. Scoggins.

Discussion followed about the fairness of offering different plans to different employees.

Motion passed 4-0-0.

Mr. Whitman made the motion that the newly elected Town Clerk not receive health care benefits. Seconded by Mr. Harrington.

Discussion followed on the merits of changing the policy to allow the Clerk to receive medical benefits and work under 35 hours.

Motion failed 2-2-0.

Other Business: None

Action Items: Shires Housing has sent the Board a proposal to construct a 22 unit housing Project, Paran Acre Village, on property on Paran Road by the North Bennington Village line. It will be cluster housing of 22,000 square feet, serving mixed income households. Discussion will continue on January 2nd meeting.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn by Mitch Race at 846PM, seconded by Art Whitman. Motion passed 4-0-0.