

Shaftsbury Select Board Meeting by Teleconference
August 3, 2020

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order via the teleconference platform GoToMeeting at 6:30 pm. Present were Selectmen Tim Scoggins (chair), Tony Krulikowski, Joe Barber, Ken Harrington, and Art Whitman. Also present were town administrator David Kiernan and treasurer Melanie Dexter and others.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

By roll call, it was confirmed that no one present had a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

Mr. Whitman moved to approve the July 20, 2020 minutes. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which upon roll call vote passed 5-0-0.

4. Warrants

Payroll warrant #2, \$24,898.81. Mr. Whitman moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which upon roll call vote passed 5-0-0.

Check warrant #5, \$35,846.45. Mr. Whitman moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which upon roll call vote passed 5-0-0.

5. Announcements

Mr. Kiernan reported that the Census Bureau will begin going door to door shortly. The County's residents have fallen way behind in completing the forms, which can be accessed online.

Mr. Scoggins reminded listeners that voting will take place at the town garage, not at the firehouse. He suggested that voters vote by mail-in ballot.

Mr. Scoggins reported that Chris Ponessi has to retire from the DRB, leaving that position open. Those interested in serving should contact Mr. Kiernan, town administrator. The same situation afflicts the Planning Commission, which has only four members for a five person board.

6. Public Comments—by teleconference only

Ken Coonradt said has stepped down from being Cemetery Superintendent as of the end of July. He thanked the members of the Select Board and Mr. Kiernan, who has been a great counsel and great supporter. He thanked all and said he was very grateful for the opportunity to serve for ten years. Mr. Scoggins, Mr. Krulikowski, Ken Harrington, Mr. Barber, and Mr. Whitman individually thanked him for his service.

7. Service Presentation to Jerry Mattison.

For at least fifteen years, said Mr. Scoggins, Mr. Mattison has served as volunteer firefighter, fire warden, and emergency management director. Mr. Scoggins presented Mr. Mattison with a plaque. All members of the Select Board thanked him.

8. Cemetery committee's recommendation re replacement for Ken Coonradt.

Kathy Cardiff reported that the committee has chosen Michael Albans, who was present on the teleconference. Mr. Albans said he is a former writer, photographer, and ranch owner, and just closed on a home on Myers Rd. He said he thinks this is an important job, and a good way to serve the town and to meet a lot of fine folks.

Mr. Whitman moved to appoint Michael Albans as Cemetery Superintendent. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which upon roll call passed 5-0-0. Mr. Coonradt said he wholeheartedly supports Mr. Albans's selection.

9. Treasurers Report.

Melanie Dexter reported that prebates are coming in at the usual rate. The cash situation is a little overstated because of the payment to N. Bennington. We still don't have a grand list, but as soon as we have it she will get the tax bills out. She paraphrased a memo she shared regarding waiving the late homestead filing fee, and said the biggest argument against it is that it is meant to attract attention and may result in taxpayers suffering more than they would have. Mr. Whitman moved to waive the penalty for late filing of homestead exemption. Mr. Harrington seconded it. Mr. Whitman said it was not a good idea to waive it, to switch back and forth. And filing the exemption does not have to take place concurrently with filing income tax; it can be filed anytime. Mr. Scoggins agreed: everyone had plenty of time to get this done, and it has been proven to be an incentive to getting it done. Mr. Krulikowski agreed. Upon roll call vote, the motion failed 0-5-0. The penalty will not be waived.

10. Emergency management update

The Town and now the State have passed a mask mandate. Mr. Scoggins noted that each town will receive free cloth face masks from the state, the number equal to about one-quarter the town's population. Mr. Whitman left a box of paper masks at Paulins, so the owner could give them out to anyone lacking one. A pop-up virus test will be held in Bennington on August 10. Attendees must register on-line.

11. Communications Union District

Mr. Scoggins reminded listeners that 12 towns in the county have formed a district; it has received a grant to do a feasibility study; has received a \$10,000 donation from the Vermont Community Foundation; and has received for a Covid relief grant to accelerate plans to implement broadband. The CUD will probably do a pole assessment, a necessary first step in improving broadband. The CUD has also been signed a "teaming" agreement with the internet company Tilson about partnering to bid for federal funds totaling \$16 billion. The funds will be released this year through the FCC to help construct broadband around the nation. An association of CUDs meets weekly. A new state program will give up to \$3000 to help families connect to existing services.

12. DPW report

Mr. Kiernan reported the crew continues to work on the Flats on Murphy Hill Rd. and have worked at Peters Flats. Tinkham at Four Corners will get new culverts. Grading will be done as necessary. Slope failures along White Creek Rd. were corrected last week, as was the bump. The crew will be preparing the garage for the election next week. An online link for the auction of DPW equipment will be put on line. The old garage was tested for asbestos. The high-priority Howard Park drainage project will be going out to bid shortly, with the board's permission. Mr. Harrington moved to put the Howard Park project out to bid with the designs in hand. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Mr. Harrington wondered whether the road crew could do some of the work; Mr. Kiernan replied only to the detriment of caring for the road system. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0-0.

13. Renaming of Cleveland Avenue Park

Deena Ruege said the Recreation Committee would like to change the name of the Village Park to the Cleveland Avenue Park. Mr. Whitman moved to change the name of what is now called Village

Park to Cleveland Avenue Park. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Ruege said she'd been contacted by a librarian from McCullough Library about holding a story time at Howard Park. She wondered if there was a limit on the number of people who could attend. Mr. Kiernan noted there would be no functioning bathrooms. He wondered if the Library had been turned down by other communities. Mr. Whitman moved to allow groups to use the Park as long as Mr. Kiernan is allowed to set the rules for use. Mr. Scoggins suggested the Board ask Mr. Kiernan to first devise rules for the use of the Park. Mr. Whitman withdrew his motion.

Ms. Ruege thanked the Norshaft Lions for their donated efforts in the Park.

14. New fire truck

The new truck should arrive next week and the trade-in will be shipped off to Missouri. Various items will be added to the new truck. All expenses will be totally reimbursed from reserve funds and by the sale of the old truck.

15. Proposal, no through trucks on Hawks Avenue

A citizen has complained to several state agencies that overweight vehicles are using the town road rather than driving to the new intersection at Route 67 at the old bank building. A weight ordinance could be imposed, as well as a No Through Trucks ordinance. Mr. Williams suggested that truckers would find other ways to avoid that route, such as Elm St. Mr. Kiernan suggested to the complainant the he and his neighbors consider a petition.

16. Other Business

Mr. Kiernan said he'd received a phone call request to rent the second floor of the firehouse, for 25+ people. He said he'd investigate that at the same time he looks into Howard Park and come up with proposed rules for building uses as well. At Mr. Whitman's request, Mr. Kiernan will find out from Bennington if, and if so why, Bennington turned them down.

Mr. Harrington said at West Mtn. Rd., by the apple orchard, a ditch needs cleaning.

Mr. Scoggins noted that the Board should be aware of the progress or lack thereof to expand RC on the west side of 7A. He said there are various opinions among Planning Commission members. At a recent meeting, the public attended in large numbers. Mr. Whitman said the meeting devolved into accusations that the Commission was not meeting its responsibilities to the democratic process rather than a discussion of the substance of the Select Board's proposal. Mr. Scoggins noted that the Select Board can move forward on its own if the Planning Commission is disinclined to act. Mr. Whitman was reluctant to proceed without the Commission, to override the Commission. Mr. Harrington said he thought the area was almost totally commercial now; if the Commission doesn't want to do it, he said, the Select Board should.

17. Action items

- Mr. Scoggins will talk with Mr. Barber, Mr. Krulikowski, and Mr. Harrington about a recent meeting with the N. Bennington water department.
- Mr. Kiernan will revisit the schedule and Mr. Kiernan will sign the engineering services agreement with Dufresne.
- Mr. Kiernan will issue RFPs for the Howard Park drainage project.
- Mr. Kiernan will devise suggested protocols for the use of the park and public spaces.
- Ms. Ruege will send Mr. Scoggins the list of volunteer tasks Norshaft has undertaken at Howard Park.

- Mr. Kiernan reported that a water fountain at Cleveland Park was found to be too expensive, as the connection to the water main would have to be made on the opposite side of the street.

18. Adjournment

Mr. Harrington moved to adjourn at about 7:40 p.m. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned.