

Shaftsbury Select Board Meeting

December 7, 2020

NOTE THAT CITIZENS CAN ACCESS THE PROPOSED BUDGET THE SELECTBOARD PUBLIC FOLDER:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gg3r5tsur0b142n/AABPQ57qvJuzCEI5gpBhk-apa?dl=0>

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order remotely via the Zoom platform at 6:31 p.m. Present were select board members Tim Scoggins (chair), Tony Krulikowski, Ken Harrington, Joe Barber, and Art Whitman. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan and citizens.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Announcements

Mr. Scoggins reported that the Planning Commission has decided to postpone its recommending of a kennel bylaw at the March Town Meeting.

There will be an opening on the Planning Commission in March and are now openings on the Development Review Board. Any citizens interested in serving should contact Mr. Scoggins or David Kiernan.

Mr. Barber is coming up for re-election at the end of his two year term.

Mr. Scoggins's three year term will end in March. He will not be running for re-election.

Mr. Scoggins presented Ken Coonradt with a plaque honoring his service to the Town of Shaftsbury. He spoke of several awards Mr. Coonradt has received from other organizations over the years. Among Ken's services to the town, Mr. Scoggins listed: serving on the SB, serving as a trustee of public funds, serving on the sidewalk committee, acting as zoning administrator, serving as superintendent of cemeteries, and serving as assistant water superintendent. Mr. Coonradt thanked the Select Board, the cemetery commission under the leadership of Ellie and Kathy, Mr. Kiernan, the Town Clerk, and most of all the town crew and the general public. He also thanked Austin and Henry Martinka. He said he's enjoyed his service very much.

4. Treasurers Report

Ms. Dexter reported on the November budget comparison. She noted that expenditures to date have been held to about \$100,000 less than last year, because of the uncertainty regarding tax receipts – which have not been as low as had been feared.

She noted that two PILOT and state grants have come in that are larger than usual and are somewhat mysterious. (The ACHs are coded ambiguously.) She will have better information on what they are for at the next meeting.

The huge cash balance will nearly disappear next month, when payments to the school will be made.

Lots of water payments have come in and represent the bulk of reserve deposits. Ms. Dexter thanked payees for making use of the drop box outside the back door and encouraged folks to mail in payments or use the online payment option.

At the end of the month, all transfers to reserve voted in at Town meeting will be made.

5. Town budget, FY 2022

Mr. Kiernan outlined the proposed budget, which is designed to keep the tax rate as flat as possible.

Several expenses have gone up and must do so.

Others will go down, including postponing several reserve fund payments; reducing the paving reserve budget for one year; and replacing a uniforms contract with a clothing allowance for the road crew. A cost of living increase will go forward as originally proposed.

The tax rate increase would be less than 1% over FY 2021, a 0.0101 rate increase, or \$10.10 for every \$100,000 in valuation. For FY 2023, full or partially restored payments to reserve funds would yield an increase of 1 cent over FY 2022.

Mr. Kiernan shared a pie chart illustration of the proposed budget.

Mr. Harrington congratulated Mr. Kiernan on the budget, but said he hoped the increase could be zeroed out. Mr. Whitman thought the small increase was necessary, given the unavoidable increases in costs such as health insurance.

Mr. Whitman asked about the delinquent tax collector's FICA, which the town pays; and wondered about the listers – wasn't the Town going to do away with the positions? Mr. Kiernan said the listers had decided they didn't want to retire just yet.

Mr. Whitman asked for clarification on the animal control officer's expense. Mr. Kiernan said the bulk of the budget went to guaranteeing access to a local kennel.

Mr. Kiernan clarified that the DPW crew is content with the proposed change to their clothing arrangement. The crew will be expected to dress professionally.

Mr. Whitman asked about chloride. Mr. Kiernan said the reduction in the budget is possible because the new material is better, and the crew has learned how to use it more efficiently.

The new cemetery assistant will be Austin Martinka. The Town Clerk's assistance to the cemetery commission was rolled into her salary a year or more ago.

Mr. Kiernan said a few community appropriations requests have not been received, hence the blanks in some cases.

6. Public comments

There were none.

7. 2021 Town Meeting

The legislature is allowing Select Boards to vote on all items at Town Meeting by Australian ballot in 2021 only, and is considering allowing Town Meeting to be postponed until later in the spring. Representative David Durfee noted that such a delay would confuse other schedules, such as Select Board terms. He said he expected the legislature wouldn't allow a delay to the new fiscal year.

A remote informational meeting would be held before the day of the vote. That assembly would not have the power to change the budget.

Mr. Whitman moved to move Town Meeting to Australian ballot as an emergency measure in 2021, with the provision that public comments on the budget be sought at the next three meetings, before the Select Board votes on the proposed budget no later than January 18. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0-0.

8. NEMRC contract renewal

An annual fee is charged for the use of NEMRC and support for its platform. Mr. Harrington moved the Treasurer renew the NEMRC contract. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

9. Minutes

There were no minutes for review.

10. Warrants

Payroll warrant #11, \$28,009.68. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

Water warrant, #1, \$298.00. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

Check warrant #19, \$4,154,179.05. The warrant included school taxes. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

11. Public Comments

There were none.

12. Review of Action Items

Citizens will be encouraged to provide input to the Select Board on the budget at the next three meetings.

The solid waste alliance agreement will be voted on at the next meeting.

13. Adjournment

Mr. Harrington moved to adjourn at 7:47 p.m. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.