

Shaftsbury Select Board

January 18, 2021

- 1) The meeting came to order at 6:33 p.m. remotely via the Zoom platform. Present were selectmen Tim Scoggins (chair), Joe Barber, Tony Krulikowski, Art Whitman, and Ken Harrington. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan and Treasurer Melanie Dexter.
- 2) Conflict of interest statement. No one reported a conflict with any item on the agenda.
- 3) Minutes
Mr. Harrington moved to approve the December 21 and January 14 Select Board minutes, and the January 7, 2021 water board minutes. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- 4) Warrants
Payroll warrant # 14, \$24,216.53. Mr. Harrington moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
Check warrant # 24, \$53,445.83. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which failed 0-5-0. (Mr. Scoggins erred in describing the warrant and asked that the warrant be made to fail so he could start over.)
Check warrant #24, \$53,445. 85. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- 5) Announcements
Mr. Scoggins noted that there are openings on the DRB and the Planning Commission. Citizens should send an email if interested to Mr. Scoggins or Mr. Kiernan by January 25.
All ballot questions at Town Meeting this year will be decided via Australian ballot. An internet-based informational meeting will be held before the balloting.
- 6) Treasurer's report
Melanie Dexter described the reports she'd submitted.
Six citizens were able to take advantage of a state program to cover water payments for eligible persons affected by the pandemic.
This quarter's highway state aid has arrived.
Delinquent taxes are in nearly lock-step with receipts last year. It seems that the pandemic has not drastically affected Shaftsbury residents' ability to pay taxes.
The cash balance shown in the reports reflects all voter-approved transfers for the year. The number is basically what the town has left to spend in the remainder of the fiscal year.
It has been agreed that the taxes-due date will be November 10, 2021, identical with the taxes-due date for Bennington and North Bennington. Formal approval of the annual warrant on January 25 will also formalize that date.
- 7) Mail in ballots
Town clerk Marlene Hall joined the meeting. She said the state legislature last week passed a bill allowing towns to mail out ballots to all registered voters for Town meeting. She reported that it would be logistically difficult and possibly costly to mail to all registered voters. The alternative would be to send to only those who request a ballot.
Mr. Krulikowski moved to send a ballot to all registered voters. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion. In the discussion, Ms. Hall said she guessed she'd get about 400 requests for mail in ballots, versus a count of 2700 registered voters. She said she would put out a sidewalk sign, put it on the website, and otherwise get the word out. She said there were about 750 walk-in voters for the November election. She said she thought the layout of the November election at the Town garage was safe and comfortable.
The motion was voted upon, with a result of 0-5-0. Ms. Hall will mail ballots only to those who request them.

Mr. Scoggins reported that CAT-TV has agreed to handle the logistics of the informational meeting. By state law, the meeting can be held any time on any of the three days before Town meeting. It was suggested to hold it at 3 p.m. on the Saturday before. [NOTE: After the meeting it was learned that CATTV wishes to do school meetings on Monday and selectboard meetings on Sunday. The Shaftsbury meeting will likely be held on SUNDAY at 3p.]

- 8) Mr. Kiernan reported that some changes had been made to the proposed budget on the website. Health insurance was upped a little “after a child was born into the road crew;” a proposed revenue line (sale of equipment) had to be reduced; and the tax rate will have to change. The FY 22 budget will be \$2,262,140, an increase of 1% over last year, or an increase of \$14.20 per \$100,000 valuation. A \$250,000 home would pay \$35 more in taxes in FY 22. He said he’s received no questions from the public.

- 9) NEMRC assessor services contract renewal

Mr. Kiernan said the town used to employ a professional assessor, but such individuals are rare today. NEMRC offers similar services and Shaftsbury has depended on NEMRC for some time now. The new contract is much clearer, laying out responsibilities of NEMRC vs listers clearly. On questioning, it became clear that if we didn’t have elected listers we’d have to hire someone to be the public face for assessment purposes. Mr. Whitman moved to accept the lister contract with the change that both listers and NEMRC will assist with hearings and appeals. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0. One signature from Mr. Scoggins in two separate places is needed.

- 10) Reinstate pay as you throw stickers.

Mr. Kiernan asked to postpone the return to using stickers until July 1. He said receipts under the current honor system are comparable to past years’.

Mr. Kiernan said he’d been informed that the Casella scale on North Road would close as of February 1, 2021. (He thought that means the Casella facility will essentially close.) This will require significant additional expenses as the Town can no longer simply truck material across the street but must take it to more distant places. The Select Board should begin thinking about how to approach negotiations with Casella as a new contract is crafted. (The present one expires in June.) Mr. Kiernan said Casella has submitted an application for a new state permit. He has not yet seen the language. Mr. Scoggins said the Town should participate in that permit process.

- 11) Ballot items

Mr. Kiernan has put together some suggested language for the ballot. It includes the FD air pack reserve fund and a renewal of the tax exemption for the Shaftsbury Community House for a period of five years. He will ask VLCT to look the items over. The SB will formally review them at a special meeting on 1/25.

- 12) Town meeting procedures

The CAT-TV presentation will be run by Tom Daly, town moderator.

- 13) Other business

Rescuing the Eagle Square stamping machine at Bernstein Display. Bernstein and the Historical Society are on board. Mr. Scoggins thought that when the old stone building goes, a memorial should be emplaced. Mr. Kiernan said he and Mike Yannotti will visit the site to see what kind of an obstacle it really is.

Fire Department purchase: \$1837 for the deputy chief’s radio in his personal vehicle; and \$8537 for three full sets of bunker gear. Both items have been in their budget for some time and the money is there. Mr. Whitman moved to authorize the fire department to use their own budget to purchase radio equipment and turn out gear. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

Mr. Kiernan reported that re E911 numbers for camps, the E911 office would take charge of assigning addresses. The Town would be responsible for choosing names for the woods roads. Mr. Kiernan will ask Chief Vadakin to ask his colleagues what names they use in describing their camp locations. Mr. Kiernan said the camps are on the tax rolls.

Mr. Kiernan will reach out to people in the Furnace Brook development and those on Trumbull Hill Trail to let them know the Town will be changing their addresses.

14) Action items

- Mr. Scoggins will let Ms. Hall know the schedule for the school informational meeting.
- Mr. Scoggins will sign the NEMRC contract.
- David will keep an eye on the Casella state permit issue.
- Mr. Scoggins will contact Tom Daly re running the March information meeting.
- Mr. Kiernan and Mr. Yannotti will research moving the Eagle Square stamping machine.

15) Adjournment

Mr. Harrington moved to adjourn at 7:40 p.m. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.