

Shaftsbury Select Board meeting
April 5, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order remotely via the Zoom platform at 6:30 p.m. Present were selectmen Art Whitman (chair), Tony Krulikowski, Ken Harrington, Joe Barber, and Mike Cichanowski. Also present were town administrator David Kiernan and DPW foreman Mike Yannotti.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

3. Minutes

Mr. Harrington moved to approve the March 15, 2021 minutes. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

4. Warrants

Check warrant # 31, \$37,233.75. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

Payroll warrant #20, \$22,742.55. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

5. Announcements

Mr. Whitman introduced Mike Cichanowski, the newest board member.

Mr. Whitman said one does not have to pay state income tax when applying for the homestead exemption.

Mr. Whitman drew attention to a new proposed state PFOA boundary, which includes Lamb and Town Line Roads.

6. Public Comments

- Heather Bullock commented on the trenching going on in Grandview St. She asked that the Town instead put in a proper drainage system with a sidewalk. She said the neighborhood is very like Cleveland Avenue and other streets in the Village, which have sidewalks. She said the new ditches have caused people injuries and vehicle towing.
- Cynthia and Edwin Luce echoed Ms. Bullock's comments regarding Grandview Street and added a request for street lights. Ms. Luce said trenches on both sides of the road are a danger to all in the neighborhood. Mr. Luce said he would have preferred that they'd been notified ahead of time of the plans for trenching.
- Veronica and John McDonald also live on Grandview St. She said the trenching has recreated a problem they successfully addressed with their labor and money years ago – erosion along the front yard. She wanted reassurance that the DPW would return to reseed the disturbed area. A drainage feature under the driveway has been broken. A water main shut off has been broken. The front of the house is a mud pit and a disaster.
- Mr. Yannotti said fabric will be laid down on the raw banks and they will be reseeded and mulched in the next few days. He said he'd talked to the N. Bennington water department folks who said the broken shut offs will be replaced soon.
- Ms. Luce said she thought the ditch had been dug deeper than two feet.

- Mr. Whitman said no further ditching would be done until some kind of meeting with the landowners has been held.
- Mr. Yannotti confirmed that the ditching was required by a state regulation.
- Naomi Birdman lives on Hawk Avenue and expressed concerns about speeding on that street as well, asking for speed limit enforcement or perhaps speed bumps.
- Mr. Durfee noted that the new PFOA boundary also affects properties on Route 67 West. He said the Banner did a piece on the PFOA boundary in Shaftsbury in the April 5 digital edition.
- Mr. McEnany said he hoped the Board would come to bat for landowners affected by the new PFOA designation when necessary.

7. Treasurers report

Ms. Dexter urged people to get their homestead declaration in for their own sakes. If filed late, many headaches follow.

Regarding the cash flow and account balances for March: delinquent taxes continue to come in; revenues remain above 100% of budget; expenditures are slightly behind last year's. A grant for water system preconstruction expenses came in. Re April's cash flow: the cash balance as of today is a little more than \$574,000, sufficient to run the town until the end of the fiscal year.

8. Furnace Brook Road: North –South axis name change

Melody Niles complained that the post office has not been getting mail and packages to residents in the neighborhood. Mr. Kiernan said he'd talked with the Bennington and Shaftsbury post offices about such problems and was told they were being remedied. He said the town's issue is with the E911 numbers; the state E911 board has demanded that the town re-name a portion of the neighborhood's roads. Mr. Kiernan said he had received suggestions that the south leg be named Lucas Lane and the north leg Red Clover Lane. The board agreed to table any action until the next meeting, when it will vote on the proposed names.

9. Select Board Goals FY22

Board members shared their lists:

Mr. Whitman: remove the old garage slab and start planning for a park around Cole Hall; make Cole Hall ADA accessible; keep modernizing and improving the parks; continue caring for the roads and increase tree removal; trade in the Volvo for a smaller model; consider a man-lift for tree work; all plow trucks should be bought with a wing on them; continue to look at a tractor mower for roadside mowing; discuss the necessity of the publicly elected listers; adopt a public information policy for upcoming roadwork.

Mr. Harrington: a hiking trail at Howard Park; trade in the old Volvo excavator for a smaller one; explore whether to keep the tractor backhoe; purchase a used equipment mover.

Mr. Cichanowski: ask BCRC to review bylaws for consistency

Mr. Barber: an amphitheater for Howard Park

Mr. Krulikowski: continue the Zoom option for Select Board meetings, as it enhances public engagement.

10. SB Liaison List

Each selectman earlier reviewed a list of which member is responsible for which departments. Mr. Harrington moved to accept the list as modified. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

11. DPW report

Mr. Yannotti said the work on Grandview began following a complaint and a site visit last autumn.

- Tree work

Mr. Kiernan said the state will be paying to take down all ash trees which might imperil the GMP power lines, which includes 70 miles of town roads. It will take years. One emerald ash borer was found in Shaftsbury in 2020. Our tree warden has informed us that it is urgent that all ash trees in the ROW be removed. Mr. Whitman and Mr. Yannotti would also like to remove all dead trees.

- Replace Volvo excavator, which is too big for what we need

Mr. Yannotti said he has spoken with three companies, but needs a trade appraisal before we can decide what to buy instead. (The old Volvo has 3250 hours on it.) He thinks we may be able to also purchase a trailer with some of the trade-in price. Mr. Harrington asked about also trading in the backhoe. Mr. Yannotti prefers to keep the backhoe, which occasionally comes in very handy in important ways.

- Grants in Aid project (administered by BCRC)

Mr. Yannotti would like to do stone pillars, check dams, under drains and more near the Ludwig orchard. He would like to put the project out to bid.

12. Proposed Cleveland Park Sign

Mr. Kiernan shared a draft graphic of the new sign (which he hopes will serve as a template for future signs). No one objected to the proposal.

Mr. Kiernan shared a draft parks survey, which will be sent out digitally. Mr. Barber asked that a question about an amphitheater at Howard Park be added.

Mr. Yannotti said a curb at Cleveland Park will be removed. He has sought a couple of quotes for its removal.

13. Emergency Management LEMP & COOP update 2021

Mr. Kiernan shared updated forms and plans with the board. Mr. Harrington moved to approve the LEMP and COOP as shared with the board. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

14. Sullivan Powers Audit contract renewal

The renewal will cost \$16,800 in FY 2021. (Costs will go up by \$400 FY 21, \$300 FY 22, and \$600 FY 23.) Mr. Kiernan said it provides the fullest possible fiscal transparency for residents of the town. Mr. Harrington moved to enter into a three year contract for an annual audit. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

15. Other Business

Mr. Kiernan will leave the documents needing Mr. Whitman's signature on the table in the meeting room at Cole Hall.

16. Review of Action Items

Mr. Kiernan, Mr. Whitman, and Mr. Yannotti will talk with the neighbors about the Grandview situation.

Mr. Yannotti will do the matting and seeding on Grandview but will undertake no more ditching for the time being.

The working on the Cleveland Park sign will be changed. "Amphitheater" will be added to the Howard Park questionnaire.

A final vote will be taken on the new names in the Furnace Brook neighborhood.

17. Mr. Harrington moved to enter into executive session for a personnel matter at 7:59 p.m. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

18. Adjournment