

Town of Shaftsbury Select Board and Water Board meeting

Monday, July 1, 2024

In person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Water Board Agenda

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were water board members/select persons Naomi Miller (chairperson), Mike Cichanowski, Brad Peacock, and Martha Cornwell. Also present were water superintendent Josh Brace, DPW foreman Mike Yannotti, town administrator Paula Iken, and operations manager Jen Holley.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

3. Minutes

4. Announcements

5. Water Superintendent Update

Mr. Brace said they just finished the every-three-years sanitary survey. All went well. The only state request was an additional allocation of water from North Bennington, as has been routine for several years. During that time, the need for additional water was met via an informal agreement between the two water operators. Mr. Brace said the state suggested that, going forward, the two water boards get together to discuss the additional allocation. (The former water superintendent for North Bennington, Ted Fela, is now the state representative for our area.) The lack of a larger allocation is a violation from the state's perspective. There seems to be enough water to cover the needs of both systems.

Mr. Brace said Joe Herman and Joann Herman will be leaving the water department. Ms. Dexter will take over Ms. Herman's bookkeeping responsibilities. Mr. Brace asked that a back-up person be appointed for those times when he is away. He suggested DPW crew member Dave Worthington. He lives right in town and has some understanding of the water system. He doesn't have to be licensed. Mr. Brace usually lets North Bennington know when he is on vacation, and they are always willing to help when there are issues.

Ms. Cornwell moved to terminate Mr. Herman's contract as of the end of FY 2024. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0. It was agreed to send both letters of thanks for their many and successful years of service.

Mr. Yannotti said the water department has an old truck that Mr. Herman used. He suggested that the water board auction off the truck, and purchase a new pick-up truck that both the water department and the DPW can share. Mr. Brace thought the old truck might bring \$500. Mr. Yannotti thought it might bring more. Ms. Cornwell wondered whether sharing between two boards with two budgets could be complicated. Mr. Yannotti suggested that can be figured out while the truck is out for auction. Mr. Cichanowski said he thought, given the ongoing legal issues with the water department, the department shouldn't acquire any additional assets. Mr. Cichanowski moved to sell the water department truck. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. Mr. Yannotti said he'd need to go to DMV for a title (the original seems to have been misplaced).

6. Other Business

7. Review of Action Items

8. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn at 5:55 p.m. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

Select Board Agenda

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Present were selectpersons Naomi Miller (chairperson), Mike Cichanowski, Brad Peacock, and Martha Cornwell. Also present were DPW foreman Mike Yannotti, town administrator Paula Iken, and operations manager Jen Holley.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

3. Minutes

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the June 17th minutes. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed. 4-0-0.

Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on June 24th. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Warrants

- Check warrant #1 (for FY 2025), \$36,565.62. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- Payroll warrant #26, \$28,882.04. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- Vermont retirement fund catch-up warrant (for an oversight dating back up to two years ago), \$21,305.03. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- Vermont retirement fund warrant #101, 4,562.89. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

5. Announcements

Carl Korman and Betsy Habberfield announced that, with the permission of the Select Board, Shaftsbury T-shirts will go on sale at the Town Clerk's office, to benefit both the Town and the Historical Society. The Board had no objection. Mr. Korman said he thought August 20 could be celebrated at Founding Day. Ms. Holley will post the T's availability on the website.

6. Public Comments

7. DPW report

- Truck Replacement

Mr. Yannotti said he's signed the paperwork with Allegiance to lock in a potential purchase of a truck – the truck they planned to buy last year except that it's single axle. It will cost \$254,719 and will be delivered sometime in FY 2026. The single axle will allow the crew to more easily turn around on such roads as Eleanor's Way and Blueberry Hill. It might mean an additional load of sand will be required to be moved. Mr. Cichanowski moved to authorize Mr. Yannotti to purchase a single axle truck for \$254,719 from Allegiance or Viking. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. Mr. Yannotti explained that Allegiance is reluctant to cite a figure for a trade-in for the existing truck. He therefore recommends that when the new truck arrives, the Town should put the old truck up for auction or

otherwise sell it. He says he's noticed that other towns are taking this route as the lag time between the ordering of new trucks and their delivery grows, and trade-in prices are harder to assign.

The existing tandem will be replaced with another tandem when its time is up. Capital budget funds will be used. The date of purchase for the new tandem has not been set yet.

Meanwhile, a truck purchased from N. Bennington has lived out its life earlier than expected. (Repair costs have become prohibitive.) To avoid being left with a truck this winter, the DPW would like to buy a new single axle, maybe a Ford, maybe from a Rutland dealer. That purchase would be financed as it was not planned for in the capital budget. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the purchase of a Ford from Formula Ford in Rutland. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion. Mr. Yannotti said if the Board wished, the Town could buy an extended warranty on the new Ford. Mr. Yannotti noted that repair costs for the fleet have been consistently greater than budgeted for. The Board and Mr. Yannotti discussed how the capital budget could be revised in the near future. Mr. Yannotti emphasized that a truck needed to be ordered soon to meet the needs of the DPW in winters to come. The motion passed 4-0-0.

- Methane Vent Replacement

Mr. Yannotti reached out to Hayden Plumbing, which offered a quote of \$7188, including the replacement of the enclosure. Brad from Hayden said there are less expensive enclosure options. Mr. Yannotti wondered whether the Town should search them out, or simply go with the MSK design. It should take one day to install.

- Speed Monitors

Mr. Yannotti said that, on further inspection, he finds that the monitors bolt to sign posts and have batteries that must be charged every few days. He said he is concerned about the impact on posts; and that the road crew doesn't have time to go out every few days, remove the batteries, charge them, and replace them. Mr. Yannotti suggested purchasing the solar panels that go with the devices. (The plugs are already there.) He said the Town could have rented units for \$1200 monthly and moved them about Town. He said the crew could modify them to make them more mobile and solar-powered. Ms. Miller asked Mr. Yannotti to return when he has firm numbers on solar panels and the cost of carts – whatever it takes to make the existing solar panels work.

Mr. Yannotti said that recent storms caused only very minor washouts, that the crew's maintenance is working. He said the crew cleaned out a ditch near a problem driveway on Cold Spring Road.

8. Cole Hall renovations: Request for new phone system

The existing phone system is so old the units are no longer made. The phone tree is problematic, and new lines can't be added. (The operations manager needs a new line for her new office, and the assessor needs a line in her office, especially with the re-evaluation coming up.) Ms. Holley said it has been recommended that VoIP be used, but the internet system won't support it. We are now paying Comcast nearly \$500 per month, for phone and internet (and cable TV, which we don't have). Consolidated plus ESI for phone would total \$442 monthly. (Consolidated is less expensive than Fidium.) The fire department will be included in this service. Now they are paying \$166 monthly for cell phones they don't have. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve moving forward on purchasing service from Consolidated and ESI for \$442 monthly with a \$144 set up fee. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

9. Zoning Permit Fees

Ms. Iken presented a proposed schedule for new zoning fees, in which slight increases in "permitted use" fees are suggested and higher fees are recommended for applications requiring a warning in the Banner. Mr. Cichanowski moved to accept the proposal. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

10. Committee Stipends

Ms. Miller and Ms. Iken noted that because of gaps in bookkeeper coverage and some loss of institutional memory the size of the stipends due board and committee members is somewhat confused. It will be clarified.

11. Amendment to Town Administrator Contract

Ms. Miller said it has come to the Board's attention that all full-time employees except the TA are entitled by contract to twelve sick days annually. At present, the administrator is eligible for only five. Mr. Cichanowski moved to amend the administrator's contract to provide that employee with twelve sick days. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

12. Bennington County Sherriff's Contract

The Select Board clarified for the administrator that when the Select Board has approved a contract the administrator may sign it when it crosses her desk. Examples include the contract with the Sheriff's office, with Sullivan and Powers, and with CAI GIS.

13. Other Business

Ms. Iken said she is meeting with Casella tomorrow re the contract renewal.

14. Review of Action Items

Revise the conflict of interest statement.

Revise open meeting policy.

15. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn at about 7:15 p.m. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.