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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Select Board

Date of Meeting: August 5, 2024

Members Present: Miller, Peacock, Cornwell, Krulikowski

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m. Present were selectpersons Naomi Miller (chair), Brad Peacock, Martha Cornwell, and Tony Krulikowski. Also present was 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. Peacock oved to approve the July 15 2024 minutes. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Warrants

Ms. Miller shared two warrants she signed the previous week, as she had been authorized to do by the Select Board. The first was a payroll warrant, the second for the purchase of a new Ford truck.

Warrant 25-005, \$62,473.89. Mr. Peacock moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. (Ms. Iken noted that Sycamore Landscaping is doing some additional mowing for the Town, as the part-time DPW position has not been filled. The announcement is still posted.)

Payroll warrant for withholding, \$29,075.62, for payments to federal and state government and the VT state retirement fund. (Where the payroll company used to handle this task, our bookkeeper is now in charge of it.) Mr. Peacock moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Iken said Peckham Industries has agreed to replace the stolen Howard Park sign free of charge. The recreation committee is exploring placing a stone sign in place.

Ms. Iken explained the new procedure at the transfer station. The cash box is gone. The attendant now has a cash register. Folks must now go inside the shed to pay. She said there have been a few instances of the transfer station staff being verbally abused. The Town constable will hereafter attend sporadically to give

the staff some back-up. Ms. Miller noted that the staff is doing their jobs as the Select Board asked them to. Any complaints should come to the Select Board.

6. Public Comments

Art Whitman spoke. He said there is a rumor circulating re the DPW doing work on his property. Instead, the Whitmans have allowed the DPW to stockpile sand and gravel on their property on Coulter Road while the road crew is working in that neighborhood. Mr. Whitman is also letting the DPW use his front end loader.

Mr. Whitman also said rumors claim that Mr. Whitman and Mr. Yannotti are colluding, and that other residents are suffering as a result. He asked residents to not knock an employee who is doing his very best and has shown his extraordinary usefulness to the Town. Mr. Whitman said the same is true of the transfer station employees.

Debbie XXX said she realized long ago that the transfer station is a social hub of the Town. But people often leave their vehicles running while visiting. She said the existing sign asking visitors to cut their engines is located where no one can see it. She asked that it be replaced with a larger sign and be moved. Maybe it could be portable, so the transfer station staff could move it in place. She said she thought citizens would readily volunteer to make the sign. Ms. Cornwell suggested getting the elementary school kids involved. Ms. Iken will check out the existing sign and report back.

She also complained about parking at Paulin's, now known as The Buck Stop. The Select Board asked Ms. Iken to speak to the owners about it.

7. Awarding of 61 Buck Hill Rd bid

Ms. Iken reported that Mr. Yannotti is on vacation but asked that she report that he recommends awarding the bid to Matt Morse, for \$48,000 to take down both buildings on the town property. (He plans to take them down on August 12. The fire department will hold another training there on August 8.) Ms. Cornwell so moved. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

8. Discussion of Cole Hall renovation

Ms. Miller reported that there was flooding in Cole Hall about two weeks ago and that the staff shouldn't have to work in a wet setting and where mold is likely. She said she hoped to discuss what we can do immediately to address the working situation. Town clerk Marlene Hall said she thought water was coming in through the rock foundation. Ms. Hall mentioned that the upstairs is hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Ms. Miller thought that might be a long term problem. But what about the short term? Ms. Hall said she thought long term solution is to put the offices in the new building, but that the staff could all stay in Cole Hall as it is until the new building goes up. Ms. Cornwell noted that Cole Hall is the Town's responsibility in perpetuity. She noted the state's MERF program may be of help. Mr. Whitman suggested hiring an engineer to inspect the foundation, and to consider rain gutters. Ms. Cornwell thought there are resiliency grants for historic structures. It was agreed that the first step is to confer with BCRC about possible grants. The second more distant step will be to put out an RFP for consultant services. Ms. Hall said she thought the vault is safe from water, but not from fire. (For example, there was an electrical fire in the basement last year.)

9. Election Bulletin

The state asks that the justices of peace candidate names be placed on the back of the ballot, and that the Select Board approve those names. Ms. Miller read the statement required by the state regarding that issue. Mr. Krulikowski moved to sign the statement. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

10. Candidate for Trustees of Public Funds

Rosemary Smith introduced herself. She has lived in Washington County, NY and in Colorado recently, but now owns a house in Shaftsbury. She thinks her financial background makes her a good fit for the position. She's served on many boards and chambers of commerce, but not in local government. Mr. Krulikowski moved to appoint Rosemary Smith as a trustee of public funds. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. She said she also has experience managing construction projects.

11. Discussion of use of funds from Maser Estate

Ms. Maser died intestate, and some of her \$59,000 went by state law to the school or its property (but not to the education system, which is not the Town's responsibility). Rob Steuer, chair of the trustees of public funds, said it would be right and proper for the Town to hand that money over to the trustees. The Select Board has ultimate authority as to how to spend the funds. Should the Board wish to use it immediately, the trustees will place it in an accessible fund. If not, it would be invested, and the interest would go to the school property. Mr. Steuer thought the investment might raise \$400-\$500 in interest annually. Ms. Miller said the Board's immediate responsibility would be to transfer the funds to the trustees; its ultimate responsibility would be to decide if and how to spend it. Mr. Krulikowski thought it should go to the school. Ms. Cornwell suggested using the funds to improve climate resiliency at the school property. Ms. Miller said the funds could go to installing solar panels and back-up batteries at the school, making it possible to designate the school an emergency shelter. Mr. Whitman mentioned air conditioning. XXXXX. Mr. Peacock moved to transfer the funds to the trustees of public funds and to a fund that is flexible in its usage. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

12. Brief presentation and update on Shaftsbury Solar project from Reed Wills

Mr. Wills summarized meetings and submittals to date. He said his team went before the PUC on July 15. The PUC members and intervenors were able to ask questions. The Town's counsel was present at the hearing, which lasted one day. It was a thorough and healthy discussion.

The host town agreement came up.

Progress on the VTRans permit came up. That permit will be a requirement of the PUC's approval. He expects to receive it within sixty days or so.

He said the other critical piece is the water line and making sure there is no interruption to service. He said everything will be done in coordination with the water board and the board will sign off on the project. He said the legal process with the water board is slow moving. There is an MOU with the water board. The water line project has been engineered but work has not yet been scheduled.

Another hot topic at the hearing was where the power will go. Until recently, there hadn't been a good mechanism for Green Mountain Power to buy from larger solar projects, but recently legislation was passed which will make it easier. (Rule-making still needs to proceed.) Mr. Wills says he now expects to sell power to Connecticut under a twenty-year contract. If that doesn't happen, it may be possible to sell to Vermont utilities beginning in 2025. He hopes to have an update on the Connecticut contract by early October. In answer to a question, Mr. Wills said it would be financially difficult for his team to stand on the sidelines waiting for Vermont should Connecticut approval be proffered.

A couple of additional filings will be made, probably ending in September. The PUC will then make a decision, probably before the end of 2024. He said he'd be glad to return to update the Select Board in the near future if the Town wishes. He doesn't expect anything new to happen before September. He imagines communicating with the Town with increasing frequency.

13. Next steps for Vtrans and the Sunderland culvert bridge

VTRans proposes to close off new 7 and reroute the traffic to 7A, resulting in 8000 more vehicles passing through Shaftsbury daily for the duration of the project (scheduled for 2026). Ms. Iken said she'd

heard from VTrans public relations that they essentially declined to attend a special meeting to respond to citizen concerns, but instead suggested a Zoom presentation to the Select Board. The Select Board agreed that a special in-person meeting was needed. Mr. Peacock and Ms. Iken said they thought a VTrans person will be attending a public forum re Town roads scheduled for August 14. Perhaps the issue can be broached then. The Board authorized Ms. Iken to get back to VTrans to decline their offer. A six o'clock in-person meeting on non-Select Board Mondays will be suggested to VTrans.

14. Discussion of fall panel discussion on Ash Borer policy

Ms. Miller thought it best to have some experts come to talk about what towns are doing about this impending economic disaster, to get people to come to think about it as a community issue and how the town might manage the insect. Ms. Cornwell suggested a panel discussion, aired on CAT-TV. Ms. Miller suggested organizing it for the spring. Mr. Peacock, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Iken will work on organizing a forum.

15. Other Business

Ms. Cornwell suggested a thank you note to Peckham for a new stone sign for Howard Park.

Mr. Peacock asked about an air exchange system for Cole Hall. Ms. Cornwell thought the MERF program could help.

16. Review of Action Items

Ms. Iken will check out the existing sign at the transfer station and report back. The SB will then discuss next steps.

Ms. Iken will speak to the owners of the Buck Stop about parking.

Ms. Iken will reach out to VTrans re the Sunderland culvert.

Mr. Peacock, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Iken will work on an EAB forum.

16. Adjournment

Mr. Krulikowski moved to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Mr. Peacock seconded the motion , which passed 4-0-0.