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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Select Board

Date of Meeting: November 4, 2024 in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Naomi Miller (chair), Martha Cornwell, Brad Peacock, Mike Cichanowski, and Tony Krulikowski. Also present were Melanie Dexter (treasurer), Jen Holley (operations manager), and Paula Iken (town administrator) as well as several citizens from the Twitchell Hill neighborhood.

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were none reported.

3. Minutes

Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the minutes for the October 21 select board and water board meeting. Mr. Cichanowski seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-2.

4. Warrants

- Payroll check warrant #9, \$19,290.92. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Payroll check warrant #10, \$18,608.38. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Payroll check #4, \$19,493.73. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.
- Check warrant 25-011, \$82,091.50. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Miller reminded all that the polls will be open on November 5, 7a-7p, at the town garage.

6. Public Comments

Gabrielle Rynes spoke about the recent increase in the speed limit to 35 m.p.h. on Twitchell Hill Rd. She said the situation has become noisy and dangerous. She asked that the speed limit be reduced to 25 m.p.h. Ms. Miller explained that the road had been mismarked at 30 m.p.h. for several years and was re-marked a couple of years ago. The state allows only 25 m.p.h. or 35 m.p.h.

roads. Residents can petition the town to request a change to 25 m.p.h. Several other residents on the road described the speeding situation on Twitchell Hill. Board members noted that the sheriff occasionally monitors Twitchell Hill.

Resident Kurt Ernst spoke about drug fights and shootings at 218 Twitchell Hill. He said that, despite a raid and arrests some time ago, drug traffic has increased. He asked what the Select Board can do about it? He said if something isn't done, more shootings will come. He said other locales (in New Jersey, for example) exercise property seizures. Ms. Miller said she and Ms. Iken have been in touch with Sheriff Gully about the situation on the road. Ms. Cornwell noted that towns in Vermont are greatly limited in their powers. Ms. Miller promised the Select Board would act on both issues.

7. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter said she keeps seeing people having to pay thousands of dollars more than they should because they didn't file their homestead declaration. It must be filed annually.

She said she collected \$2 million in taxes in October. She moved some money for the paving of White Creek Road into the proper fund. She said the cash balance is as large as it is because the Town hasn't cut the checks for the schools yet. That will happen later this month or in December. She said expenditures are running a little ahead of last year but it may be a simple question of timing.

Re the reserve fund, three big things happen in December: the Town cuts checks for the schools, community appropriations are distributed, and voter-approved transfers to reserve funds are made.

She will be getting out water bills very shortly.

8. DPW Report

Ms. Iken shared Mr. Yannotti's report: the crew is updating road signs, replacing a culvert and installing French drains on Airport Road, preparing the plow trucks, storing summer equipment, helping Jen Holley clean headstones, and doing fall cleanup at Howard Park. The contract for Wallingford gravel is about to expire. He hopes to get bid requests out and bids back before the next Board meeting.

9. Status of RFPs

Ms. Iken said she posted the RFP about a week ago for the basement demolition. She's heard nothing. Ms. Miller asked all demolition experts to visit the Town's website for more information. The cemetery mowing RFP went out. She will finish the mortaring RFP after talking with State masonry expert Jamie Duggan, who will be visiting Cole Hall.

10. Grant Award for Howard Park

Ms. Iken reported that the Town was awarded a grant for Howard Park. It will help resurface the tennis courts, install more pickleball courts, install a shed and maybe a bench. It is a 1:1 match requirement grant.

11. Cole Hall Restoration Update

Ms. Miller reiterated that the Board would wait on repairing the basement until Mr. Duggan has visited and reported.

12. Other Business

Ms. Miller reported that Mr. Peacock has agreed to serve as the Town's liaison with the composting committee at the Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance.

13. Review of Action Items

- Explore changing the speed limit on Twitchell Hill.
- Try to think of a way to help the Twitchell Hill residents with their drug matter.

14. Executive session, personnel and legal

Mr. Cichanowski moved to enter executive session at 7:02 pm. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 5-0-0.

15. Adjournment