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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Select Board

Date of Meeting: December 2, 2024 in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom

Members Present: Naomi Miller (chair), Martha Cornwell, 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.

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

None were reported.

Ms. Miller noted that public comments will be heard immediately following Mr. Gulley's updates. Cemetery bids will be tabled as the bidding period hasn't closed yet.

3. Minutes

Tabled.

4. Announcements

There were none.

5. Sheriff Gulley Updates

Sheriff James Gulley appeared to discuss matters regarding events on Twitchell Hill.

He reported that he, members of the State Police, and residents of the Twitchell Hill neighborhood met some time ago. Since that time, he said many agencies, local, state and federal, have been involved in an investigation of drug-related activities on the road. He thanked neighbors for sending videos of such activities, which are being used to create "incidents" that can generate a search warrant. Sheriff Gulley said he is unable to share more information on the investigation at this time as it might jeopardize that effort.

In response to a citizen's comment, Mr. Gulley said the putative drug dealers know of the neighbors' 24 hour a day intelligence gathering. He said not every person who visits the residence in question is a person of interest. Mr. Gulley said the neighbors are doing everything right. A citizen said the drug activity hasn't ended because the neighborhood isn't patrolled at night. Another citizen said he'd seen two drug deals go down in front of his house. Mr. Gulley said the sheriff's office and other agencies are working very hard to solve this problem and are making progress. A citizen said that since the raid in May, putative dealers have

brazenly conducted drug deals on the street and openly taunted residents. Mr. Gulley said this isn't like a TV show: problems like this take a lot of time to resolve; certain criteria must be met; certain schedules must be met. A lot of things go on behind the scene that complicate the investigation, including the unpredictable behavior of the persons of interest.

A citizen asked for more coverage and for street lights at the top of the hill on Twitchell Hill Rd. Mr. Gulley said the Town's budget only allows for 24 hours weekly of Sheriff's coverage. He said the office could handle a greater number of hours, but not necessarily night time hours as they are more costly. Mr. Gulley said the state police are revisiting their mission. They are considering saturation patrols in the Brattleboro area.

In answer to a question from a citizen, Mr. Gulley said he did not know how long this problem might go on. He said that is largely up to the prosecution or state's attorney.

Sheriff Gulley said the problem is present not only on Twitchell Hill Road but also elsewhere in the wider community.

He said Representative David Durfee has been active on their behalf. Mr. Gulley said he believes everything that can be done has been done; his office will continue to look for and respond to neighbor communication about the situation; his office may be able to increase coverage if the Town's budget allows. Mr. Gulley said this is not the only narcotics house in the community, and his office is worried about where the dealers might go next.

Sheriff Gulley said the Vermont State Police are highly involved in this matter. They are a kind of "big brother" to the Sheriff's office's "little brother."

6. Warrants

- Check warrant 25-015, \$91,385.84. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- Payroll warrant #11, \$22,802.43. Mr. Cichanowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- Check warrant 25-014, for school taxes, \$4,679,192.38. The Board had already approved signing this check.

7. Public Comments

There were no additional public comments.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter reported first on the cash flow report. The cash balance to date is \$2,373,810.45, which will have to get us through the end of the year. Upcoming major expenses will include community appropriations and tax overpayments due. She said spending is a little ahead of last year – 36% of the total compared to 32% for last year. She will keep a close eye on this going forward.

As for the reserve accounts, water payments are coming in. They are due December 20.

She noted that she has received some journal entries from our auditors, to accomplish the change from accrual to cash-based accounting.

9. DPW Report

Ms. Iken reported for Mr. Yannotti that there are no large projects in the works, simply getting prepared for winter.

10. Open Cemetery Maintenance Bids
Tabled.

11. Generator at SES

Ms. Iken reported she'd found two maintenance plans, one for \$848 annually and one for \$1381, each including inspection and batteries. She recommended the less expensive option. Mr. Cichanowski moved to reinstate the Town's upkeep of the SES generator. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion. In discussion, it was reported that it has been learned that the land on which the school sits was transferred by deed to the school in 2019 (perhaps as part of the school consolidation process). Therefore, the Town owns neither the school building nor the land under it. A discussion was held: should the Town be responsible for the generator? Ms. Cornwell said that the school could not be certified as a Red Cross shelter, for several reasons. Others noted that it could serve as a non-certified shelter. Ms. Iken said she'd learned the school provides the fuel for the generator. It makes sense, she said, to work in partnership with the school to keep the generator running, but an MOU should be entered into codifying this partnership. (This was suggested by emergency manager Paul Dansereau). The motion passed 4-0-0.

12. Cole Hall Update

Ms. Iken said she'd had some back and forth emails with Jamie Duggan, the state's historical masonry specialist. Apparently he's been having health issues. The Board noted that the ARPA funds must be spent or committed by the end of December. Ms. Miller said it has been discovered that the Town may hire individuals who don't carry worker's comp insurance (but not employers who don't carry worker's comp insurance). She invited anyone listening who is experienced in the kind of demolition required for the Cole Hall ground floor to contact the town administrator.

13. Special Meeting on 12/9: CCDC Report and Recommendations

It was agreed to hold a meeting to hear the recommendations of the CCDC on December 9. A water board meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. on the same date.

14. Schedule of January and February meetings

It was agreed that the Select Board will meet, in December, on the 9th and 16th. The December 30 meeting will be cancelled. Ms. Miller will sign payroll checks that week on the Board's behalf. The board will meet on the second and fourth Mondays in January (the 13th and the 27th) and, in February, on February 3 and February 18.

15. Other Business

Ms. Iken presented a request from the assessor for a signature on the errors and omissions form. Mr. Cichanowski moved to sign Form 4261E, errors and omissions certificate. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. The form was signed.

16. Review of Action Items

- Renew the generator maintenance contract at the lower amount.
- The next meetings will held December 9 and 16, January 13 and 27, and February 3 and 18.
- Ms. Iken will follow up with Mr. Duggan or one of his colleagues.

- The Select Board reminded all who are seeking a community appropriation to get their requests in. They will be discussed on Dec. 16.

17. Adjournment

Mr. Cichanowski moved to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.