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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

Meeting Minutes

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Town of Shaftsbury Select Board Meeting

Date of Meeting: Monday, August 4, 2025, at 6:00 PM, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:00 PM. Present were selectpersons Zoe Contros Kearl (Chair), Tony Krulikowski, and Brad Peacock. Also present were Town Administrator Paula Iken, and Treasurer Melanie Dexter.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

The July 21st minutes could not be approved due to lack of a quorum.

4. Announcements and Updates

Ms. Iken gave an update on progress at the new town office building. The next 2 weeks will be focused on the HVAC system. Hometown Heating and Cooling, a Shaftsbury based company, is pricing out the heat pump and mini split. Though the building has central air, the vault needs a split to maintain a specific humidity. Units and ducts are being inspected to come up with a maintenance and replacement plan.

5. Warrants

Check warrant report #26004 \$70,277.68

Items over \$1,000.00:

A & K Agri Services: \$1,198.57 and \$1,572.48 Gravel

All Climate Hydraulics LLC: \$1,369.85 DPW Diesel & oil

G. A. Bove Fuels: \$1,966.64 Diesel

Ford Credit Municipal Finance: \$24,924.27 Lease payment

Matt Moore Excavating: \$1,800.00 Culvert work

Peckham Industries: Amount not given. 3 of 4 gravel purchases will be covered by grants.

Sycamore Landscaping: \$3,208.00 and \$1,600.00 Mowing town offices, parks, and cemeteries.

Weaver Excavating: 3,000.00 Excavator rental for culvert project. This will be reimbursed by a grant

Ms. Contros Kearl asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. The warrant was approved 3-0-0.

Check warrant report PR03: \$20,927.53 payroll

Check warrant report PRW01: \$12,932.31 social security, health equity benefits

PRW12: \$20,296.94 Social Security payments Ms. Contros Kearn asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Peacock moved; Mr. Krulikowski seconded. The warrant was approved 3-0-0.

6. Public Comments

No public comments

7. Special public comment: proposed change of speed limit to 25 mph on Twitchell Hill Road

The proposed change to the speed limit on Social Hill Road, as discussed in previous meetings, would be lowering the speed limit to 25. This follows a speed study and feedback from residents of Twitchell Hill Road. The Select Board offered an opportunity to anyone who would like to comment about that change. There were no public comments. Ms. Iken said that she had received a letter from the neighbors and that they are very much in favor. She continued that she is working with the state to find out the next steps.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter said that the external auditors had visited, and they had discussed no longer collecting or accounting for interest on a fund by fund basis in the reserve accounts. This creates the possibility of eliminating the reserve bank account and pooling resources into a single bank account and solves the perennial problem of cash flow towards the beginning of the year. The Town won't have to take out a line of credit going forward. She noted that it's a completely different way of keeping track of the cash position in each of those reserve accounts, but it's the same as it used to be, just not in a different bank account. Ms. Dexter ran through numbers to demonstrate the new system. She mentioned that the auditor said that this has always been the advisable way to do fund accounting.

Ms. Dexter didn't have a comparison of where expenses versus budget is because it's too early in the year but will look at it next couple of months. She has not printed the tax bills to give time to have a close look so that they won't have to be reprinted. Ms. Dexter noted that it's less urgent to get tax bills out as early because of the adjusted cash flow. This makes it possible to wait for possible changes to come through from the State before we mail them out.

9. DPW Report

Mr. Yannotti sent the following to Ms. Iken regarding work being done by the DPW in the next 2 weeks: roadside mowing will continue on the west side of Shaftsbury, starting on White Creek Road, continuing on all roads towards Apollo Road. Grading will be done on Myers Road, Cross Hill and Daniels Road, weather depending. Culvert replacement work continues at the Mountain View and Glastenview intersections with Daniels Road. This project will be completed by the end of next week. The next project being planned is a replacement of a bridge on Horton Hill Road. This project will be going on for the month of September, probably September 2nd to the 26th. Horton Hill will be closed between Madison Road and Rollins Road. Signage will be put up. Mr. Yannotti will have more on the project closer to the end of August. This project is funded from the trans structures program grant. Ms. Iken said that the DPW report is now posted on the town website. If anyone is wondering what roads are being worked on this week, go on the Town of Shaftsbury website, to the Public Works page and open reports.

10. Bennington County Multicultural Community Center presentation: Jack Rossiter-Munley

Jack Rossiter-Munley, the director of programs and community engagement at the Bennington County Multicultural Community Center, presented some background and information on community projects and programs that it undertakes. The Center is the local branch office of ECDC, which is a national

refugee resettlement agency. Mr. Rossiter-Munley said that refugee resettlement is fairly new for the southern part of Vermont. It started here out of conversations around regional economic development, becoming active sooner than people anticipated, in response to the emergency needs created by the evacuations in Afghanistan in 2021. ECDC opened an office in Brattleboro in 2021; some of the families who initially came to Brattleboro found their permanent housing in the town of Bennington. Because of the outpouring of volunteer and community support for the refugees, Bennington was designated as a separate resettlement site and has its own relationship to the headquarters of the ECDC, and through them the State Department. Almost 200 people in the last 2 years have resettled in Bennington through this process. The main message is that the Center supports people as needed on an ongoing basis. The challenge is that 82% of funding was federal, because refugee resettlement is a federal process, and with the change of administration that process, and funding, was halted. In addition to directly supporting people, the Multicultural Community Center undertakes projects and programs that respond to the needs of people involved with the center. Mr. Rossiter-Munley went on to discuss some of the projects including, language skills building, collecting books in different languages, painting murals, and community gardening and farming. He noted that the main challenge is making up for the vast shortfall in the original federal funding that supported the program.

11. Discussion of Shaftsbury Solar Project Status

Ms. Contros Kearl updated the board on the Shaftsbury Solar Project, saying that nothing has happened. The developers reached out to the Vermont Public Utility Commission's Clerk asking for an update or a decision on their application. It's been a long time with no response, so the Town sent in a request to the PUC through its attorney, asking that a decision be made, or an update be released. The Town needs to know if the project is going to happen or not. It is a financially interested party under the provisions of the Host Town agreement. The developer is still on board, but at some point, they will not be if the project no longer appears to be financially viable. If there's an update from the PUC, information will be provided.

12. SFD Equipment Request

Fire Department Chief Joe Vadakin said the department has received quotes from Reynolds and Sons and would like to proceed with the purchase of air packs and a battery charger. These are replacements for one that is 15 years old, and in accordance with NFPA Standards, needs to be replaced along with the air bottle. The battery charger is needed because the cost of buying alkaline batteries is rising; charging would be much more cost efficient. There is only one quote because the Fire Department only uses one brand and Reynolds and Sons is the regional vendor. The department is in the process of getting quotes on new replacement gear, because gear has a shelf life. According to NFPA Standards, they need to be replaced every 10 years. Testing revealed leaks in hoses. Mr. Vadakin proposed replacing a couple of hose lengths per year to avoid a large cost. This is the official request for money from the department's fund.

13. Other Business

Ms. Iken brought up an emergency of a sinkhole developing on the left side of the fire department's parking lot, near the elementary school. It is probably caused by stumps of trees rotting. The board agreed that this needed to be addressed immediately, before school opens. A bid for paving was solicited last year and the company will honor that bid. The DPW will work with the paving company to correct the issue. There is a possibility that money left to the Town for school use might be available. Ms. Contros Kearl asked for a motion to allow Ms. Iken to proceed with paying for work to fix the sinkhole. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded. The motion was approved 3-0-0.

14. Review of Action Items

Ms. Iken will follow up on the repair of the sinkhole and speed limit change.

15. Adjournment

Ms. Contros Kearl asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Krulikowski moved; Mr. Peacock seconded.

Motion to adjourn passed 3-0-0.