

Shaftsbury Select Board
November 18, 2019
6:30 pm

- 1) Call to order at 6:35 pm. Present were Select Board members Tim Scoggins, Art Whitman, Tony Krulikowski, and Joe Barber. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan and treasurer Melanie Dexter.
- 2) Conflict of interest statement
No one reported a conflict of interest with any item on the agenda.
- 3) Minutes
Mr. Whitman moved to approve the November 4, 2019 minutes. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 3-0-1 with Mr. Krulikowski abstaining.
- 4) Warrants
Check warrant #12, \$84,224.01. Mr. Krulikowski moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Barber seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.
- 5) Announcements
The tree lighting ceremony will be held at Cole Hall December 8, 4 pm. Santa will be attending. Mr. Scoggins mentioned a program called Internet Essentials offered by Comcast, which offers high speed access at less than \$10/monthly. Residents receiving public support of many kinds may be eligible. More info at internetessentials.com.
- 6) Public comments
There were none.
- 7) Treasurer's report
Ms. Dexter reported that all taxes have been processed, including late payment paid by credit card. It seems that more people paid on time this year than last. (Approximately 82% paid on time.)
The water bills have gone out.
A class 3 roads grant has been deposited to reserve funds.
- 8) Road Reports
Mr. Kiernan reported that the guard rail was installed on North Road this day.
The new truck will arrive in December. We hope to purchase the N. Bennington truck soon.
Town staff will confer with Tree Warden Jim White in early winter regarding which ash trees should be taken down, and when.
Regarding the former rented lot behind the old garage: the layer of gravel on it will be removed and a conservation mix will be planted on the site.
Mr. Whitman reported he'd talked with the road foreman regarding solutions to sinkholes.
It appears our mowing contractor is in the process of going out of business. The Town may be back on mowing duty again. The board will discuss whether it makes more sense to rent a mower or purchase a used one. (A mower costs about \$12,000 monthly to rent and the town

needs it for at least two months. Mr. Kiernan wondered if it doesn't make sense to ask the road crew to work overtime on mowing for the rental month.)

9) FY 21 budget

Mr. Kiernan said the total budget for FY 2021, assuming inflation, is equal to the budget for FY 2015. The entire increase in the new budget, about \$87,000, is for road projects, including increased funds for paving, for the class 3 road fund, for chloride, and operating supplies. Gravel, winter sand and winter salt budgets are not being increased. The cost of vehicle maintenance has been increased to better reflect reality. (Now that most of the trucks have gone through a round or two of repairs, these costs should stabilize.) A spreadsheet of maintenance costs for each vehicle is being created by the highway foreman. (Until now, such records have been kept only by the bookkeeper.)

The Bennington Rescue Squad contribution of \$25,000 will not change.

Mr. Kiernan suggested working more closely with the Sheriff's office to target its services better. The Sheriff's office is understaffed and can't guarantee coverage as requested: as result the service is fragmented. Mr. Kiernan would like to institute block scheduling, but acknowledge that fourteen hours per week is about the most the Sheriff's office can provide (not the seventeen the town has requested), and budget accordingly.

10) Internet: CUD on March Ballot

Mr. Scoggins reported that Kathleen James, state representative for parts of the Northshire, recently called a meeting to discuss a Communication Union District and Act 79 (which helps towns assess the viability of a proposed CUD). It was agreed among those attending that they would attempt to create a CUD for southern Vermont as a first step. (There is no downside to forming such a district.) CUDs have access to cheaper capital than an ordinary ISP. It is this feature that can make a CUD work. Voters must vote to join a CUD, so information will have to be shared with the public. A second meeting will be held November 20. One of the topics to be discussed will be how big to get. Mr. Whitman moved to place on the March ballot the question of whether Shaftsbury should join the CUD. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

11) Other Business

Mr. Whitman brought up a request from VLCT to push state legislators to give towns a lot of control over and share revenue from any marijuana operations with the state.

Mr. Harrington has asked to place the question on the March ballot, "Should the town budget be approved by Australian ballot". Mr. Whitman said he is concerned that should the Select Board put it on the ballot, the public will think the Select Board is for it – and he (Mr. Whitman), is not for it. Both Mr. Krulikowski and Mr. Barber said they are on the fence on the issue. Mr. Scoggins said he'd been on the fence, but now leans toward Mr. Harrington's point of view. The Board will continue to debate the matter.

12) Review of Action Items

Mr. Kiernan will schedule a meeting with the bidders on the water line replacement.

Mr. Scoggins will place the announcement re low cost internet on the town website.

13) Adjournment

Mr. Whitman moved to adjourn and about 7:45 p.m. Mr. Krulikowski seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.