

Shaftsbury Select Board

December 21, 2020

1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order remotely via the Zoom platform at 6:43 p.m. Present were Select Board members Tim Scoggins (chair), Ken Harrington, Tony Krulikowski, and Art Whitman. Also present was town administrator David Kiernan.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

No one reported a conflict with any item on the agenda.

3. Minutes

Mr. Harrington moved to approve the November 30, 2020 water board and November 30, 2020 select board minutes. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

4. Warrants

Check warrant #21, 2020 \$87,710.00, for Town Meeting appropriations. Mr. Harrington moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

Check warrant #20, \$27,364.14. Mr. Whitman moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

Payroll warrant #12, \$26,519.65. Mr. Whitman moved to approve the warrant. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

5. Announcements

a. Town Meeting by Australian Ballot

Mr. Scoggins reported that the Select Board has decided to hold the 2021 Town Meeting votes by Australian ballot. An informational meeting will be held virtually, probably the evening before. Mr. Whitman noted that any changes to the budget must be made no later than the end of January; that is, the remote informational meeting cannot yield changes to the budget.

b. Opening on PC, DRB, SB

Terms will be ending on the PC, the DRB, and the Select Board. To run for the Select Board, a letter of intent must be presented to the Town Clerk. (Petitions will not be required.) For other openings, people should contact Mr. Scoggins or Mr. Kiernan.

5. Public comments

There were none.

6. Treasurers Report

Ms. Dexter reported that a lot of delinquent taxes are coming in, only about \$60,000 behind the average for most years.

Ms. Dexter said a very vocal but small minority of tax payers wants Shaftsbury's taxes-due date to be the same as North Bennington's -- always November 10, in contrast to Shaftsbury's Friday before Veteran's Day. The date taxes are due, usually decided by Town Meeting floor vote, will be decided by Australian ballot, along with approving the budget.

Without objection, agenda item 11 (Bank Authorization for Paran Village funding transfer) was moved up on the agenda so Ms. Dexter could answer questions if necessary. Mr. Kiernan said that a separate bank account for the federal payment to Shires via the Town must be created, in order to meet grant audit requirements. Mr. Harrington moved to sign the business deposit account certified

resolutions from Peoples Bank. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. Mr. Kiernan will leave the resolutions with the Town Clerk for signing and notarizing by Mr. Whitman, Mr. Harrington, and Mr. Scoggins.

7. Sally Gannon Solar Project –Martha Staskus, Norwich Solara. Vote to Reaffirm Preferred Site Designation

The owners of the land have changed their mind and the project will not be going forward.

8. Budget FY22

Mr. Kiernan thanked the community organizations for keeping their requests flat, for the most part.

WBTN's request for \$5000 was submitted via petition and was approved by the voters in 2020. Mr. Kiernan, however, noted that \$5000 is equal to 27% of the station's total budget. Mr. Whitman thought it might be better to base the contribution on how much of its listenership is represented by Shaftsbury citizens. Mr. Scoggins said he was inclined to leave the \$5000 in the budget as it had been approved by the voters, after a successful petition drive, and a petition drive now to address a changed amount isn't feasible. Mr. Kiernan wondered if the Town shouldn't have a representative attend a Select Board meeting to explain their request, so the voters could better understand it.

- Community Appropriation Reviews

1. Shirekids –new application

Nicole Campbell presented the organization's request. She said she started Shirekids in 2019 to offer Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to Bennington County. The program provides one free book annually to enrolled children ages birth to five. Fifty-three Shaftsbury children are currently enrolled. Nine have recently graduated from the program. Shirekids pays for the books, which are deeply discounted to \$2-\$3 each. Imagination Library negotiates with the publishers for the discounts. Shirekids is responsible for outreach to child care centers, pediatricians, social service workers, and others. Shirekids's monthly invoice for books is about \$1700. Ms. Campbell said she hopes to secure a stable income one-third from grants, one-third from towns, and one-third from businesses and individuals going forward. Ms. Campbell is requesting \$500 from Shaftsbury in 2021. Mr. Whitman moved to place a request for \$500 from Shirekids on the ballot. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.

2. Presentation by McCullough Library –no change in request

Jennie Rozycki said she was attending this evening because she thought it the library's responsibility to check in and answer questions. While the building is closed, a book pick-up service is now in place, serving folks three times weekly. One can call the library, email it, or use a link on the library's website to request a book. She said loan numbers have been stable, when the early summer ten-week complete closure is taken into account. She said a small business training program called Linda.com has instituted, and in 2021 Kanopy, a film service, will be offered. The library's WiFi has been very popular. Those wishing a library card should simply contact the library.

- Draft Budget Review

Mr. Kiernan said the proposed increase for 2021 is has been revised to \$25,184, a 1.1% increase over last year. About one half of that is the \$10,000 annual air pack reserve fund for the Fire Department, which was discussed at an earlier Select Board meeting. Also new is an emergency

communications fee. Mr. Kiernan said he added back in to the budget costs of maintenance on a garage yard tractor.

Mr. Kiernan shared a pie chart illustrating the town's expenses, the largest part of which goes to the DPW. A pie chart breaking down DPW expenses showed that the largest part goes toward road maintenance and construction. He shared the capital equipment plan.

Mr. Harrington said he had gotten a few calls from the road crew members, asking if the uniforms could be put back in the budget. Mr. Kiernan noted the Town already provides boots, hoodies, gloves, t shirts, and safety items. Mr. Harrington asked Mr. Kiernan to look into coveralls to wear while working on the vehicles.

9. Public Comments (Budget Comments/Questions)

There were none.

10. Bennington County Solid Waste Alliance Interlocal Contract

At a prior meeting, it was asked when the contract expires. Mr. Kiernan learned it doesn't expire, although towns can opt out if they wish to be a stand-alone provider. The current document simply updates the old. Mr. Whitman moved to sign the contract. Mr. Harrington seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0. Mr. Kiernan will leave the document with the Town Clerk. It requires three signatures.

11. BCRC Commissioner Appointments

BCRC is looking for an update. At present, Cinda Morse and Ken Harrington are commissioners. Mr. Harrington wishes to continue. Mr. Scoggins will find out from Ms. Morse whether she wishes to continue. A vote will be taken to appoint whomever is interested at a future meeting.

12. Public Comments

There were none.

13. Review of Action Items

- Mr. Whitman, Mr. Scoggins, and Mr. Harrington will visit Cole Hall the next day to sign two documents.
- Mr. Kiernan will ask a WBTN representative to attend the next meeting to explain their budget.
- A taxes-due date should be decided upon, either Wed. Nov. 10, or Nov. 5, a Friday.
- Mr. Scoggins will talk with Ms. Morse about BCRC service.

14. Adjournment

Mr. Harrington moved to adjourn at about 7:55 p.m. Mr. Whitman seconded the motion, which passed 4-0-0.