

Town of Sherman
Board of Selectmen
Regular Monthly Meeting
July 26, 2018
7:00 p.m. Mallory Town Hall

DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectman Don Lowe, Selectman Bob Ostrosky

ABSENT: Selectman Kevin Keenan

Audience and Invited: Treasurer Erik Holub, Business Administrator Liz LaVia, and audience of approximately 30.

CLERK: Ruth Chen Byrnes

CALL TO ORDER: First Selectman (FS) Lowe called the meeting to order at 7:05p.m. Public Comment is allowed after each agenda item (no cross talk and please keep comments germane to the topic). Additionally, there are Public Comment opportunities at the top and bottom of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Rolf Martin, Conservation Commissioner spoke to having reviewed 6650 scientific articles on “toxicity of very fine particulate matters released” from plants like Cricket Valley, and that the evidence shows this causes shut down of protective genes and is harmful young children.

CORRESPONDENCE: Card from Linda Yannone commending Library Director Millie Loeb for her service, dedication, and making the Sherman Library a warm welcoming place for all.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: **Selectman Ostrosky moved** to approve the minutes of the 6/28/18 Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting minutes. **Seconded: FS Lowe. Vote: For: Unanimous.**

MONTHLY FINANCIAL SUMMARY REVIEW: Liz LaVia stated that last fiscal year budget is still open pending an expense item that needs to be turned in. All selectmen have received a copy of year-end report.

RETIREMENT PLAN FOR PART TIME EMPLOYEES: Eric Holub shared that on September 1, 2018, the 457 Savings Plan for Town employees will move from Nationwide to Ritholtz Wealth Management. Ritholtz will be on site and available to meet with individual employees on August 15, 2018. Discussion continued on allowing non-seasonal part time employees to participate in the savings plan without Town matching funds. Part time employees will then be able to invest a portion of their tax deferred salary. If approved, interested part time employees will be invited to attend a Ritholtz presentation on August 15, 2018.

First Selectman Lowe moved to allow part time non-seasonal employees to participate in the 457 Savings Plan without Town matching funds. **Seconded: Selectman Ostrosky. Vote: For: Unanimous.**

CRICKET VALLEY: First Selectman Lowe commended the Conservation Commission on work done on drafting a resolution in support of the Stop Cricket Valley movement. FS Lowe recently wrote a letter stating that this Board of Selectmen will not be supporting the resolution, but suggests air quality monitoring (in partnership with neighboring towns) pre and post Cricket Valley’s opening. This letter was sent to neighboring town’s First Selectmen and Mayors. Kent Conservation Commission plans to

start a task force for air quality monitoring. Selectman Ostrosky also supports the air quality monitoring and looks forward to hearing from Kent Conservation Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Rolf Martin, suggested amending the air monitoring to request a “test release of emissions” from Cricket Valley prior to full operations. FS Lowe stated that Kent Conservation Commission (KCC) is looking for help and suggests that Mr. Martin bring his suggestions to KCC’s next meeting. DEC and CT Bureau of Air Management are other contacts for those who are concerned and want to get more involved.
- Bill McCann, Conservation Commission Chairman, stated that the Kent Conservation Commission is not creating the task force. The task force will be made up of volunteers (including Kent Conservation Commission members) at KCC’s last meeting. Mr. McCann requests representation from Sherman.
- Colette Schulman, Conservation Commissioner, will leave copies of articles by Johanna Fallert, and an excerpt from “The Light of the Stars” by Adam Frank.
- Jen Freed, Church Road, was disappointed in FS Lowe’s letter and that it was on Town of Sherman letterhead. Ms. Freed noted that air monitoring from Maine to Virginia is needed, not just locally.
- Joe Keneally, Rte 37 East, suggests asking state political candidates where they stand on this issue and what they plan to do if elected.

FS Lowe stated that this will be the last time that Cricket Valley is on the BoS agenda.

EMERGENCY SERVICES FACILITY MAINTENANCE: FS Lowe asked Joe Lombardozi to do a building assessment of the ESF in an effort to be maintenance ready for winter. Mr. Lombardozi’s fees will be charged to Building Maintenance. Selectman Ostrosky recommends waiting for the assessment to determine if work done on the building will qualify under LOCIP.

FS Lowe recommends:

- a single person who reports maintenance issues
- central vendor for each building system
- troubleshoot problems, possibly with a facility manager

Selectman Ostrosky would like to see preventative maintenance contracts as originally suggested by Selectman Keenan.

Stan Greenbaum, Parks & Rec Commissioner, supports having a town facility manager again. Would like to be included in the planning process.

Bob Acosta was introduced as the new Fire Chief, this being his third time. Jim Reilly was thanked for his work as outgoing Fire Chief. FS Lowe commended Jim also for his outstanding work and how it hastened the recovery time for the May storm event.

FOX RUN DETENTION UPDATE: Dry weather is needed to start the project. It will likely start in two weeks.

HOLY TRINITY PAVING UPDATE: Scheduled to start week of 8/13/18.

WATER/WELLS GARY ROBBINS PROJECT UPDATE: Planned to start week of 8/6/18.

HAPPY ACRES T-MOBILE UPDATE: FS Lowe moved to go into executive session at 7:42 pm to discuss the contract between the Town and T-Mobile and the addendum to the contract. **Seconded by**

Selectman Ostrosky. Treasurer Eric Holub was invited to the executive session. **Vote: For: Unanimous.**

First Selectman Lowe moved to come out of executive session at 7:59pm. **Seconded by Selectman Ostrosky. Vote: For: Unanimous.** No action was taken.

ELDERLY TAX DEFERMENT PLAN: FS Lowe raised the point that 26% of Sherman residents are of the age range that could apply for this plan and the trend is moving to 50% in five years. Concerns expressed by the Tax Collector's and Tax Assessor's offices are that this could mean significant budgetary issues. However people who have paid their mortgage off usually do not want to have the Town put a lien on their home. This plan is meant for seniors in need of assistance to stay in Sherman. Treasurer Holub stated that the proposed two year plan allows for this plan to not be renewed if budgetary issues arise. This plan will stay on the BoS agenda for further discussion and for approval to bring to Town Meeting.

HOUSING COMMISSION STATUS: The Housing Commission asked FS Lowe to re-write the by-laws and simplify their charge. FS Lowe asked Selectman Ostrosky to read the by-laws and give feedback. FS Lowe would like the current members to stay on the commission, and has other potential commissioners who would like to join.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING POLICY: Selectman Ostrosky proposed that yearly training/certification/meetings/association dues/conferences be part of the annual budget request. This allows for full transparency, and ad hoc exceptions that come up during the year can be brought to the First Selectman for approval. Currently many departments have an Education budget line without specifics. The selectmen will keep this on next month's agenda.

HAPPY ACRES BARN REPAIR & IMPROVEMENTS: FS Lowe moved for the Happy Acres Barn Repair project, to approve the hiring of Fire Tower Engineered Timber Co. as the engineer not to exceed \$6,000, and also the hiring of Hudson Valley Preservation as the contractor not to exceed \$8,000, and to bring to Town Meeting at a later date, both to be paid out of the Restricted Fund. Timing of this project needs to be when the old hay is out of the barn and the new hay hasn't been stored yet (spring). **Seconded by Selectman Ostrosky. Vote: For: Unanimous.**

INFO ON SIDEWALKS AS PER LOCIP: There is a path through the grass by the ESF that leads to a crosswalk (illegal) off Route 37. It was a temporary crosswalk likely put in during construction at the Sherman School. Sight line looking west is problematic, therefore a special dispensation is required to build sidewalks. FS Lowe and Public Works Supervisor Don Borkowski will speak with DOT contacts in an effort to move this forward.

HAPPY ACRES FARM REPORT: FS Lowe summarized the emailed farm report: 28 healthy calves born this past month. The farm market is on every Sunday, with occasional farm stands on other days. The farmers inquired about the repairs on the barn, the paint on the house, and asked that a set of stairs be looked at for safety reasons.

Jen Freed expressed concerns over the 21+ split rails for fencing by Route 39 are down. The lease states that the farmers are responsible for maintaining the fence.

GRANTS: FS Lowe would like the BoS to start thinking about possibly hiring a grant writer to take advantage of all the opportunities available. His thoughts are to compensate the grant writer with a small

stipend and a percentage of the grant amount received. Selectman Ostrosky suggested a “proof of concept” to see if it’s prudent before hiring a grant writer.

SUGGESTIONS BY SELECTMEN FOR FUTURE AGENDAS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Ann Chiamonte, Board of Assessment Appeals, inquired if there will be additional opportunities for discussion on the Elderly Tax Deferment Plan. She prefers a tax relief plan for the seniors as she sees an increasing number of seniors needing help. Treasurer Holub stated that Sherman already has a tax relief plan in place, and the capped amount is dependent on income level. Selectman Ostrosky confirmed that a senior could take advantage of both plans assuming the deferment plan is approved.

Gretchen Briggs asked the BoS to reconsider not having Cricket Valley on future agendas. As a parent of a child with cerebral palsy, she is very concerned at the possibility of kids coming into our school system with severe disabilities five years from now. She feels the school is not equipped to deal with this, and that we need to continue discussions. FS Lowe reiterated that his letter explained he does not believe Cricket Valley can be stopped at the local level. An official at the level of Governor, Attorney General, or Senator or Congressman is needed for any action. FS Lowe has written to multiple elected officials and no one wants to get involved. FS Lowe pointed out the exact same plant is up and running in Oxford. When CT was given the opportunity to ask for permits from Cricket Valley, DEEP did not ask for them citing that they had no concerns since they had permits and information on the Oxford plant. FS Lowe is willing to discuss Cricket Valley if someone brings it up at future BoS meetings, but it will not be on the agenda.

Rolf Martin asked why the selectmen are ignoring the science and published evidence that he provided, and asked if they spoke to any experts. FS Lowe encourages all concerned to email the Bureau of Air Management (DEEP) with questions. He is happy to share the responses he’s received from them. Mr. Martin spoke to the EPA.

Jen Freed stated that the tax payers pay the salaries of the officials at the state and local levels. She does not believe that residents who work and have families should be the ones doing the work of contacting officials.

Gail Maletz, Pepper Pond Road, asked about the Oxford facility. FS Lowe stated all information/findings/filings are on line for both facilities.

Terry Hahn asked how many towns are impacted by Cricket Valley.

Susan Zeitler, Curtis Drive, asked for Selectman Ostrosky’s view on Cricket Valley. Selectman Ostrosky does not support the Conservation Commission’s resolution, and does support air quality monitoring. Ms. Zeitler stated that in September 2017, Ms. Zeitler asked then First Selectman Cope to send out a mailing to every resident about Cricket Valley and it still hasn’t been done.

ADJOURNMENT: First Selectman Lowe moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55PM. Seconded by Selectman Ostrosky. Vote: For: Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ruth Chen Byrnes