

**SHERMAN BOARD OF SELECTMEN
BUDGET HEARING MINUTES
March 3, 2012**

Present: Clay Cope - First Selectman Chris Jellen - Selectman Andrea O'Connor - Selectman

Call to Order: First Selectman Cope calls the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The next budget hearing will be on March 8th.

Agenda: The Board of Selectmen will receive and review budget requests from the following entities:

Sherman Library: Millie Loeb represented the library. They prepared their budget with the Board of Trustees to reflect the cost of relocating for the library construction. Most of the library costs are fixed, even though they are moving. There are some costs that will go down as well. They are asking the town to support the library through a grant of \$120,000 – the same amount they have received since 2007 (last year it was a little lower). This figure will get them through this year. The expenses to move to the school are in the bold numbers. She spoke with the Board of Ed and they said to use the same numbers as last year, they weren't sure, it might go up one percent. First Selectman Cope asks what they are charging them for. Mille says the \$3,000 goes down in the event they aren't in their own building and are at the school. Millie presents a sheet to the Selectmen. Their insurance is a little higher, \$6,642.68. The library will continue aggressive fundraising, because they fundraise for both operating budget and building projects. They have some good fundraising coming up for the end of the year. No questions from Selectman Jellen or Selectman O'Connor.

Sherman Volunteer Fire Department: President Jim Reilly spoke. For the last four or five they kept a flat budget. There is only about a 1% increase this year, because vendors they use can't hold it down anymore. Fire supplies (listed on the sheet) increase this year mostly because of the two storms. They do the fire prevention poster contest and Little Munchkins. The state requires them to re-certify every year. The utilities, heat, and phone are known expenses. The town has the numbers on those. They have a big list for maintenance. They have been asking for years what it will cost to run the new building, and they have come up with their best estimate for this. There are new items in this building the town hasn't covered before. New septic, water softener, everything is listed there, the items new to this building. First Selectman Cope asks if there will be contracts for many of these things, Jim says "yes". Jim mentions that some things are failing already – the floor, and there have been issues with air control. Dues and contracts - EMS is required by the state, and they have to test the ladders and hoses annually. Equipment – NFP regulations say they can't use certain things after a period of time, so this is what they are predicting for next year. Physicals and vaccinations are consistent. Radios and pagers go up, because if they get new people, they need to be supplied with these. The biggest increase is in vehicle repair.

They will start looking at different vendors to see if they can knock that figure down. The fee for the annual inspection is going to go up. The second engine (1985 vehicle) has higher costs, according to Chief Accosta. EMS supplies – a list of all the things they use on calls, a marginal increase. Jim hands First Selectman Cope a vehicle replacement sheet, an 80/20 split with the Town. Regarding the ambulance – the current one is getting very old. They are trying to keep costs down. They are coming up with different ways – looking at new purchases, and refurbishing, they are restricted to what they can get for a vehicle. They have mechanical problems with it now. The Fire Department is going to incur the expense on that. Jim also mentions the STEAP grant the town is exploring for an ambulance. First Selectman Cope inquires about the propane. Jim explains that the temporary heat is strictly propane and probably won't be used when the building is up and running. Jim says the only time they would likely use this in the future would be in the winter. They maintain their computers themselves. No questions from Selectman Jellen or Selectman O'Connor.

Candlewood Lake Authority: Larry Marsicano, Director Candlewood Lake Authority, Ed Hayes, Howie Berger, and Phyllis Schaer. Larry says Public Safety includes patrolling the lake, and they provide guidance on how to preserve the lake. Phyllis prepared the budget that is before the board. There is an increase, because they have incurred unforeseen expenses. They renegotiated an agreement with the DEP to oversee their patrol, which cost them a considerable amount of money. Also, the threat of Zebra mussels arose, and they stepped up to be leaders in this arena – this was something they did not anticipate. They are in the process of changing over their patrol, and towns feel that they need to evolve in their patrol, for example officers carrying firearms, and this costs a little bit more than other patrolmen. They were also asked to increase their insurance - now they carry about \$5 million. The board also wanted to provide some increase to staff. There is a request for buoy replacement – they paid for that with their reserves (based on fund raising), and they replace around 10 a year. They paid last year, but next year they put in for \$2,500 to cover that. They also have in a request for vehicle – wear and tear and gas and repair bills. Public Safety also includes increases for salaries. Larry explains that patrolmen are stepped on seniority, they go up in salary (these are highly qualified individuals) and they top out a \$20.00 & \$21.00 per hour. They are in the process of transitioning from print mailings to electronic mailings. They use quite a bit of electronic technology for outreach and communication. However, they printed quite a bit of materials for the Zebra mussels. That money came out of the designated reserve. Their newsletter budget decreased. Their budget also includes supplementing their income from the community. Larry says it is a challenge for them to do what they do with the budget. First Selectman Cope asks Larry what his GIS is. Larry explains it is a program that makes maps. They have the software now, so he can make due with what he has. He is certified to use it. Howard Berger says they need continued leadership from Sherman, and the town always responded in the past and was a good partner of the CLA. They need the town's leadership in addition to economic involvement. First Selectman Cope asks Howard to schedule a meeting with him. No questions from Selectman Jellen or Selectman O'Connor.

HVCEO: First Selectman Cope wonders how to work out attendance issues with himself and Selectman Jellen. First Selectman Cope thinks there is tremendous value in HVCEO. Selectman O'Connor encourages Selectman Jellen to attend these meetings as well to get a feeling of the flow of the meetings. This way he can know what he is stepping into in the event that Clay is absent.

COST: First Selectman Cope and Selectman Jellen both attended the COST meeting. First Selectman Cope accepts what their budget is. Selectman Jellen and Selectman O'Connor have nothing to add on COST.

CCM: First Selectman Cope asks for a little guidance on CCM, and mentions he gets emails from them. Selectman O'Connor explains it is a lobbying group, like COST. CCM provides educational programs that she found relevant and well put together. Sherman belonged to both, then dropped them, and then it was a struggle to get them back in the budget. It was valuable to her on other occasions for doing legwork and research on what other towns were doing with problems rather than researching or gathering or inventing this research. This is open to non-members, but at an extra cost. She was pleased with the services that the town got for their money with this. First Selectman Cope is on the fence with CCM. He will forward these workshop emails to Selectman Jellen and Selectman O'Connor, to see if they want to attend. Selectman Jellen has already attended three or four of these workshops, and he thinks CCM is a valuable program.

HVA: First Selectman Cope is not reading the letters into the record, both Selectman Jellen and Selectman O'Connor have them. First Selectman Cope has no problem with what they are proposing. Selectman O'Connor mentions we have had variable funding with them, and that one year they were very valuable. First Selectman Cope notes it is not a lot of money and probably a good value for environmental issues.

Northwest Conservation District: First Selectman Cope sees no issue here. It is \$1,200, and they also help with the GSI maps. Selectman O'Connor says they are particularly helpful with wetlands issues.

911 Service Contract: First Selectman Cope will move 911 to March 8th. Selectman O'Connor says check with the Fire Department for the liaison.

Paramedics: Not on the list for today, but written in: HV Regional paramedic program. First Selectman Cope notes it is a minor amount. Sherman's part is down 9.81%. Selectman O'Connor says this is because we lost population. No Selectmen questions on this.

Police Protection: First Selectman Cope says this covers our trooper and fill in troopers, and he has no problems with this at all. Selectman O'Connor wonders if overtime and extra troopers (like for parades) are factored into this, because we will be charged for such things. She says we do not know what a new trooper will cost in terms of salary, because the barracks assigns them. If we get a more expensive trooper we won't know

the cost, because it won't come in until after the budget. Selectman O'Connor mentions she did have good input on our last couple of troopers, and they try to match the trooper to the temper of the town. First Selectman Cope mentions he met with the troopers Mike, Mike, and Mike. He and Liz need to factor in and think about things like salary increases and overtime.

Animal Control: First Selectman Cope has nothing from animal control.

Collections/Recycling: First Selectman Cope has nothing from collections and recycling.

Women's Center: First Selectman Cope says they are asking for \$1,500. Beth Trott speaks on this. This is under the Health & Welfare budget. We do use the Women's Center, and we do make referrals for domestic violence and women going through divorce. She thinks this is a worthy contribution.

Visiting Nurse: Beth Trott says they do almost all our health education, work together sometimes with New Milford Hospital, and most health education for the seniors. This includes the flu clinic, and we usually have around 100 people who take advantage of this. They also do monthly visits to homebound individuals. They do blood pressure screenings 1x per month at the Senior Center. She is sure whatever VNA is requesting is appropriate.

Mental Health: Beth Trott is not really sure what they do for us. She and the Trooper work together with the mental health issues that arise with respect to safety. She does not know who else is making referrals to Mental Health. First Selectman Cope says they are an advocate for funding and advocate for legislation – lobbying at the Hartford level, not local level. Selectman O'Connor says we used to have a town representative to this board. First Selectman Cope says they approached him for a delegate. He thinks we should keep this in the budget, if we get a delegate. If not, perhaps that increase can be put someplace else.

Child Advocacy: Beth Trott is also unsure of what this does for our town, as she takes care of advocacy for families with children. The school calls on her. When there is an issue of neglect or abuse, she or the school make the report. First Selectman Cope reads their request letter. The letter says their services support the families in this area. They say that Sherman has used their services in the last fiscal year. First Selectman Cope will reach out to Ms. Juliann Reppenhegen on this. Beth explains their \$750 is based on a typo error from our town. We previously paid them \$750 when it should have been \$250, so now they are requesting \$750.

WeCahr: Beth Trott spoke to them. There are six children they have advocated for at Special Ed conferences at the Sherman School. They also advocate for four adults from Sherman. They are asking for \$2,500. First Selectman Cope will scan and email the request to Selectman Jellen and Selectman O'Connor. Beth says this is a new request for them. Beth does not know what adults they are helping, as she is involved with most of the disabled in town. Beth says WeCahr is doing something, but she does not know

the details of what they are doing. She will speak with Mrs. Boylan at the school to see what is going on, to see what sort of referrals to WeCahr they have made.

Elderly Nutrition: This is a very valuable program, according to Beth Trott. This is meals on wheels and contributions toward those programs. The rate of 30 cents per meal is a tremendous value.

Veterans Center: Selectman O'Connor says this is in Danbury, and they provide counseling to Veterans about benefits. Beth Trott says we do refer Veterans to them. First Selectman Cope says they will get some follow up on this.

Parade Committee: First Selectman Cope says the parade budget will stay the same for this year.

Probate: First Selectman Cope notes they are requesting an increase. Selectman O'Connor says we have a statutory requirement to contribute to the regional probate.

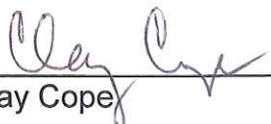
Cemeteries: Selectman O'Connor says Veteran's cemetery flags come under this, the ones on the graves. We do alternate year funding on these with the Veterans, because they maintain the flags and they last two years.

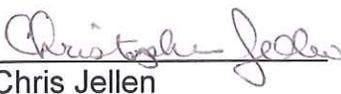
Park and Rec: First Selectman Cope says they moved to the March 8th meeting.

Adjournment: First Selectman Cope moves to adjourn the March 3, 2012 Budget Hearing Meeting at 10:01 p.m., and the motion is carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Laura J. Pettinato, BOS Clerk

- **Please note the disc used to record this meeting was defective, and failed to record. Minutes are drafted entirely from detailed notes taken at the meeting.**


Clay Cope


Chris Jellen


Andrea O'Connor

Minutes are not considered official until they have been approved and signed by a minimum of two Selectmen