

**TOWN OF SHEFFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
SELECTMEN'S OFFICE
JANUARY 13, 2010
6:30 PM**

Board Members Present: David D. Macy, Chairman
Julie M. Hannum
Rene C. Wood

Others Present: Joseph A. Kellogg, Town Administrator

Chairman Macy called the working meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board members reviewed a proposed FY2011 budget request for the Selectmen/Town Administrator department which is due to be submitted to the Town Administrator by January 22, 2010. Selectman Hannum moved to submit the budget request as presented, seconded by Selectman Wood. The motion carried unanimously.

Thomas Carmody, Building Commissioner, was present for a discussion relative to a request received from the Planning Board asking that all decisions of the Building Commissioner be placed on the Town's website. Mr. Carmody said he is opposed to the proposal, noting that a recent experiment with placing a list of building permits in the *Sheffield Times* resulted in several calls from residents expressing concern about privacy issues. He did note his understanding that such information is public and said he has always accommodated requests to view these documents or make copies. Discussion ensued and Selectman Hannum noted that the Town is currently exploring the purchase of new software which will help make the building permit process more transparent by placing most functions online. Selectman Wood suggested that building permits and records of decisions could be placed in a binder and made available for public view in the Assessor's office. The Board noted their appreciation for the Planning Board's suggestions, but agreed that no action should be taken until the outcome of the permitting software proposal is determined.

A brief discussion was held about whether the Board should propose adoption of either a meals tax or room tax for the Annual Town Meeting as a means of dealing with revenue shortfalls from the State. Although members were not sure of their own position, it was agreed that the voters should have the option as they determined budget allocations for the next fiscal year. Selectman Wood moved to include an article on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to determine whether the Town would adopt a 4% room tax, seconded by Selectman Hannum. The motion carried unanimously.

Selectman Wood provided a number of documents summarizing the Recovery Zones program which is a component of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. If the Town participated in this program, low interest bonds would be available to fund local infrastructure as well as assistance to businesses seeking to expand and create jobs. Members agreed to study the information and discuss it in more detail at the next meeting.

Selectmen Wood said the Board needs to move forward on amending the Town's Personnel Policy to include updates and to deal with those portions which are unclear. She volunteered to work with Administrator Kellogg on this project.

Chairman Macy provided a brief update on the status of the negotiations relative to a new SBRSD Regional Agreement. He noted that an initial draft has been prepared and will likely be ready soon for submission to each of the member towns. It was suggested that a meeting be held with the Selectmen, Finance Committee and School Business Manager to better explain the financial implications of the new agreement.

Administrator Kellogg told the Board he has received a request from James McGrath, Director of Parks and Recreation for the City of Pittsfield, to place a link on our website which would direct visitors to more information about how to prevent and control the spread of zebra mussels in local water bodies. Board members said they were in support of putting the link on the Town's website.

There was a brief discussion regarding the cable license renewal negotiations with Time Warner. Administrator Kellogg noted that there was a great response to our latest survey of unserved residents which should help in bringing negotiations to a conclusion. The next meeting of the Cable Committee is scheduled for January 20th.

Administrator Kellogg updated the Board on his discussions with officials from Sheffield Plastics regarding their corporate status and how it affects personal property and other taxes.

The Board reviewed a letter from Roger Ball, resigning from the Fire Department due to his entering military service. Selectmen Hannum moved to accept the resignation with regret and to send Mr. Ball a letter of thanks for his service, seconded by Selectmen Wood. The motion carried unanimously.

Concerns were expressed by members that several boards and committees do not post their meeting minutes in a timely fashion on the Town's website. Selectmen Wood moved to send a letter to all boards and committees reminding them that minutes of their meetings must be prepared and filed with the Town Clerk in a timely fashion, at least within 30 days of the meeting, seconded by Selectmen Hannum. The motion carried unanimously.

Selectmen Wood noted her concerns about a number of procedural issues at the January 11th Special Town Meeting, including the poor sound system, and asked that improvements be made for the Annual Town Meeting.

Chairman Macy adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Joseph A. Kellogg
Town Administrator