

## **SELECTBOARD REPORT**

When the year began, the Selectboard was focused on the financial health of the Town. The economic downturn was affecting every aspect of our community and Town government. The Selectboard was faced with hiring a new Town Administrator, as Aaron Chrostowsky had resigned. At the same time, the Selectboard was preparing to begin two major construction projects, the water improvement project and the sidewalk construction project. This has been a challenging, but productive, year for the Selectboard and your Town government.

### **Administration & Finance**

Aaron left the position of Town Administrator in April 2009, following 5 years of service. The Selectboard thanks Aaron for his contributions to the Town and Town government. While the Selectboard recruited a new administrator, the Town Clerk, Judy Stratton, and Treasurer, Henrietta Billow, voluntarily took on most of the day-to-day responsibilities of the Town Administrator. Karen Mellinger took responsibility for the water improvement project and the sidewalk construction project. Due to their collective efforts, Town government continued to function and the Selectboard moved ahead on a number of important projects. Judy's, Henri's and Karen's efforts were invaluable, and the Selectboard extends its thanks to all of them.

In June, the Selectboard hired Margaret (Margy) Becker to serve as Town Administrator. Margy has brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the job, having served 14 years as administrative assistant to the Selectboard for the Town of Sharon. Margy has assumed all of the responsibilities of Town Administrator and was actively involved in the summer's construction projects. Her energy, experience and organizational skills have proven to be a valuable asset for your Town government.

The Selectboard has continued its efforts to obtain grants to fund Town projects. Some of these grants are common, such as the State paving and culvert grants. Others are less common, and very competitive, such as the Historic Preservation Grant, the Federal Transportation Enhancement Grant, and the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant. Demands on the Town Administrator's time have grown substantially as the Town has obtained more grant funding. To assure that day-to-day tasks were performed and grants were properly administered, the Selectboard authorized the Town Administrator to hire an administrative assistant to provide 8 hours per week of administrative support. The Selectboard supports retaining the administrative assistant during FY 2011. This additional support is needed if the Town is to comply with grant requirements and properly perform routine Town business.

The Town ended FY 2009 with a \$13,712 budget surplus, due in part to cuts in spending made by the Selectboard during the fiscal year. The FY 2008 deficit has been retired and the Selectboard looks forward to finishing FY 2010 with a balanced budget. Winter weather can have a profound effect on the Town's budget, so it is too early to tell how the Town will end its fiscal year.

On August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009, Wynn Metcalfe resigned his positions on the Selectboard and the Development Review Board. Wynn also resigned as superintendent of the Town's cemeteries. Wynn served on the Selectboard for 9 years and the DRB many more years than that. The Selectboard thanks Wynn for his years of service to the Town.

The Selectboard appointed Craig Bruder to fill the 2-Year Selectboard seat vacated by Wynn Metcalfe. A special election was scheduled, but the Selectboard cancelled the election when only one candidate, Craig Bruder, filed a petition to run for the seat.

### **Transfer Station & Solid Waste**

The State has approved the methane remediation system designed, installed and tested by Dr. Bill Pennebaker last year. The landfill closure process is now complete. Looking ahead, the Town will monitor methane levels and perform ground water testing at the landfill to comply with State requirements.

The Town sponsored two hazardous waste days, free tire days and free metal week. Two other towns participated in hazardous waste days, helping to pay some of the costs of the events. Resident participation was high, so the Selectboard is committed to continuing these events. The Recreation Committee co-sponsored Green-up Day with the elementary school. Many residents participated and the event was a remarkable success. The Swap Shed has proven to be a popular addition to the Transfer Station, and residents are encouraged to contribute and take items from it. Please speak to the Attendant before leaving an item, as not all items are accepted. Our thanks to the Environmental Issues Committee for their hard work setting up the Swap Shed.

### **Public Works**

This summer the Town completed the State mandated improvements to the Shaftsbury Water System. The project was financed by a \$425,000 bond through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund. The Water Superintendent, Joe Herrmann, worked diligently with the Town's engineer and contractor to get the work done on time and within budget. The Selectboard greatly appreciates all of Joe's efforts in getting this project successfully completed.

The Highway Department continues to maintain and improve our 70 miles of roadways. The crew completed road improvements on the east end of Myers Road and repairs to a section of Shaftsbury Hollow Road. The Myers Road project was identified as a high priority on the Town's Road Improvement Plan. The Road Foreman proposes to complete two improvement projects in 2010, one on Paran Road and one on Murphy Hill Road. The Town will lease a second road grader again to expedite road repairs following mud season. The Selectboard's proposed budget includes the purchase of a new road grader in FY 2011. The Town will keep the current grader, a 1987 Caterpillar, for spring road recovery work and spot duty.

Construction on the sidewalk construction project began over the summer. The Town applied for and was awarded an additional grant to extend the sidewalk improvements north, along Route 7A to the edge of the old Thompson Garage. Except for seeding and some other items, the construction work is substantially complete. The Town has applied for a final grant to complete the sidewalk around the Church Street/7A corner. The Selectboard is appreciative of all the assistance provided by the Sidewalk Committee in planning and carrying out this project.

### **Cemeteries**

The Cemetery Committee has undertaken a review of the Town's cemetery operations, including the current condition of the Town's five cemeteries. The Committee recommended, and the Selectboard adopted, a new Fee Schedule to replace the Fee Schedule adopted in 1999. The Committee is in the process of establishing new policies and procedures for the Town's cemeteries. The Selectboard anticipates appointing a new cemetery superintendent in the coming months.

### **Facilities Committee**

The Facilities Committee and the Selectboard have been working with Keefe & Wesner to develop a detailed facilities plan for both Cole Hall and the Town Garage. Keefe & Wesner completed a detailed analysis and found that current facilities do not meet the needs of the Town. The Selectboard and Facilities Committee are continuing to study the issues and hope to complete a plan for addressing the Town's facility needs by the end of 2010. In the fall, the Town used a \$7,000 Historic Preservation Grant and Reserve Funds to make critical repairs to Cole Hall. More work needs to be done.

### **Public Safety**

Beginning December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, the Sheriff's Department is providing 20 hours of law enforcement service each week, rather than 10. The Sheriff's Department received a Federal COPS Grant, which helps towns increase their law enforcement services. The Selectboard signed a 4-year contract with the Sheriff's Department, locking in 10 hours of service per week at the Sheriff's regular rate, and an additional 10 hours per week at a 75% discount. Without the COPS Grant, the discount would not be possible.

Beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, Vermont law requires constables to meet State certification requirements if constables are to engage in law enforcement. The training requirements for obtaining State certification are lengthy and substantial. The Selectboard met with State Police Lt. Reginald Trayah, Bennington County Sheriff Chad Schmidt, and Constables Dave Herzfeld and Robert Perry to discuss what would be involved to have the Town's constables perform law enforcement services. As a result of that conversation, the Selectboard concluded that paying for State certification for the Town's constables is not appropriate unless there is substantial planning for a constable law enforcement program. There are serious financial and legal issues which must be addressed before the Selectboard can ask our constables to perform law enforcement

duties, which can be dangerous work. The proposed budget does not include money to pay for State certification. These complex legal, financial and public safety issues need further study. The additional sheriff's hours the Town contracted for is expected to comfortably meet all of the Town's law enforcement needs.

### **Ancient Roads**

The Ancient Roads Committee, chaired by Peggi Price, has completed 2 years of work and has prepared a report with recommendations to the Selectboard. The Committee has recommended that three existing Town roads be returned to the Town Highway map. The recommendations affect the northerly end of Granger Hollow Road to the Arlington town line, the northerly end of Shaftsbury Hollow Road to the Arlington town line and an un-named cross road from Old Depot Road to the Little Rhode Island Cemetery. The Selectboard has conducted a public hearing and will be studying the Committee's recommendations. The Selectboard appreciates the hours of historical research and analysis the Committee performed to complete its report and recommendations.

### **Recreation Committee**

This summer the Recreation Committee applied for and was awarded a \$15,000 grant from the State Department of Forest & Parks to make improvements to the Linda Tilgner Trail at Howard Park. The Youth Conservation Corps provided the manpower, building a kiosk and bridge, and improving the trail. A small amphitheater was constructed so teachers can provide lessons to the children using the trail.

### **Volunteers**

While the economy has been very difficult this year, and caused lots of personal hardships, the Town has benefited greatly from the work of many volunteers. Our volunteers have written grants, guided decision-making in committee meetings, and organized activities and events. Their contributions, large and small, have enriched our lives and made Shaftsbury a wonderful community. The Selectboard thanks all of the volunteers who have served their Town.

Lon McClintock, Chair  
William Pennebaker, Vice Chair  
Craig Bruder  
Karen Mellinger  
Cinda Morse