**What Is a Senior Services District?**

A Senior Services District (SSD) is a governance structure that would allow the current Senior Center, or a different building, to be purchased and renovated to meet the needs of the growing aging population in our member towns. While the existing intermunicipal agreement provides for the Center’s operation and maintenance, it does not delineate legal ownership. Although community residents have expressed high interest in renovating the Center’s longtime “home” in Shelburne Falls, no progress can be made toward that until an entity is designated to actually own the property.

For this reason, the Expansion Committee is recommending the establishment of the Senior Services District as the next step to address our future needs.

***How much would it cost to establish the SSD?*** Language being proposed for consideration at the annual Town Meetings in Ashfield, Buckland and Shelburne, specifies that formation of the SSD does not cost anything. The towns will vote on their assessment, to operate and maintain the Senior Center, in the same way they have in years past. Once the District is formed and an official expansion site is identified, each town will have to vote to approve the project and, also at Town Meeting, to approve the capital cost and any borrowing.

***Who will run the show?*** The Select Boards in each town, with representation from their Councils on Aging, will appoint a Board of Manager to oversee the operations and maintenance of the Center-- responsibilities currently handled by the Town of Shelburne--giving each town an equal say. The Senior Center will be run as it is now with a Director, staff and volunteers, and a Board of Directors that will continue to serve as an advisory council.

***What’s happening now?*** Municipal officials in each town are reviewing the proposed District agreement, raising questions and concerns to further clarify the Expansion project and District document. A small advisory working group is meeting regularly with Dan Pallotta, President of P-Three, Inc. the firm hired to consult and aid the expansion committee, to determine the next course of action.

***Want to learn more?*** When the Select Boards give their support to proceed, there will be opportunities for the public to learn further details, share comments and raise questions through Zoom forums and outdoor gatherings (pandemic pending) and there will be written materials available for distribution. The purpose of this process is to create an equitable District that will serve all the Seniors in our Community. Watch for postings of Expansion Committee meetings ([www.the-senior-center.org](http://www.the-senior-center.org)) as well as Senior Center topics on Select Board and Finance Committee meeting agendas and announcements in *The Recorder*, *The Independent* and this newsletter. We encourage members of the communities to follow the progress of this process and project and look forward to community engagement.