

# The Senior Center

Ashfield • Buckland • Shelburne

## West County Senior Services District Board of Managers

7 Main Street, Shelburne Falls, MA 01370

(413) 625-2502

[sfsrctr@crocker.com](mailto:sfsrctr@crocker.com)

### MINUTES

February 10, 2025 — 10:30 a.m. — Buckland Town Hall and Zoom [Z]

**Board of Managers (BOM) members:** Present – Sylvia Smith, Shelburne Council on Aging (COA) rep., chair; Amy Shapiro, Ashfield, vicechair [Z]; Janice Fleuriel, Buckland COA rep., secretary; Todd Olanyk, Ashfield COA rep. [Z]; Christine Baronas, Shelburne; Absent – Regina Purinton, Buckland

**Senior Center Consortium (Consortium) members present:** Juli Moreno, Senior Center Director

**Presenters:** Ted Cormier and Frank Natale, VADAR Systems (municipal financial software);

Elizabeth Braccia and Tanya Campbell, CBIZ (formerly Marcum, accounting services)

1. **Call to order:** Sylvia convened the meeting at approximately 10:33 a.m.

Sylvia said she invited representatives from VADAR and CBIZ (formerly Marcum) to discuss fiscal services.

Sylvia said she will follow up with Bob Dean about contracting Attorney Donna MacNicol for legal services (she provides legal services for Ashfield, FRCOG, and Shelburne). Christine noted she also serves other towns.

2. **Secretary's Report: Minutes of 1/13/25 meeting:** Janice said these were from memory instead of notes due to a shredding mishap during file cleanup, and asked the group to review who attended on Zoom. The group agreed to amend the minutes to say that Christine attended on Zoom.

**Motion:** Todd moved to accept as amended; Amy seconded; passed unanimously.

### 3. Transition Activities

#### a. FY 26 Budget updates: meetings with towns, volunteer hours, state budget request

Juli reported on the **meetings with towns and volunteer hours:**

- She reviewed the budget on January 15 with Abby Straus, Buckland Finance Committee, and Joan Livingston, Buckland Selectboard liaison, before presenting to the full Finance Committee in February. Janice and Regina attended, and said Abby and Joan were impressed and the budget reasonable.
- The Ashfield Finance Committee and Selectboard had a few questions on the fiscal pieces at the February 3 presentation, but overall the budget was well received. Amy and Todd agreed it was well presented.
- Both Ashfield and Buckland encouraged reaching out to townspeople to vote in support of this.

- Volunteer hours are included in usage assessments, as with the state report. Since having volunteers incurs administrative costs, the group agreed this makes sense.

**Motion:** Janice moved to include the volunteer hours; Christine seconded; passed unanimously.

**Action:** Janice will get the breakdown of Buckland's volunteer vs. total hours from Juli, in case this question comes up at town meeting.

**State budget request:** Discussion moved to after items b. and c.

#### **b. Software Discussion with VADAR representative**

Sylvia reviewed the transition process and status, and BOM members introduced themselves.

Frank gave an overview:

- Frank is CEO, Chair, and co-founder; Ted is Director of Planned Accounts
- VADAR has been in business over 30 years, with lots of experience launching new and current entities. They are based in Acton, MA, and have 20 employees. They have about 140 small-to-mid-size municipal clients (towns and districts)—including Ashfield and Buckland.
- The software suite is cloud-based; it doesn't offer payroll but integrates with these systems.
- Whoever the district gets for fiscal services will need to use this; contracting firms they work with include Marcum [now CBIZ] and Kinsherb—they have worked with Kinsherb the most. Todd said that Ashfield and Buckland use CBIZ and think they are good, and Worthington uses Kinsherb and thinks they are good.
- A chart of accounts will take 3-4 months to create, so the accountant decision needs to be made ASAP. They will need one representative from the District to be their contact.

Sylvia said the BOM is in the process of figuring out the legalities for the mechanics to procure services before the District is officially active (e.g., can BOM sign documents or do selectboards need to?). Frank said they deal with similar situations all the time and can be flexible on working from a "contingency" agreement, signed by the selectboards if needed, and on when they get a first payment.

Janice asked if the fiscal companies would work from an LOI; Frank wasn't sure but offered to call Kinsherb to see. Todd said the 3 selectboards could put together a legally-binding document if needed.

**Motion:** Todd moved that the BOM prepare an LOI to request VADAR services for the 3 selectboards to sign onto; Amy seconded; passed unanimously.

**Action:** Sylvia/the BOM will work on creating a Letter of Intent.

**Action:** Frank will send Juli a list of companies who provide fiscal services.

VADAR signed off from the meeting.



### c. Accountant and Treasurer update and procedure

The BOM introduced themselves. Sylvia gave an overview of the transition process, then asked the CBIZ representatives to provide an overview of their interest and services, and invited them to ask questions.

Tanya gave an overview:

- They are aware of the BOM's discussions about using VADAR. Every town they work with uses VADAR, and they have also worked with towns on conversions to VADAR.
- Currently there is a team of 4 in their accounting program, with someone always available. They generally work remotely, but in-person meetings are possible. They could set up a recurring call/meeting if desired.
- They would create a schedule regarding bills, etc.
- They bill monthly, for the previous month's work.
- They would need a District staff contact to provide needed info (e.g., gathering invoices). Juli said the Senior Center Director job description includes this function, and doesn't see that changing.

Group discussion:

- Juli explained the current process with the FRCOG accountant as part of the Consortium.
- The group discussed possibilities for executing an agreement before the July 1 District activation date. CBIZ would be willing to have a contract signing happen July 1.
- Elizabeth asked about funding sources. Juli gave an overview of the grants and coding system, and said she sees the transition as a streamlining opportunity. Elizabeth said she could work with Juli on that.
- Elizabeth asked about a Tax ID. Juli said the BOM's discussions with legal will include how to get this sooner than the July 1 start date.
- Janice asked if CBIZ also provides treasurer/bookkeeping services. They cannot do both for one entity.

Sylvia thanked them for their time and said the BOM will be back in touch. CBIZ signed off from the meeting.

Sylvia asked for group input. Christine said both CBIZ and VADAR seemed knowledgeable; the group agreed.

**Action:** Sylvia will ask Bob Dean to get a quote/proposal from CBIZ and to help determine the legal process to solicit proposals.

**Action:** Sylvia will draft the VADAR LOI with Bob Dean and Attorney Donna MacNicol.

**State budget request:** Sylvia said the District didn't receive any funding the last 2 years, and this year seems prime to ask. She suggested asking for \$100,000, and read a draft of a request.

**Motion:** Christine moved to submit the request as read; Amy seconded; passed unanimously.

**Action:** Sylvia will ask the Consortium Board of Directors to also vote on this at its 2/13 meeting; she will email the request to the legislature on Friday, 2/14.

The group discussed using the approximately \$20,000 left in the senior center expansion funds towards legal fees and support to help Juli with transitions tasks. Juli suggested allocating up to \$4,000 (which may be more

than needed) for extra hours for Senior Center Office Manager Gloria Fisher, who has the skills and past municipal experience, and currently fills in on fiscal tasks in Juli's absence.

**Action:** Sylvia will get an estimate from Donna MacNicol.

**Motion:** Sylvia asked for a motion to allot up to \$4,000 from the senior center expansion funds for added transition-related administrative support for Juli. Janice moved; Christine seconded; passed unanimously.

Janice asked about the need to still procure a treasurer. Sylvia noted there is a current interested party, but not with municipal background.

**Action:** Sylvia will ask Bob Dean if he has any recommendations for Treasurer contacts.

**Action:** Amy will notify the interested party of the decision to seek someone with municipal experience.

**d. Personnel policies review, discussion and possible VOTE:** Tabled.

**e. 2024 Annual Report to Member Towns:** Sylvia drafted and distributed a report prior to the meeting.

**Motion:** Janice moved to submit the report as drafted to the towns. Christine seconded. Passed unanimously.

**Action:** Juli will adapt the report to include in the senior center newsletter.

**f. Any other updates:** None.

#### 4. Senior Center Director Report

Juli distributed the January monthly report; the report gives an overview of administration and programming.

Juli reported that the state Office of Elder Affairs is now called the Office of Independence and Aging. According to statute, the town bodies are still a "Council on Aging."

**5. COA Representative Updates:** No updates.

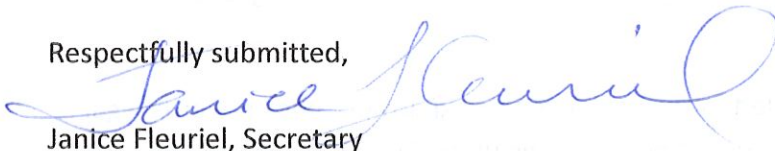
**6. Town Representative Updates:** No updates.

**7. Public Comment:** None.

**8. Next meeting** Wednesday, March 12, 10:30-12, Buckland Town Hall and Zoom

**9. Adjourn:** Christine moved; Janice seconded; passed unanimously. Sylvia adjourned the meeting at approximately 12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Fleuriel, Secretary