

The Senior Center

Ashfield • Buckland • Shelburne

West County Senior Services District Board of Managers

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MINUTES

March 12, 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; Regina Purinton, Buckland; Absent – Todd Olanyk, Ashfield COA rep.; Christine Baronas, Shelburne;

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

Community Members Present: Bob Dean, FRCOG Director of Municipal Services

1. **Call to order:** Sylvia convened the meeting at 10:36 a.m.

2. **Secretary's Report: Minutes of 2/10/25 meeting**

Motion: Janice moved to accept; Amy seconded; passed with 1 abstention (Regina – not at that meeting).

3. **Transition Activities**

a. **Adopt proposed FY 2026 West County Senior Services Budget and town assessments VOTE**

Sylvia noted the latest budget draft was missing the "Other Grants" column total; with this \$35,951, the Total Budget is \$495,836.

Updates from Juli:

- The increase in benefits will be 18% instead of the expected 8%; this has been added to the budget.
- There is still some minor clean-up to do, and she generally has Office Manager Gloria Fisher review this before calling it final; this could affect the grand total slightly, but it won't affect the town assessments.

Janice asked if there is any need to run this back by Buckland Finance Committee, given the increase in town assessments due to the benefits increase. Juli and Bob both said no, not at this amount.

Sylvia asked if we wanted to change any fiscal estimates now that proposals are in. Bob suggested leaving as is, and the group agreed. Sylvia said when Shelburne questioned what would happen with any surplus in these lines, she said it would be reallocated. The group agreed. Any surplus could either go to reserves/a stabilization fund or be factored into the FY27 budget.

Amy said this will always be a working budget/living document, and will continue to have increases/decreases.

Motion: Sylvia asked for a motion to adopt the annual FY26 West County Senior Services District budget and town assessments, and to notify the towns. Janice moved; Regina seconded; passed unanimously.

b. Software proposal Letter of Intent to VADAR - VOTE

Sylvia gave updates on discussions with Attorney Donna MacNicol on whether the selectboards would need to sign an LOI (letter of intent) or if the Board of Managers could do this:

- After reviewing the Act, Donna advised asking the selectboards to accept Section 3 of c. 402 of the Acts of 2022 which authorizes the Board of Managers of the West County Senior Services District to act during the transition from the Senior Center Consortium between the Towns of Ashfield, Buckland and Shelburne to the West County Senior Services District. As of Tuesday, March 11, all 3 selectboards voted to accept this.
- Donna prepared a draft LOI based on the VADAR proposal dated 11/25/2024.

Sylvia asked for discussion on contracting with VADAR:

- The group reviewed the 2 options in VADAR's proposal: 1) a year-1 fee of \$19,917, and \$1,974 for years 2-6; 2) \$4,964.50 for years 1-6. Both total \$29,787.

Motion: Janice moved to choose option 2; Regina seconded; approved unanimously.

- Sylvia read the LOI draft to the group. The group agreed to specify the exact \$4,964.50 amount for FY26/year 1, and to clarify that this represents the initial payment as quoted in the proposal.

Motion: Regina moved to approve the LOI as discussed; Amy seconded; approved unanimously.

Action: Sylvia will send the LOI to VADAR ASAP.

Sylvia presented an invoice from Attorney MacNicol, for \$712.50 at \$190/hour, for the selectboard motions, VADAR LOI, and lease review; she asked members to initial this (Amy gave permission for Janice to add her initials). Juli said that the usual procedure for paying invoices for services she is aware of would not need to involve an up-front approval process; the group agreed that for any similar situations, Sylvia could initial for the group and report at the next meeting, or bring an invoice to the group first if deemed more appropriate.

Sylvia asked for discussion on an "up-to" amount for FY25 attorney fees from the senior center expansion funds, and said Attorney MacNicol will be drafting a Consortium dissolution document and may also be doing contract review. The group agreed on \$5,000.

Motion: Sylvia asked for a motion to authorize up to \$5,000 for FY25 transition legal expenses from the remaining senior center expansion funds. Janice moved; Regina seconded; approved unanimously.

Sylvia said that Attorney MacNicol recommends having selectboards reappoint all members in July to ensure the necessary staggered 2- and 3-year terms. The group agreed to discuss this at a future meeting if needed.

c. Accountant proposals and next steps

Sylvia contacted the 4 accountant firms provided by VADAR, and invited a proposal by Friday, March 7:

Aponte (proposal received by 3/7); **CBIZ** (proposal received by 3/7); **Kelli Pontbriand** (proposal received 3/10); **Kinsherf** (no response). She asked for discussion on each proposal:

- **CBIZ:** Bob said they have multiple staff for backup if the main contact is out; Juli likes that they seem flexible to have on-site visits if needed, and that Ashfield uses them and is very pleased. The group agreed multiple staff is an important asset.

- **Aponte:** Bob said Sunderland uses them; being just a 2-person firm could risk lack of staff backup.
- **Kelli Pontbriand:** Bob has heard excellent things about her from various towns, but as noted in her email she is a 1-person service, and is in Florida so it would be a remote-only service.

The group agreed that the CBIZ multiple-staff service sets them apart in meeting the District's needs.

Motion: Sylvia asked for a motion to prepare an LOI with CBIZ for accounting services at \$1,750 per month, as proposed in their 3/7/25 proposal. Regina moved; Amy seconded. Approved unanimously.

Action: Sylvia will work with Bob and Juli to draft and send an LOI.

d. Treasurer update

Sylvia said she asked a few people but with no interested parties. She spoke with Jonathan George; he told her he is currently treasurer for 5 things and is trying to retire from it, so is not taking on anything new, and his partner Lewis Goodnow is strictly tax preparation. He mentioned Stepping Stone Accounts in Rowe – Amy said that person has been in business a long time and may be retired.

Bob posted a request on a small-town administrator listserv for names of treasurer services; 1 reply suggested Kinsherrf; the other reply suggested Mass MuniFin (who didn't reply to Bob's earlier contact attempts) – based on the website, they may be a resource if the District needs Treasurer training for a staff member.

Amy asked about who other towns use. Bob offered to check into this.

The group discussed other possibilities:

- Juli: Neither Angel Bragdon, Shelburne Treasurer and Tax Collector, nor Jan Morin, Shelburne Falls Fire District Treasurer, are interested
- Bob: Cara Leach, Buckland Treasurer and Tax Collector, is full-time in that position.
- Janice: Linda Marcotte, who still helps out with Buckland, is not interested, but she doesn't think a treasurer necessarily has to have municipal experience if an accountant has this, as long as the person is good with numbers. The group still feels municipal experience is preferred.

Action: Bob will find out about names of treasurers in other towns.

Action: Bob will re-post to the small-town administrator listserv to ask if anyone is interested in this work.

e. Personnel policies review, discussion and possible VOTE

Juli said she has about 2 hours of work to refine the PTO section to be ready for the next meeting.

Action: Sylvia will include this in the April agenda.

f. Any other updates:

- Janice asked about the status for obtaining payroll services.

Action: Bob will contact Harpers.

- Sylvia said she will include by-laws review on the May agenda.

Action: Janice will save a clean copy of the latest draft and do an editorial review markup.

- Janice asked about the letter to Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust. Sylvia said this went out; we haven't heard back yet.
- Sylvia said the visioning group is still meeting and interested in the concept of a community hub housing all resources; the 2D8T consulting project, to determine possible school district reconfigurations, is currently doing community presentations on 5 options.

4. Senior Center Director Report

Juli distributed a copy of her monthly report, and gave the following updates:

- She will send Amy a copy of each monthly report, since she is the Zoom holder.
- She has been meeting with staff, working on job descriptions, and reassuring them that the district transition won't change anything staff-wise; staff don't feel the need to have anyone from the Board of Managers talk to them about the transition.
- Bob Szafran, FRTA scheduler and driver, gave his notice to retire effective May 1. Juli is looking to hire 2 part-time drivers and a scheduler (someone who knows the local roads and driving distance times); in May she will be working on renegotiating the FRTA contract for July. FRTA would like the contract, but the senior center has been able to offer very specific pickup times for people, while FRTA offers longer time-frames (e.g., between 9 and 10), which could mean more waiting before and after appointments.

5. COA Representative Updates:

- Janice: Buckland COA is meeting March 20, and will discuss setting up a regular meeting schedule.
- Sylvia: Shelburne COA has been preparing for any questions at town meeting about its \$1,000 ask.

6. Town Representative Updates:

- Janice: Buckland Town Administrator Heather Butler is leaving; her last day in the office is April 11, but she will be on vacation time, etc., and will attend the May town meeting.

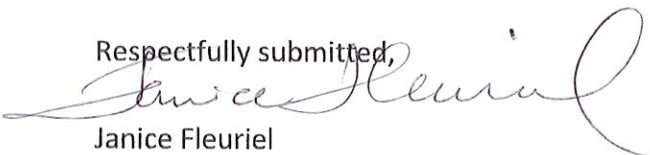
7. Public Comment: None.

8. Next meeting Monday, April 7, 10:30-12, Buckland Town Hall and Zoom

Action: Janice will contact Town Assessor Pam Guyette to reserve the space.

9. Adjourn: Regina moved; Amy seconded; passed unanimously. Sylvia adjourned the meeting at 12:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Janice Fleuriel

Secretary