

Don Lowe First Selectman Column 04/14/2025

The annual Town Budget Meeting is this Saturday at 10am in Charter Hall. This is an opportunity to learn about the Town and Sherman school budgets and to ask any questions you'd like. Along with that item, are five other items that are listed on the agenda and can be found on the Town website.

As you probably know, this budget meeting is a precursor to the budget referendum (in-person vote) to be held in Charter Hall on May 3 from 8am to 8pm. Please be aware that this is the first ballot vote with new, touchscreen machines. Our registrars have been training with them and are well versed on how they work. However, they will look a little different to first-time users. Be patient with yourselves.

Many of you have seen the Town's request for proposal (RFP) for a construction manager from the Sherman Senior Community Center Committee for the proposed center. In retrospect, I wish we had called this position a "consultant" as the term "construction manager" has led some to believe that we are already in construction of this building. We aren't, and we have a long way to go before that happens – particularly approval from Sherman voters in a future referendum. This individual is being sought to help us better appraise the plan that our architect has drawn. There is some uncertainty about the cost and this individual will help us clear that up. Once we are on firmer pricing, we will start to do presentations of the building and site plans for the public. We know that if we do these presentations, people will want to know the cost of the project. So we want to get that as clear and accurate as possible.

By the way, we have a wonderful building committee for this Senior Community Center project whose ranks are filled with veterans from the library expansion and also with two active building professionals who are generously volunteering their time. I will name the committee members at a future time (they are on the website), but I bring this up now to call attention to Ray Kelly and Ed Hayes, both committee members who gave so magnificently of their time and effort towards this. They are both deceased now and I sadly regret that these two fine men won't get a chance to see the fruits of their good work if we, indeed, do build this new center. And I hope that the voters approve it and that we do build it. I think it will fit perfectly towards serving our senior population as well as serving Sherman citizens of a wide spectrum of ages.

It's terrible that we have to be concerned about schemes and fraud, and it's not the world anyone wants to live in. One new scheme that some conscienceless individuals attempt is to wrest the house deed on what I understand to be "an illegal quit claim" from a homeowner and sell that person's house right from under them. Fortunately, Sherman subscribes to a service (PropertyCheck) to help warn a homeowner about potential property/mortgage fraud. It's free and you can sign up in 3 easy steps:

- 1) Visit: recordhub.cottsystems.com
- 2) Use the 'Search Sites' button and choose 'Sherman'
- 3) Set text/email alerts using the name on your property

After your sign up you will receive automatic alerts if a document is recorded against property in your name. It won't stop the attempted fraud before it occurs, but it will give you early warning so you can take immediate action.