

## Don Lowe First Selectman 07 28 2025 Column

This column is the last I'll write before the Town Tribune goes digital; however, my column will continue to be presented in the new format. I hope you subscribe to the new online version as the Town Tribune is the most important info pipeline we have. More changes while I'm at it. The Town of Sherman is officially a ".GOV" domain (not .ORG). Our new website address is [www.shermanct.gov](http://www.shermanct.gov). The Fireman's Ball is this Saturday night. Doors open at 4:30 and tickets are still available. Anyone 12 and under attends free. There's live music, raffles, hometown fun, and a yummy roast beef supper with all the fixins'.

Work to prepare Sherman School for the return of staff and students after Labor Day has been underway since June. Most of the work has been inside moving classrooms and preparing infrastructure and systems to support the portion of the building that will be utilized by students during the first phase of construction. By late July you may notice a larger construction mobilization, much of it focused on abatement. This is why the Board of Selectmen (BOS) approved moving forward with this next phase of work.

As I have written previously, updates offered to the BOS confirm that the cost of the school project is higher than first anticipated. After factoring in state reimbursement, funds that have already been approved, and a modified project budget, the local share or additional cost to taxpayers necessary to manage the overage is \$2.5 million. Hence, we have warned an in-person referendum for approval of that money for August 23 in Charter Hall. A Town Meeting that moves the warning to a referendum will be held on August 9 at 10am in Charter Hall. Absentee ballots are available after that meeting for those who can't vote on August 23.

I am pleased to report that our Town's bond rating recently went under review by Standards and Poors and it improved by one notch to AA+. There is only one rating higher than that (AAA), and frankly, towns of our size and grand list almost never achieve that rating. In other words, we are at the highest rating a town the size of Sherman can receive. We received this rating for the stable financial position we have put ourselves in over the last eight years including a reduced tax rate, an increase in our general fund surplus, tax collection rate, and overall fiscal responsibility. It has greatly helped that we have an effective and non-political Board of Selectmen, but more credit goes to our business manager, Liz Lavia and to our past treasurer Eric Holub and now to our current treasurer Andrea Maloney. It's a good team.

Something bad: some goofball is polluting our Town Beach Park with graffiti. We'd like anyone with information about this to let me know what you know. We have zero tolerance for that vandalism here.

Something good, in fact, downright amazing: Sherman resident, Ryan Fitzpatrick, 20, has been a member of the Team USA Wheelchair Basketball squad -- the highest level of this sport in the country! They recently competed in a tournament in Germany and took third place. Ryan's basketball prowess has taken him all over the world including, Europe, Columbia, and Brazil. He is currently a junior at the University of Illinois, and although he's been a congenital amputee from birth, nothing seems to hold him back from succeeding at his pursuits. He is majoring in sports management. When his schedule allows, he helps us out with Summer Camp. Ryan is a pleasure to work with!