

## Don Lowe First Selectman Column 08/04/2025

Last weekend's Fireman's Ball was a big success with loads of community good feelings, amazing roast beef, and some rockin' country music. The whole Town is proud of the Sherman Volunteer Fire Department for bringing this great event back. Actually, the whole town is mighty proud of the women and men of the SVFD for many reasons, and that's why it's important to keep supporting what they do: They are there for us when we need help the most.

This August 9 at 10am in Charter Hall is a Town Meeting of great importance. This is the required Town Meeting prior to the referendum on August 23 (12pm to 8pm in Charter Hall) for a request from voters for an additional 2.5 million dollars to cover the bid overage for the Sherman School renovation project. The August 9 meeting is an opportunity to hear accurate details of why this extra funding is needed, and it's an opportunity to ask questions.

This week, Matt Vogt, Chairman of the Board of Education, sent out a letter outlining the need for this funding. Please read it carefully as it, step-by-step, shows how pricing for large scale municipal projects occurs and what changed with our project. No one is happy about having to make this request, but the letter explains better than I can here in a short column as to what happened. In one sentence, basically the project was priced by two independent estimators in the fall of 2024 and that's the figure that the Town used for its referendum vote; the bidding on the actual project work was done in late spring 2025 and the economic world has changed over these 7 months and those bids came in higher than they were projected back in the fall of 2024.

The taxpayers voted quite favorably, by two thirds, in the 2024 referendum. They saw and understood the value of having a fully functioning school facility whether they had kids in the school or whether they didn't. Although there is some negativity and misinformation on this renovation project (especially, of course, on Facebook) by some individuals, the vast majority of Sherman residents want success here. That's what makes Sherman such a wonderful Town to live in.

On a different topic, one of Sherman's most thoughtful citizens offered me a grassroots help (I won't call it a "solution", because it's a hard issue to *solve*) to getting drivers to slow down through Sherman. Speeding is a persistent problem, and my board has taken several measures to help reduce speeding. We have had some success, but it persistently persists. However, my friend's suggestion is to encourage a culture, starting with simple signage, that communicates something to the effect of, "Sherman residents care about their town so Sherman residents don't drive too fast." He believes (and so do I) that if we who reside here drive within the speed limits as a matter of pride, that it will keep others, who don't abide, driving more reasonably. Yes, they may be tailgating you, but they'll slow down.

I want to remind everyone who didn't get to attend John Cilio's signing and discussion over his recent book on the history of Lake Mauweehoo that the Sherman Historical Society, together with the Sherman Library, will be holding another one at the Sherman Library on August 16 at 11am. John's previous presentation was made to a packed audience and this is another opportunity to learn the details about a very interesting part of Sherman history. Lake Mauweehoo, as you already know, is a pristine natural gem for our town, but as you'll learn from John's book and his presentation, it wasn't always there!