

Don Lowe First Selectman Column 08 18 2025

The Sherman Town Softball Tournament is coming up! Saturday, September 13, starting at 8:15am at Veterans Field. This low-key, fun community event welcomes all players 14 years of age and up. So far there are six teams, and they are always looking for players as well as volunteers to help with umpiring, scorekeeping, and food. If interested contact them at this email: shermanctsoftball@gmail.com.

Our bond sale of 19 million dollars for the first or two tranches to fund the Sherman School renovation project went very well. Nine firms bid – a high number – and our rate came in at 3.82 with the lowest bidder being Roosevelt and Cross, Inc. Several outstanding aspects of Sherman were in our favor including our recent Standard and Poor's bond rating upgrade to AA+Plus. This is the highest bond rating achievable for a town of our size and is one notch from the very top rating. This upgrade occurred out of recognition for our strong fiscal management which included doubling of our general fund surplus since 2018, the reduction in taxes, and responsible budgeting along with other positive factors.

The timing of this positive news is good as we have a referendum this Saturday, August 23 from Noon till 8pm in Charter Hall. (Absentee ballots are available in the Town Clerk's office through the end of Friday's workday.) The referendum asks Sherman voters to approve an additional 2.5 million dollars needed to adequately finance the current Sherman School renovation project after the costs – estimated last fall – came in higher than expected this spring when they were bid on. A few things have changed in the marketplace between those two periods in time and here we are. Although a positive vote will raise taxes about \$30 to \$40 per year on the average taxpayer, this vote is extremely important, and we ask voters to consider how vital a well-functioning school is to our Town and to not be swayed by some of the agenda-driven negativity and misinformation you can find in the usual place: Facebook.

Last weekend was a trying one for our Sherman Volunteer Fire Department as they received a call that a swimmer, a 55 year-old male from Hamden CT, disappeared under the surface in Candlewood Lake. A rescue attempt, led by our SVFD in conjunction with several other Towns' departments, ensued and was finally called off that evening. The mission resumed on Saturday as a recovery effort and the body of the swimmer was found on Saturday around 3pm. Throughout all of this, the women and men of our SVFD were on call for many hours and served in a primary position. We all must be exceedingly proud of their work, which was aided by the determined training they go through to be the best that they can be. We are so fortunate to have this fine department in Sherman, and I can't thank them enough.

Candlewood Lake has been gaining a great deal of attention for other matters including quality of life issues with people crowding onto the islands and leaving litter and making disturbances. On Friday, I will be attending a meeting hosted by my friend, Mayor Bass of New Milford, to address these issues with the help of other Town leaders, the Candlewood Lake Authority, and DEEP.

Just a reminder that the Weed Warriors will resume their work at Veterans Field this Saturday, August 23 starting at 9am till about Noon. Anyone can attend. Bring work gloves and water to drink. Bill McCann, a terrific fellow, will put you to work ridding Sherman of pesty invasives.