

Town of Shirley

BOARD OF SELECTMEN



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Patrice Garvin, Town Administrator

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Dear Shirley Residents,

The Town has some good news to report in regards to its Economic Development. Recently the Town received approval from the state for a 43D Expedited Permitting site on Lancaster Road. At the November 10, 2014 we asked Town Meeting for approval to make an area on Lancaster Road an expedited permitting site. What this means is that a developer interested in developing a project for commercial use will receive all of his/her permits 180 days from the time an application is submitted. Most developers will tell you that the money involved in the time it takes to permit a site is a factor in choosing where to develop properties. What this approval also gives the Town is needed exposure of this site throughout the state. The site is listed on the states web page and the Town can market the site as a 43D permitting approved location. Our hope is that this will bring needed economic development to the Town of Shirley.

I am also glad to report that the Town received a District Local Technical Assistance Grant from the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC). The Town submitted a grant to have the MRPC update its Economic Development Element of the Master Plan. This works nicely since the MRPC is currently updating the other elements of our Master Plan, approved at a previous Town Meeting. This update will guide the Town in how it can create Economic Development opportunities without disturbing the rural characteristics of Shirley that we all love.

The Town is also working towards finishing its solar projects, which is providing the Town with much needed revenue projected for FY2017. The Town recently appointed a Budgeting Coordinating Committee (BCC) to look into placing a Proposition 2 ½ override question on a town wide ballot. The Town has looked at ways to cut expenses and keep down assessments but Town Meeting continuously voted to keep the expenses in the operating budget. The Town sees the votes at Town meeting as direction to look for more revenue.

As many residents know there are only a few sources of revenue for the Town. There are taxes, state aid, fees and fines and one time revenue sources like MCI prison money. State aid has been held flat and fees and fines we try and stay conservative with projections. One-time revenue is just that, one time. You can't predict when, and if you will receive this money and it does not come every year. The most sustainable revenue is taxes. The BCC will look at all operations of the Town to find out what is truly needed to run the Town and the revenue needed to sustain it.

I am confident that the BCC will provide the best and most affordable plan to the residents of Shirley to be able to sustain the services we currently deliver. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Patrice Garvin, Shirley Town Administrator