

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, November 19, 2018
Minutes (Draft)**

Attending:

Board members present: Kevin Gish, Joe Ronan, Mary Gavin

Staff present: Frank Rogers, Road Foreman; Deb Jones, Finance Manager; Margy Becker, Selectboard Assistant

Visitors present: David Indenbaum, resident; Jim Kearns, resident; Sheriff Michael Chamberlain; Deputy Sheriff Claude Weyant; Fritz Weiss, Sharon Conservation Committee

1. **Public Comments:**

David Indenbaum, resident from Fay Brook Road, provided some thoughts as to why the surface of Fay Brook Road continues to be slimy after rains. Discussions followed with Road Foreman Frank Rogers about the lack of permeability of a hard pack layer applied to certain stretches of the road. Frank asked Dr. Indenbaum to assess the stretch of road from Kevin Blakeman's to Jack and Deb Jones, where $\frac{3}{4}$ inch gravel has recently been applied (after a culvert replacement) and to provide feedback.

2. **Approval of Minutes:**

A motion was made by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of November 5, 2018 with changes as noted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

3. **Approval of Warrants:**

Check and payroll warrants were approved.

4. **Road Foreman Reports and Highway Matters:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to hire Tim Barnaby as an on-call road crew employee through the end of FY19 and to authorize Frank Rogers to use his discretion as to when Mr. Barnaby's help is needed. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

The Selectboard and Frank Rogers further agreed that Tim Barnaby will undergo drug and alcohol screening required of employees who will be driving a commercial motor vehicle. Tim Barnaby already has a CDL. Frank Rogers will show Tim Barnaby plow routes before he is assigned to it.

A revised bid from Countryside Property Maintenance for **winter sidewalk maintenance** was reviewed. Selectmen commented costs remain higher than anticipated, which may be attributed to the fact the Town is requiring the contractor to provide their own salt or sand versus providing access to the Town's stockpiles. Joe Ronan volunteered to further negotiate with Kolbi Walton-Strong on behalf of the Town. **Motion by Mary Gavin to authorize Joe Ronan to negotiate with Kolbi Walton-Strong. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

FY20 Highway budget: The highway equipment replacement schedule was discussed. Deb Jones agreed to perform further analyses regarding budget impacts on future estimated tax rates.

5. **Pine Hill Cemetery Budget Request:**

Jim Kearns spoke on behalf of the Pine Hill Cemetery Association. He indicated the Association is requesting an additional \$500 for operating expenses. The Association has increased the price of cemetery plots from \$350 to \$375. The Association's FY19 allocation was \$5,250 plus \$400 for gas for mowing. Jim Kearns confirmed the FY20 request is for a base allocation of \$5,750.

6. **Ashley Community Forest:**

Fritz Weiss met with Selectboard to share thoughts, questions, and concerns regarding a proposal to establish a community forest on a parcel of land that straddles the Sharon-Strafford line comprised of approximately 200 acres. 130 acres are in Sharon. He also relayed his opinion that the Conservation Commission may not be the best entity to represent the Town in future planning meetings. The Conservation Commission is 'maxed out' with its responsibilities to manage existing conserved lands within the Town.

Fritz Weiss described the parcel under consideration for a community forest has a gentle topography, pre-existing trails, and young hardwoods. The land was once used for grazing. It is estimated that revenues from timber sales would not be realized for at least 20 years.

Among the several questions Fritz raised was the question of 'what would be the legal mechanism for joint-ownership of the parcel?' Would a subdivision have to occur? Fritz noted a survey of the property has to be completed. If a subdivision and survey occurred, a location for the Sharon-Strafford town and the Windsor-Orange county lines could finally be agreed to. A 'gore' has existed since the 1700's between Sharon and Strafford.

Fritz further commented that deed restrictions should be put in place prior to conveyance of the parcel to the towns. The property is not in current use. There is currently no access to the property in Sharon, though Blake Hill Road may offer potential access in the future.

Fritz inquired as to the sentiments of the Selectboard. Board members expressed general support for the concept of a jointly-owned community forest. Joe Ronan inquired as to the

potential loss of tax revenues for the town. Deb Jones estimated approximately \$3,400 per year.

Mary Gavin inquired about the possibility of creating a network of mountain bike trails similar to Kingdom Trails in Burke. Fritz indicated that such trails could be developed in the future, if the use was agreed to. He noted that mountain biking causes trail erosion and is discouraged in Downer State Forest. There are, allegedly, mountain bike trails which extend off the end of White Brook Road.

Discussions concluded without formal action.

7. **Website Proposals:**

Two revised proposals have been submitted by Earthlogic and Indelible. The range of proposed website development costs range from \$5000 - \$9000. Those costs will be inserted into the draft budget. Selectmen agreed to discuss proposals in more detail with Mike Tisdale, the Town's IT consultant. Margy Becker will arrange a teleconference for the December 3 meeting. A bid award is expected at that time.

8. **Finance Manager Reports:**

Health insurance discussions continued on the topic of non-employee options for coverage upon turning 65. The Selectboard reiterated its intent to offer health insurance through Blue Cross Blue Shield. Employees or non-employees may 'opt out'. Deb Jones noted the Board had agreed previously to provide a \$400 cap on reimbursements to employees for out-of-pocket premium expenses for Medicare supplemental policies offered by Blue Cross Blue Shield (including Medicare B, D and Medicare Blue 65.)

FY19 Audit Report: Joe Ronan asked that the Board consider the practice of meeting with the Auditor to discuss the audit report prior to acceptance. Selectmen agreed to this procedure for review of next year's (FY20) audit. **Mary Gavin made the motion to accept the FY19 Audit Report from Mudgett Jennett & Krogh-Wisner, PC. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

Mary Gavin made the motion to hire Ralph Herrick to clean the Town Offices and Library at a rate of \$17/hour. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

9. **Unfinished Business:**

- Kevin Gish and Deb Jones reported on the Baxter Library well pump replacement. It was noted Melissa Shekinah has already seen a decrease in her electric bill, now that the pump is not continually running.
- Margy Becker noted she will begin prioritizing work on the Town Report. She will provide a tentative publishing schedule, in order to accommodate proof readers. A report tribute was discussed. The agreement reached was to recognize the numerous volunteers serving the community.

- FY20 budget discussions will spill over into a special meeting scheduled for December 8th 8AM – noon. Kevin Gish will confirm his availability.
- Joe Ronan will follow-up with VT Council on Rural Development
- Selectmen discussed an email received from Chris Wilmot, who comments that the Carleton Clark memorial deserves to be moved from the Rte. 14 roadside to the Village Green. Selectmen will prepare a response regarding the fact that several parties were involved with creating and locating the memorial where it now exists on the shore of the White River across from Tracy's Midway Station. The steel bridge was also named after this fallen soldier.
- Joe Ronan provided a brief update on the status of legal proceedings against Walter Radicioni pertaining to ongoing violation of the Town's flood hazard bylaw.

10. **Adjournment:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:42PM. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Submitted by, Margy Becker

Kevin Gish
Joe Ronan
Mary Gavin