

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, February 4, 2019
Minutes (Final)**

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

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

Visitors present: Warren Johnston (Alliance for Vermont Communities), Sue Sellew (Sharon Planning Commission), Fritz Weiss and Dick Ruben (Sharon Conservation Commission), Nicole Antal.

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:30PM.

1. **Road Foreman Reports and Highway Business:**

Frank Rogers reported on the status of salt and sand supplies, noting the crew had been called out to plow 15 times and to salt/sand 18 times in the month of January. One truck is undergoing repairs, and similar front-end problems are being experienced by crews in several neighboring towns that own similar trucks. Frank will attend an upcoming meeting of members of several PW departments and key representatives of the truck manufacturer.

Dyer Road section to be closed: Frank Rogers reported that Keith Lyman, Sr. has consented to have the Town turn its trucks around in his driveway at the end of Dyer Road in order to allow closure of the short steep and narrow Class 4 segment leading down to the intersection with Carpenter Road. It was agreed that the road closure will commence next Monday February 11, 2019 through April 30th. Direct notifications to Dyer Road residents will be provided, coupled with other public announcements aimed at the broader community.

Impaired visibility at the corner of Rte. 14 and 132 in the Village was discussed. Frank will follow-up with Rob Romeo concerning a suggestion for Town crew assistance with snow removal in return for a change in plowing practices on the lot. It was noted that the road crew does customarily assist with snow removal on the sidewalk area by the post office.

Problems with **drainage in the driveway to Baxter Library** were discussed, but no short-term fix is available in these winter conditions. Frank Rogers will be speaking with Countryside Property concerning driveway repairs to be done this summer.

The **TRORC regional transportation priorities** were briefly reviewed. The Selectmen would like the regional planning commission to provide more advocacy in support of repairs needed to **Bridge 15**, the steel truss bridge over the White River. The west end abutment needs repairs. Frank Rogers also pointed out **the weight limit is still posted on the bridge**

at 60,000 lbs. The Town will file a weight limit report noting this limit. Margy Becker stated an ordinance is needed to enforce the weight limit.

Joe Ronan confirmed that revised standard contract provisions had been agreed to by Horizons Engineers. **Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the revised Horizons Engineering contract. Joe Ronan seconded. The motion carried unanimously.** Horizons Engineering will assist the Town with implementation of the paving CIP.

2. **Ashley Community Forest:**

Members of Sharon Conservation Commission, Planning Commission, Alliance for Vermont Communities (“AVC”), and Selectmen discussed the progress of AVC’s planning efforts to bring the vision for a new community forest to fruition. Warren Johnston spoke of AVC’s intent to survey the property. AVC has also just hired an attorney to begin to research and provide recommendations as to the potential final configuration of the parcel (subdivided or not), ownership entity (Sharon and Strafford as ‘tenants in common?’), potential conveyance of conservation easement(s) to Upper Valley Land Trust, and terms of a management plan for ongoing stewardship of the property. Mary Gavin requested AVC’s attorney to investigate several options for ownership of the parcel and the pros and cons of each option.

Joe Ronan reiterated his general support for the project while requesting more detailed information concerning the project and its potential cost to the Town of Sharon. It is widely agreed among those planning for the community forest, that it will be many years before there is revenue from wood harvesting. Dick Ruben concurred that some sort of cash flow analysis for yearly management and insurance expenses would be helpful. Deb Jones reported on potential property tax liability, depending on final ownership of the property. Warren Johnston stated the AVC intends to enroll the property in the Current Use Program, if the parcel is not soon conveyed to the towns. Fritz Weiss noted the AVC intends to provide funds for future stewardship of the property.

The parcel thus far remains intact. Strafford does not have subdivision regulations, but Sharon does. There is debatable access to the Sharon acreage, which lies north of Clifford Farm Road. Sue Sellew, a member of Sharon Planning Commission, spoke in favor of keeping the parcel intact. The Sharon subdivision regulations prevent subdivision of landlocked parcels. The exact location of the boundary between Sharon and Strafford has not been determined. But Warren Johnston reported the ‘gore’ may have been settled at some point, with 130 acres ± allocated each to the Town of Sharon and Strafford. The town line also serves as the boundary between Orange and Windsor County.

The Selectboard agreed to have the Town attorney review final proposals for ownership and management of the parcel at the appropriate time and after AVC’s attorney has completed his work.

3. **Our Four - Town Future (VCRD Community Visit):**

The Town is participating in a four-town regional planning process which will result in action plans that address the challenges facing the towns as they strive for a sustainable future. The planning process is a 'regional conversation' to be facilitated by the VT Council on Rural Development. Four community dinners and facilitated forums are planned for 6PM Thursday February 21(Royalton), March 14 (Tunbridge), March 21 (Strafford), and March 28 in Sharon. The Sharon meeting takes place at Sharon Elementary School.

The VCRD underwrites the costs of much of the publicity for the forums. The Towns are asked to contribute the costs of a mailing to residents and food and beverages for the dinners. Residents of the four towns can participate in any or all of the community meetings. VCRD's forums bring citizens together with the state officials, representatives of Vermont's congressional delegation, and state legislators.

Nicole Antal suggested a potluck approach to keep the costs of the community dinner to a minimum. She volunteered to enlist an army of volunteers to provide a variety of chili dishes. **Mary Gavin made the motion to approve up to \$200 to reimburse volunteers for the costs of food preparation for the community dinner. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.** Kevin Gish thanked the volunteers who have stepped forward in support of the community meeting.

4. Town Meeting Preparations:

Selectmen agreed to discuss the agenda for March Town Meeting at its next meeting. Margy Becker agreed to forward the Selectboard's letter concerning separation of school and town treasurer functions to the WRVSU Superintendent Bruce Labs.

Margy Becker reported Robert Potter did not submit a petition to run for constable. The Town Clerk had subsequently asked the question of whether or not the Town has to warn election of a constable. The VLCT has provided some guidance on this matter. The Town must hold elections for a constable in March 2019. Thereafter the voters have some choice as to how to proceed on this issue.

5. Finance Manager Reports:

Deb Jones addressed the status of the Town's reconciliation of overtime pay due road crew employees. Selectmen instructed her to reconcile retroactive to January 1, 2017 in keeping with the statute of limitations.

She then reported on a schedule of actions needed in support of an application to the Vermont Bond Bank for a bond to address highway paving infrastructure. If the Town submitted an application in December 2019, the money would be available in February 2020. The Town would have to begin preparing for a bond vote almost four months in advance (+ August for a December bond vote). The timetable includes legal noticing over a minimum of a three-week period, a formal vote by Australian ballot, and a 30-day period in which a petition could be submitted to overturn the bond vote. It was agreed Horizons Engineers will

need to make recommendations for the paving projects to be financed by the bond vote by the end of June.

Selectmen will continue to review and discuss job descriptions of the Finance Manager and Selectboard Assistant at its next meeting.

6. Selectmen's Assistant Report – Unfinished business:

The status of general administrative business items was reviewed and discussed. Joe Ronan suggested, and fellow board members agreed, that Mona Foster be invited to the second Selectboard meeting in March to discuss the status delinquent tax collections.

7. Approval of Minutes:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2019 without changes. The motion was seconded and approved.

8. Executive Session:

A motion was made by Kevin Gish to enter executive session at 8:28PM to discuss a civil matter of which premature knowledge would place the public at a substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded. The motion carried.

The Board exited executive session at 8:42PM.

9. Approval of Warrants:

Check and payroll warrants were approved.

10. Adjournment:

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:00PM. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker

Kevin Gish
Joe Ronan
Mary Gavin