

**SHARON SELECTBOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, January 7, 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: Representatives Tim Brigland and Jim Masland; Scott Williams, Rod Finley (Pathways Consulting)

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:30PM.

1. **Road Foreman Reports:**

Frank Rogers presented his reports on the status of salt and winter sand supplies, truck maintenance, and a check on the quality of sand being obtained from Twin State Sand & Gravel (samples passed the sieve analysis within State parameters). It was agreed the crew will experiment with a different sand product that seems to offer better grip. There is a slight increase in the cost of this type of sand (\$8.85/ton vs. \$7.00/ton paid now). The new backhoe is performing well.

2. **Meeting with Legislators:**

Board members met informally with Tim Brigland and Jim Masland. Selectmen explained new revenue sources are needed and the Town is wondering how to foster development, though flat land is at a premium. Joe Ronan also inquired as to what the Town might expect regarding future levels of State aid. Jim Masland reported only incremental increases in transportation grants might be expected. He reported that most small towns have problems with developing infrastructure necessary to attract development. The pros and cons of tax increment financing (“TIF”) districts were discussed, and it was noted they have been created primarily only in larger towns with sewer and water infrastructure.

The lack of affordable housing in Sharon is a concern of Selectmen, particularly for wage earners in the \$40,000 - \$80,000/year. Deb Jones noted the average asking price for houses currently on the market in Sharon is \$340,000 according to the Listers. Tim Brigland said that there are plenty of jobs available, yet affordable housing stock is an issue throughout the region. Rod Finley and Scott Williams of Pathways Consulting, based in Lebanon, noted that Lebanon is short 6 – 8,000 housing units. Tim Brigland is pleased to note the Governor views housing as the top economic development priority. He is also looking forward to release of a new study regarding Act 250. Jim Masland observed Sharon to be a very ‘commuter friendly’ town, due to its location, good schools, and high-speed internet. He inquired whether Selectmen had focused on the type of development that is desired?

Tim Brigland suggested that it may better for towns to focus efforts on infrastructure rather than specific types of development.

Jim Masland inquired about the progress of enhanced energy planning. What does the Town want in the way of energy generating facilities? Discussions closed with both Tim Brigland and Jim Masland agreeing to advocate for expedited construction of a revised Exit 2 Park & Ride. New lighting, a bus shelter, and e-vehicle charging is needed.

3. **Pathways Consulting:**

Rod Finley and Scott Williams met with Selectmen to discuss their proposal for engineering services to assist the Town with implementation of its Paving Capital Improvement Plan. The Town is confronted with how to finance substantial improvements needed to paved roads in the short-term (≤ 5 years) and over the next 10 – 20 years.

4. **Bid Award – PE Services for Paving CIP Implementation:**

After further discussions regarding proposals submitted by Horizons Engineering (which bought Harrington Engineering in Pomfret) and Pathways Consulting **Mary Gavin made the motion to accept the proposal from Horizons Engineering for planning, pre-construction, and limited construction phase services FY19-2020 in the amount of \$19,984.98. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

5. **FY20 Budget Review and Adoption:**

Selectmen completed final review of proposed general fund and highway budgets. The latest versions rely upon a projected municipal tax rate increase of 7.5 cents, coupled with continued reliance on the general fund Fund Balance (accumulated surpluses), in order to balance the overall budget. The general fund has a healthy fund balance of \$366,279. \$17,522 of that overall balance must be applied to the FY20 budget in order to lower the tax increase to 7.5 cents. The highway fund is running a negative fund balance.

Additional financial analyses presented by Deb Jones, Finance Manager, indicate the 7.5-cent tax increase brings the municipal rate to .7625, which when levied on a home valued at \$200,000 results in an additional tax burden of \$150.02 for fiscal year 2020 over FY19. The prior year property tax increase on a \$200,000 home was \$21.94 (FY19 over FY18). Property taxes actually went down by \$1.60 (FY18 over FY17) on a home of similar value.

The Town does not control education tax rates, as they are set by the State of Vermont.

**Motion by Joe Ronan to approve a FY20 general fund budget which reflects \$626,373 in total expenditures and a FY20 highway fund budget which reflects \$957,633 in total expenditures. The budgets when combined total \$1,584,006 for FY20 town expenses. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried.**

6. **Other business:**

Selectmen agreed to add ‘wage review’ to the agenda for the January 21<sup>st</sup> regular meeting.

Selectmen appointed Joe Ronan to represent the Town in mediation proceedings associated with flood hazard bylaw administration cases involving Walter Radicioni.

**7. Approval of Warrants:**

Check and payroll warrants were approved. Deb Jones noted Steve Fifield is researching the cost of fire alarm upgrades for the Town Offices.

**8. Approval of Minutes:**

**Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2018 regular meeting with the changes as noted. The motion was seconded by Kevin Gish and approved 3-0-0.**

**9. Adjournment:**

**Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:05PM. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Submitted by, Margy Becker

Kevin Gish  
Joe Ronan  
Mary Gavin