

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes
Monday, July 8, 2019**

Board Members Attending: Joe Ronan, Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin
Staff Present: Margy Becker, Deb Jones, Frank Rogers
Members of the public: Paul Kristensen (Krivak Road), Michael Sacca and Warren Johnson (Alliance for VT Communities), Scott Chesnut (Sharon Conservation Commission)

Joe Ronan called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

Public Comments:

Paul Kristensen addressed Selectmen regarding his concerns about control of roadside **wild chervil**. He has volunteered over the years to help mow the chervil before it goes to seed, in conjunction with the road crew's roadside mowing schedule. Paul inquired why the Town had not yet mowed Downer and Krivak roads. Frank Rogers explained the mower has been broken and out-of-service for several weeks, but he hopes mowing can resume soon.

Selectboard members asked Frank Rogers as to his thoughts about landowners mowing in the Town's right-of-way in order to prevent the **spread of invasive species**. Frank Rogers stated landowners could mow within the right-of-way, but you do so at your own risk. And mowing at the wrong time could help spread the plants. Frank Rogers explained the road crew washes the mower at the end of each day. Paul Kristensen stated he relies on a sickle bar mower.

Selectmen agreed the road crew does not have the resources to enable a mowing schedule geared specifically to control of roadside invasive species.

Margy Becker reported she has been following-up with Alma Zwikelmaier (Sharon) and Mike Bald, who is an invasive species expert from Royalton, regarding Louise Reitano's concern over the appearance in her neighborhood on Fay Brook Road of a plant she thinks is giant hogweed. Louise lives at 2662 Fay Brook Road.

Margy Becker further reported Mike Bald is familiar with hybrids of parsnip and hogweed, and he has very recently driven along **Fay Brook Road and found a couple of cow parsnip populations spread over the length of the road**. He did not observe giant hogweed. Cow parsnip plants are usually mistaken for giant hogweed, but they do not grow as tall. But cow parsnip plants can burn you badly if handled improperly. Mike Bald recommends removal and destruction of singular wild parsnip plants. In a recent email to the Town he reports that a potato fork can be of use.

Selectmen expressed interest in following-up with Mike Bald regarding the potential for a survey of the town geared toward mapping the most troublesome locations of invasive plants. Additionally, the Board wonders if Mike Bald could recommend treatments for the worst

infected areas within the town. Or, at minimum, would he agree to make a presentation at a public information meeting? Margy Becker follow-up with Alma Zwickelmaier and Mike Bald.

Review/Approve Agenda:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the agenda without changes. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

Selectboard Member Reports:

Mary Gavin proudly reported South Royalton Rescue expects delivery of the new ambulance on Wednesday (July 10). The ambulance cost \$215,500±. The SRRS will also take delivery of a power load for stretchers.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2019 regular meeting as modified. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Warrants:

Check and payroll warrants were approved.

Road Foreman Reports & Highway Business:

Frank Rogers briefly reported the chloride tank is working well.

Crack Sealing Bids: Mary Becker announced the Town received 3 bids as follows: Sealcoating, Inc. d/b/a Indus - \$1.62/lb. Vermont Roadworks LLC - \$2.09/lb. Nicom Coatings - \$2.35/lb.

A motion by Mary Gavin to accept Sealcoating Inc.'s bid of \$1.62/pound for a budget maximum allowance of \$12,000. Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried. Frank Rogers reported his intent to have sealing begin on Rte. 132, then move to Beaver Meadow Road and River Road if the budget allows.

Howe Hill Patching: Frank Rogers reports he is awaiting estimates from Blaktop to patch the 5 worst locations on Howe Hill. Mary Gavin suggested two locations on Fay Brook Road that should also be patched.

Baxter Library Driveway Repairs/Drainage: Deb Jones and Frank Rogers reported on their site visit with Will Davis before the July 4th holiday. Will Davis is volunteering engineering expertise concerning possible options to prevent stormwater from shedding from the Elementary School property onto the neighboring Library parcel and Polly Morrill's property. The stormwater also drains down the driveway to the Library. The Library basement was flooded for the first time in a sudden thaw this March.

After brief discussions Selectmen agreed cost estimates for Will Davis' recommendations need to be obtained. Likewise, permission is needed from VTRANS District 4 to connect to Rte. 14 drainage infrastructure in the area. Deb Jones will follow-up with Will Davis concerning cost estimates.

Selectmen noted 7 Stars Arts Center directors and Library trustees have both expressed alarm over the potholes in the driveway, and it was agreed repairs should be made as soon as possible. Frank Rogers was asked to obtain an estimate from Countryside Property Maintenance. Countryside had graded ½ the driveway recently at the request of 7 Stars Arts Center. The Town's grader is too big to grade the other half, which is Town property.

FY19 Grants-in-Aid: Howe Hill Ditching: Deb Jones requested the Selectboard sign the reimbursement request for grants-in-aid funds for improvements to stormwater infrastructure on Howe Hill. The total project cost \$24,000. The Town is asking to be reimbursed the full grant allowance of \$16,000. **A motion was made by Mary Gavin to approve and sign the reimbursement request for FY19 grants-in-aid funds as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

Sears Driveway Permit Application: This application is for a field access on the Sear's property at #1104 Downer Road. Frank Rogers reported an 18-inch culvert is required and that the curb cut location is satisfactory. **A motion to approve the driveway permit was made by Mary Gavin and seconded by Kevin Gish. The motion carried unanimously.**

Ashley Community Forest:

Michael Sacca and Warren Johnson, representing the Ashley Community Forest Committee (ACFC), met with Selectmen to discuss several action items relating to the community forest planning initiative. The community forest will overlap the Sharon-Strafford town line.

Michael Sacca asked the Selectboard to sign a letter of support to be submitted to the National Park Service' Rivers, Trails, Conservation Assistance Program for creation of a public trail network. The trail network will enhance recreational opportunities for residents of all ages, promote public health, and place-based economic development, through bolstering and increasing access to Sharon's ecological assets. The Town of Strafford is being asked to submit the same letter. **Kevin Gish made the motion, seconded by Mary Gavin, to sign the letter of support as presented. The motion carried 3-0-0 in favor.**

Michael Sacca explained the ACFC is made up of Sharon and Strafford Conservation Commission members, as well as representatives from the Alliance of VT Communities and VT Land Trust. Dick Ruben, a member of the Sharon Conservation Commission, sits on the ACFC. A second Sharon representative is needed. Michael Sacca reported Matthew Perry on Fay Brook Road had expressed interest in serving on the Committee. **Mary Gavin made the motion to support the appointment of Matt Perry to the Ashley Community Forest Committee. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.**

Michael Sacca reported on recreational activities and outings that occurred on the parcel during the course of the spring. Over 100 participants took advantage of “Ashley Outings” which ranged from bird watching to plant identification. There will be fall outings announced on community listservs. And there is an upcoming “gravel ride” already scheduled (“The Ranger”).

The ACFC is recommending purchase of the community forest parcel by the towns of Sharon and Stafford. The ACFC has been meeting to hammer out a possible arrangement, per voter approval, for this purchase. The Committee plans to host public information meetings in late summer. The ACFC is hoping Sharon and Stafford will hold special town meetings in late fall. A survey of the entire property is expected to be complete in October. Should the towns agree to purchase the property, an “inter-local agreement” would subsequently be entered into for management of the property. The VT Land Trust and Upper Valley Trails Association will be active players in future stewardship of the community forest.

Scott Chesnut (Sharon Conservation Commission) expressed his support for purchase of the property. Margy Becker submitted Dick Ruben’s comments in support of purchase.

Deb Jones informed Michael Sacca and Warren Johnson of the Sharon Selectboard’s intent to hold a bond vote in late fall, which also requires a special town meeting in order to hold the vote by Australian ballot. The statutes require a specific timetable for public information meetings on the bond vote.

Selectboard Chair Joe Ronan pointed out the Selectboard had yet to take a formal position regarding ownership of the parcel, and fellow board members agreed to schedule that conversation for an upcoming meeting.

Computer System Upgrades and Cybersecurity:

Michael Tisdale (Business Tech) has recommended upgrades for Office 365 business licensing in conjunction with and upgrade to email hosting. **Mary Gavin made the motion, seconded by Kevin Gish, to authorize Mike Tisdale to proceed with the combination of MS Office Licensing and email hosting upgrades for \$145/year per user in addition to Windows Security Upgrade to a BitDefender product for \$29/year per device. The motion carried.**

Selectmen also requested that all employees pursue further training on cybersecurity through the VLCT PACIF Online University training portal. Deb Jones will help facilitate this training.

Norwich Technologies – Decommissioning Rte. 132 Solar Array:

Joe Ronan will follow-up with Norwich Technologies and report on his discussions at the July 22nd meeting.

Repairs & Maintenance Contract (Town Buildings):

Margy Becker reported Dan Jones is too busy pursuing other career opportunities to renew his contract for repairs and maintenance to town buildings. Margy Becker will proceed to request proposals for area contractors.

Hartford EMS: Inter-local Agreement:

Margy Becker reported Hartford has requested the Town renew the inter-local agreement for FY19 agreement for FY20. No cost increases are proposed. Hartford provides emergency response to southern areas within the town and on the interstate. **Mary Gavin made the motion, seconded by Kevin Gish, to approve the FY20 Inter-local Agreement with Hartford EMS. The motion carried.**

E911 Road Naming:

E911 Coordinator Galen Mudgett, has recommended the name “**Moose Meadow Lane**” as the new name for the shared driveway to the Ruth Mayer property (opposite Raymond Road) and Brian and Jodi Harrington’s house. **Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the name “Moose Meadow Lane”. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

Finance Manager Reports: there were none.

Selectboard Assistant Reports/Unfinished Business:

Margy Becker announced Suburban Propane is scheduled to install the underground propane storage tank Wednesday AM, July 10th. This tank will provide fuel to the new 20kW generator and the Town Office heating system. Frank Rogers has reserved a mini-excavator from Welch’s for the day.

Margy Becker noted Fritz Weiss, who has been a member of Sharon Conservation Commission since its inception in 1989-1990, is moving. Selectmen discussed various plans for honoring Fritz’s service to the Town.

Joe Ronan spoke of his concern about all the bad news resulting from events over the holiday weekend, and he asked for board members to consider whether there was any particular role for the Selectboard during these times. Joe Ronan was referring to the news of Tom Ward’s passing in addition to news of the fire at the Robinson’s on Quimby Mountain Road on Saturday. Several families have been displaced. Mary Gavin encouraged community members to go to the GoFundMe page that has been created to assist those families.

Adjournment:

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 8:55 PM. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

Submitted by, Margy Becker