

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING**
Minutes (DRAFT)
Tuesday, March 31, 2020

The meeting was held via teleconference and pursuant to the most recent revisions to the Vermont Open Meeting Law enabling all participants to dial-in remotely.

Attending via teleconference:

Selectboard Members: Joe Ronan, Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin
Staff: Deb Jones, Finance Manager, Margy Becker, Selectboard Assistant
Frank Rogers, Road Foreman
Local Officials: Debra St. Peter, Town Clerk; Tim Briglin, State Representative,
Becky Owens, Emergency Co-Coordinator;
Public: Vince Gross (resident)

The Chair convened the meeting at 7:30AM as warned.

Review and Approve Agenda:

Kevin Gish made the motion, which was seconded by Mary Gavin, to approve the agenda without changes. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

Vince Gross spoke at length about continuing concerns regarding alleged criminal activity occurring on Harlow Road on an adjacent property. The property also appears to be a junkyard. The property is in Royalton, just across the Sharon town line. Vince Gross reported the VSP had responded recently to a 911 call with vests on and semi-automatic weapons. Gun shots have triggered prior VSP responses. It was agreed that Joe Ronan and Kevin Gish will again reach out to the State Police and Town of Royalton. Tim Briglin reported on his prior conversations with the VSP regarding this situation. He also made suggestions regarding enforcement of junkyard laws.

Tim Briglin provided updates regarding the Covid 19 situation. The Legislature is struggling to do its work from remote locations. Committee hearings are being held via Zoom conference calls. He reports the State expects severe impacts on revenues, as a result of Covid 19. There are 9 – 10 school budgets (including Strafford) that have yet to pass. The Legislature is focusing on the biggest question – how the federal stimulus package will ultimately affect State and local government coffers. The governors will have discretion in spending those funds. Thanks to Senator Leahy's advocacy and seniority in Congress, Vermont will receive a respectable assistance package. A large % of the funds will be directed to unemployment benefits.

Deb Jones, Finance Manager, noted that many towns may need tax anticipation notes and inquired as to whether Tim Briglin had any thoughts about banks' abilities to provide those. Tim

Briglin indicated the federal stimulus package is hoped to be a 'credit enhancer' to encourage banks to lend to towns.

Joe Ronan inquired what the Town should be doing specifically to prepare for the surge in Covid 19 cases to come. Tim Briglin shared what Thetford is doing, inclusive of encouraging neighbor-to-neighbor check-ins. The schools will be instrumental in taking the pulse of 'mental health' of many families. He indicates he had had recent discussions with Gifford Hospital, which indicates they have capacity to address the surge. Tim Briglin closed his remarks by indicating that the greatest volume of recent constituent contacts he has received have been related to the definition of 'essential work'. He encourage Sharon residents to access the 'Jim & Tim Report' <https://www.jimandtimreport.com> for up-to-date information on State and local resources regarding the Covid 19 situation across the state and our region.

Road Foreman Reports/Highway Business:

Frank Rogers reports the crew is well. Joe Ronan and Deb Jones agreed to collaborate on a letter to Fairfield regarding an oil pan issue. Frank reports he thinks we are 50 – 75% through mud season.

Prioritization of highway maintenance activities was discussed.

It was agreed that internal review and approval of all overweight permits will be delayed until May 1st.

The Board also agreed to delay bidding sand hauling, until the State gets through the Covid 19 surge.

Debra St. Peter inquired whether the Town would continue with the paving project this summer. Selectmen were in agreement about proceeding with construction, unless some major hurdle would cause the Town to renegotiate with Pike. It was agreed the Joe Ronan will contact Pike to inquire about asphalt pricing.

Quimby Mountain Road (Grants-in-Aid) Stormwater Improvements:

It was noted there were inconsistencies in bids for excavator and operator. Frank Rogers indicated the bid specifications could be adjusted to accommodate use of a smaller excavator. The bid specs had required a minimum of a 160 series machine. The Town had received bids in the range of \$90 - \$200/hour, depending on the size of the excavator. It was agreed the Town would rebid this project.

Mary Gavin made the motion that all bids be rejected. Kevin Gish seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

2021 Class 2 Paving Grant Application:

Margy Becker indicated the grant application would be ready for review at the April 6 Selectboard meeting.

Horizons Engineers – Construction Oversight Contract Amendment #2:

Jon Harrington will be invited to call into the April 6th meeting to revisit discussions on procurement of compaction testing and to review any new information about the Covid 19 situation that might impact this summer's paving projects.

Grounds Maintenance Bid Award:

Margy Becker indicated the Town received one bid only, and it was from Green Mountain Mowing. Approval of the bid was postponed to the next meeting, pending comparison against GMM's prior bid for its 3-season contract.

Re-adoption of Local Emergency Management Plan:

A few updates are needed to the current short-form version of this plan. Margy Becker agreed to make the changes to the contact information for the Sharon Community Nurse (Karen Gray) and Fire Wardens (now Dustin Potter and Andrew Brackett).

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the 2020 Local Emergency Management Plan as amended. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Covid 19 Updates:

Mary Gavin reported on the prior evening's (March 30) IC Meeting, which had been held via dial-in at 5PM, Monday. Selectmen are now rotating participation in those meetings. The Elementary School continues to supply lunches M, W, F. The school is in the process of being 'deep-cleaned' and will be shut down. The Food Shelf continues to have a good supply of food. Mary Stoddard reports 50% of households now using the Food shelf are new. This is an expected trend. IC team volunteers continue to reach out to at-risk households. Community Nurse Karen Gray is very much in-the-loop on contacts with more vulnerable populations. South Royalton Rescue now has masks and tyvek suits! Sharon Fire Department reports it has full personal protective equipment in place. The IC team and the Town are discussing how to establish a Covid 19 donations fund.

Deb Jones reported on her discussions with the Mary Stoddard, who helps oversee the Food Shelf. The operating budget is approximately \$1,300/month. The Town will maintain close contact with her concerning the need for an infusion of funds, when the need arrives. *Until the Covid 19 Fund is established, donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 42, Sharon, VT 05065.* This is the Sharon Congregational Church PO box. The Church operates the Food Shelf.

Selectmen discussed continuity of governance and the need to have a pool of potential appointments to the Selectboard, should the need arise. Additionally, Deb Jones reviewed the list of current and backup check signers. Many folks in town with check signing authority on

behalf of various organizations are also in the high risk category for Covid 19. Each person seems to have only one backup. Deb Jones will research the extent to which the Town can intervene to assure financial continuity for various organizations.

Selectmen agreed to continue to use teleconferencing as the mode for public participation in Selectboard meetings, rather than Zoom.

Selectmen, staff, and Sharon Town Clerk Debbie St. Peter discussed the Stay-At-Home Order. The Selectboard Assistant is working home remotely and will continue to do so. Limited in-office hours for the Town Clerk and Finance Manager. The Town Offices remains closed to the public and essential requests for information will be dealt with over the phone or by appointment only. The Town Clerk and Finance Manager will work opposite shifts to minimize contact.

The road crew will continue to report to duty and required to maintain social distancing. Disinfection procedures for equipment and the Garage were reviewed.

Debbie St. Peter indicates residents may purchase dog tags via the mail. She has agreed to extend the dog licensing deadline to June 1st.

Margy Becker agreed to prepare an announcement for the Town website indicating staff and officials are continuing to work remotely, are checking emails and phone messages, and can respond within 24 hours.

Selectmen agreed to continue with normal payroll until further discussed and decided otherwise.

It was agreed Joe Ronan will participate in the next IC meeting, which is scheduled for 5PM Monday, April 5th.

Selectmen agreed to continue to meet weekly during COVID 19 as follows:

1st and 3rd Mondays: 6:30PM regular meetings

2nd and 4th Tuesdays: 7:30AM special meetings

Public Access is by dial-in. Video capability is not required.

Each Agenda will include dial-in information.

Finance Manager Reports:

Deb Jones requested discussions and actions on the truck loan and audit be added to the April 6th agenda. Selectmen agreed it is time to rebid independent auditing services but that the Town will proceed to engage its incumbent auditor for the FY20 audit. Formal action will occur on April 6th.

Approval of Warrants:

Selectmen reviewed warrants that had been transmitted to them individually by Deb Jones.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve warrant #1012 in the amount of \$5,792.37, inclusive of payment of invoices from Kofile Preservation, McCullough Crushing, Primmer Piper, Eggeston, & Cramer, PC, Royal Auto, and Sabil & Sons. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve warrant #1011 in the amount of \$1,959.36, inclusive of payment of invoices from Blue Tarp Credit, Consolidated, Evans Fuels, Foley, Have Trash Will Travel, and Health Equity. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve warrant #1009 in the amount of \$40.02 for reimbursement of a duplicate expense incurred by the Rec Committee. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve warrant #1010 in the amount of \$657.00 which reflects approval of a 10% down payment to Boynton Construction for Old School House window replacements. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the payroll warrant for the period of March 15th – March 28th and a cash draw of \$17,049.52. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Adjournment:

Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn at 10:00AM. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker