

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
Minutes (FINAL)
Monday, February 24, 2020**

Attending:

Selectboard Members:

Staff:

Other Town Officials:

Public Attending:

Joe Ronan, Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin;

Deb Jones (Finance Manager), Margy Becker (Selectboard Assistant), Frank Rogers (Road Foreman);

Nathan Potter, Fire Chief; Becky Owens, Emergency Co-Coordinator; Galen Mudgett, Lister;

Ben Greene, State of VT Dam Inspector; Luis Bango and Joan Haley, Stephen Raymond, Dan Deneen (taxpayers).

The meeting was called to order by Chair Joe Ronan at 6:30PM.

1. Public Comments:

There were no public comments.

2. Approval of Agenda:

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

3. Selectboard Member Reports:

There were no board member reports.

4. Approval of Minutes:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of February 3, 2020 with one correction. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

5. Crescent Lake Dam: Concerns about Public Safety

Selectmen met with VT Dam Inspector Ben Greene, local officials, the new owners of the Crescent Lake dam, and concerned neighbors to further discuss the dam's status. Chair Joe Ronan opened discussions with a brief report on the site visit that had occurred earlier in the afternoon. VT Dam Inspector Ben Greene reported Crescent Lake Dam is one of approximately 1,000 dams that are inspected each 5 years by the State of Vermont. Crescent Lake Dam's status has been in 'poor' condition for some time. Joe Ronan noted that despite this status the landowner is not being forced into remedial action by the State. Ben Greene explained this would not occur unless the dam was declared to be in poor condition and 'unsafe'. Presently the dam is in poor condition and 'safe'. The deficiencies with the dam are common age-related deficiencies. There is a petition process available to the public to

downgrade a dam's status from 'safe' to 'unsafe'. Ben Greene also stated the State of Vermont is currently re-writing regulations concerning dam safety.

Luis Bango and Joan Haley introduced themselves and indicated they purchased the property with some knowledge of the dam's status. An engineer was consulted prior to their purchase. Luis and Joan expressed their willingness to work with the State and the Town to improve dam safety and to address concerns regarding public safety. Joe Ronan suggested they consider drafting an emergency action plan as suggested by the state inspection reports. Mary Gavin suggested, and Ben Greene concurred, that preparation of an 'inundation map' is also important. Ben Greene reported the State could help the landowners with this task. Galen Mudgett, Lister, inquired whether or not the concrete footings of the old mill were being mistaken as part of the dam. Ben Greene assured him the State does not view them to be part of the dam.

6. **2020 Paving Projects: Bid Review**

Selectmen discussed detailed bid summaries prepared by Jon Harrington, Horizons Engineering, and Deb Jones, Finance Manager.

Total Base Bids (exclusive of bid alternates)

Pike Industries: \$1,306,940.00

J Hutchins: \$1,600,491.88

L&M Svs Contractors: \$1,982,500.00

Pike Industries is apparent low bidder. The cost of all work as bid, inclusive of bid alternates, is approximately \$200,000 over anticipated costs. Voters approved a bond in the amount of \$1.1 million. Board members discussed the importance of proceeding with all work as bid. But board members expressed concerns about the 'value' of bid alternates. Frank Rogers spoke of his ongoing concern about the Engineers' proposed use of geotextiles ("fabric") on Howe Hill, due to its steep profile. Bid alternates include a better asphalt mix and ditch underdrains for Howe Hill. The apparent low bid for the bid alternates is \$105,270.

Much of the board's ensuing discussion with Deb Jones, Finance Manager, focused on the pros and cons of options available to pay for the projected cost overrun. Those options range from modifying the schedule or scope of work to be done, a one-time property tax increase to cover the entire \$200,000 or a combination of tax increases, reliance on the current fund balance, and/or borrowing. Deb Jones was asked to conduct additional research. Mary Gavin agreed to follow-up with Jon Harrington regarding the bid alternates. The Board is already scheduled to meet with the Pomfret Selectboard on Thursday evening February 27th to take joint action on the bid award for Howe Hill.

7. **Horizons Engineering Contract:**

Selectmen agreed on a meeting date for review and action on a proposed amendment to Horizons Engineering's contract for construction oversight and inspection services for the 2020 paving projects.

8. **Road Foreman Reports:**

Road Foreman Frank Rogers presented brief reports, including an update as to delivery of the new one-ton truck and the status of mud season postings. The Selectmen agreed Rte. 132 should be posted this year, to be consistent with the Town of Strafford. The Board agreed to schedule action on road postings at its next regular meeting.

9. **River Road Culvert Replacements:**

Margy Becker reported the bid notice for an excavator and operator to assist the road crew with 10 roadway culvert replacements on River Road (between Bridge 15 and Howe Hill) has been published and posted. Bids are due Thursday, March 12. Margy Becker noted a separate bid notice is being prepared for excavator and operator to assist the crew with stormwater-related improvements on Quimby Mountain Road later in May and early June.

10. **Quimby Mountain Road Box Culvert Replacement:**

Margy Becker reported she is preparing the bid notice for the box culvert replacement on lower Quimby Mountain Road. A stream alteration permit will be required. She will research whether an Army Corps permit is required. The VTRANS structures grant stipulates all work must be completed by December 31, 2021. She hopes to have the bid finalized in the next few weeks.

11. **2020 Census: Municipal Boundary Survey**

A motion was made by Mary Gavin to approve the 2020 U.S. Census boundary annexation survey. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried. Chair Joe Ronan signed the boundary annexation survey and initial boundary validation form. Staff will submit these documents to the U.S. Census Bureau.

12. **2020 Liquor License Application – Sharon Trading Post:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the 2020 liquor license application as submitted by Sharon Trading Post. Her motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

13. **Ashley Forest:**

Joe Ronan reported on a recent discussion with the Strafford Selectboard Chair. She anticipates several new board members will be elected at Town Meeting. Selectmen agreed to delay a joint board meeting until later March or early April. This will provide incoming Selectboard members time to educate themselves about the Ashley Forest initiative.

Mary Gavin reported she and Kevin Gish attended the Sharon and Strafford public information meetings sponsored by the Alliance for Vermont Communities. There was poor public attendance at those meetings, and there is a need to raise the public's awareness of this

community forest planning initiative. Joe Ronan reported on his intention to follow-up with John Echeverria regarding tax issues.

14. **Town Meeting Preparation:**

Mary Gavin agreed to make the budget presentation. Joe Ronan will present the Selectboard report. Kevin Gish will report on the 4-town planning initiative facilitated by the Vermont Council on Rural Development.

15. **Finance Manager Report:**

Deb Jones had no additional reports.

16. **Selectboard Assistant Report:**

Margy Becker reported the Town is being copied on emails between the property owner, tenants, and Town Health Officer regarding a rental housing complaint on Fay Brook Road. She intends to contact ARC Mechanical or TSA's fuel supplier to request the boiler inspection required in the Fire Marshall's inspection report. She is waiting for Indelible, Inc. to launch the new website. Content development is still a work-in-progress and will continue after the new site goes 'live'.

17. **Approval of Warrants:**

Check and payroll warrants were reviewed and approved.

18. **Executive Session:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to enter executive session at 8:45PM to discuss a personnel matter and contract negotiations. Kevin Gish. The motion carried. The Selectboard exited from executive session at 9:08PM.

19. **Adjournment:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:08PM. Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker