

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
Monday, August 10, 2020
MINUTES (Draft)**

*This meeting will be held in compliance
With the Vermont Open Meeting Law with electronic participation.*

Attendance:

Selectboard Members via Zoom: Joe Ronan, Kevin Gish;

Selectboard Members absent: Mary Gavin

Staff via Zoom: Margy Becker (Selectboard Assistant), Frank Rogers (Road Foreman), Deb Jones (Finance Manager)

Members of Public via Zoom: Steve Gagliardone; Lucia Gagliardone, Liz Stahler, Jacob & Beth Mayer; Bart Tuttle; Loretta Kit & Charles Ryan; Marian Weatherbee, Marcy Marceau, Theodore Marceau, Alex Bird, Zoe Newmarco

1. **Call to Order:**

Joe Ronan called the meeting to order at 5:00PM

2. **Recess for Sharon IC Meeting:**

Kevin Gish made the motion to recess the meeting until 5:30PM in accommodate participation in the Sharon Incident Command Meeting. Joe Ronan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Joe Ronan reconvened the meeting at 5:30PM.

3. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the agenda; Joe Ronan seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. **Public Comments:**

There were no public comments apart from those received in connection to agenda items.

5. **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the minutes of July 6, 2020 regular meeting. Joe Ronan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the minutes of the August 3, 2020 special meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

6. **Approval of Warrants:**

There were no warrants presented.

7. **Legal Trail Whitney Road to Town Farm Road: Signage**

It was noted that two emails had been received with recommendations for signage, but that staff had not yet had the opportunity to share them with all interested public. It was agreed final action will occur on sign language at the August 17 meeting.

Joe Ronan and Kevin Gish agreed the Sharon road crew will install the signs at both ends of the legal trail (one on Whitney Road, the second on Town Farm Road). SB members agreed there was no expiration date for the signs. The intent is to monitor behavior through February 2021. It was further agreed the signage shall be posted on the town website.

Kevin Gish inquired as to the need to post similar signs on other remote legal trails. SB members decided against posting them, due to lack of complaints from residents living in proximity of the trails.

8. **Racial Justice Issues in Sharon:**

Joe Ronan reported on what a display of solidarity with Black Lives Matter could look like with respect to the flag. Other communities are displaying the BLM flag on the same pole as the American flag. It is displayed beneath the American flag, then beneath a town flag (if there were one).

Steve and Lucia Gagliardone reported they had reached out to the Rutland Chapter of the NAACP to inquire about racial justice and anti-racism training opportunities. It was agreed that town staff will continue to research training options as well, including contacting people known to have assisted Hartford School District with development of its anti-racism policy. Joe Ronan indicated he had begun anti-racism training.

On the matter of observance of Juneteenth, Joe Ronan reports it is the State of Vermont which sets state holidays. The legislature has acted to establish a commemorative holiday. Should the Town of Sharon observe Juneteenth as a town holiday? SB members heard public comments suggesting this will be a controversial topic. SB members stated they would welcome such discussions. Kevin Gish stated he wishes to hear differing perspectives. The suggestion for an outdoor meeting was discussed, but the details of how to provide this forum are to be determined. SB members discussed other options for reaching out to residents, either via phone or in person appearances at various locations in town.

SB members expressed a desire to better understand the true demographics of the town, and town staff was directed to obtain more detailed information as available.

The SB received a suggestion the town should reduce its reliance on policing, and SB members conceded there may be a better way to spend a portion of the \$58,000/year allocated to policing. But they also indicated that the Town relies on police services to

protect public safety and that they would not entertain dissolution of a policing budget without a much broader discussion and community action on the alternatives to policing.

SB members heard a comment suggesting the manner in which policing is conducted is within the Town's control. SB members concurred. Town staff was asked to contact Windsor County Sheriffs to request data on traffic stops and racial profiling, should the data be available.

Joe Ronan reported he had spoken with the Town of Thetford, and the topic of sharing police services was discussed.

Marcy Marceau joined the meeting after the Gagliardone group departed and asked why the town is getting involved in the issues of racism and racial justice in the middle of COVID 19 when people are trying to make ends meet. She further inquired why the issues were brought forward and what the SB thought town government could contribute on the issues?

Joe Ronan explained the SB is trying to look into whether or not there *are* issues with racism in the town. Kevin Gish indicated the SB is looking into policing. Marcy asked why the SB is focused on the Windsor County Sheriffs' performance? Did SB members think there was a problem? SB members responded they are trying to understand *if* there is a problem with policing in town. Kevin Gish stated the SB is considering whether the town needs to do more to be a 'welcoming' community.

Marcy Marceau questioned the need for such activity and restated her objections to the topic of Black Lives Matter and racial justice placement on the agenda. SB members replied the topic of racism and racial justice is on the agenda because the SB and Town residents feel these are important issues for the town to discuss, and encouraged her ongoing participation in discussions.

9. Executive Session: Personnel

Motion by Kevin Gish, seconded by Joe Ronan, to enter Executive Session at 6:42PM with the Finance Manager to discuss a personnel issue. The motion carried unanimously.

The SB exited from executive session at 7:05PM.

10. Adjournment:

Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn, which Joe Ronan seconded, at 7:06PM. The motion was passed unanimously.

Joe Ronan
Kevin Gish
Mary Gavin