

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES *Draft*
MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2020**

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

Attending via Zoom: Selectboard members Joe Ronan, Mary Gavin, Kevin Gish; Town staff Margy Becker (SB Assistant), Deb Jones (Finance Manager), Frank Rogers (Road Foreman); Town Officials: Galen Mudgett, Lister/E911 Coordinator. Guest listeners and meeting participants were as follows: Ryan Haac, Marcy Marceau, Melissa Frary, Matthew Perry (Ashley Forest Committee), Geoff Martin (TRORC), Patricia Beavers (P2 Environmental), Ira Clark, Robert Linck (VT Land Trust), Michael Sacca (Alliance for VT Communities), Warren Johnston, Dick Ruben (Sharon Conservation Commission)

1. **Call to Order:**

Joe Ronan convened the meeting at 6:38PM.

2. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the agenda as posted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

3. **Public Comments:**

There were no public comments apart from items on the agenda.

4. **6:40PM Road Foreman Reports & Highway Business:**

The crew continues to haul hard pak and sand. Frank Rogers inquired whether the SB would consider allowing the crew to work on Monday, Oct. 12 (Indigenous Peoples' Day) in exchange for a paid holiday the day after Thanksgiving.

Mary Gavin made the motion to authorize the road crew to work on Monday, October 12 in exchange for taking off November 27 as a paid holiday. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The SB is in receipt of the Finance Manger's tally of **salt bids** from Cargill and American Rock Salt. Pricing for contracts directly with the suppliers is more competitive. Cargill was the lowest bidder at \$69.21 per ton vs. American Rock Salt at \$76.00/ton. If the Town piggybacked onto the State contract with American Rock Salt, it would have to pay \$80.31/ton.

Mary Gavin made the motion to accept the bid to purchase salt directly from Cargill at \$69.21/ton for an estimated 775 tons and to authorize the Finance Manager to sign the bid. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

SFY21 Grants-in Aid: Letter of intent: Frank Rogers listed potential sites for town highway stormwater improvements for SFY21, including Mosher Lane, Fay Brook Road, and Moore Road. He will work with Rita Seto at TRORC to finalize the locations. This is year 4 of VT DEC grants-in-aid funding for towns.

Motion by Kevin Gish that the Town agree to apply for SFY21 grants-in-aid funding for stormwater improvements. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Whitney Rd to Harlow Rd Legal Trail Signage: SB members authorized Frank Rogers to replace the missing Whitney Road legal trail sign and post. This is a one-time authorization, to be revisited in the future if needed. Frank Rogers noted that there will be increased use of the trail due to hunting season. Whitney Road neighbors have reported nighttime activity on the trail has resumed.

Baxter Library Drainage Project: Margy Becker reported that Will Davis has volunteered to meet with Frank Rogers at the library to review plans and construction limits for the drainage project. The town needs further guidance as to whether a survey will be required before the work is bid.

Garage Roof Leak: Frank Rogers noted the leaks occur on the backside of the building onto the floor of the garage. He will collaborate with Margy Becker to identify roofers who could assess the situation and make recommendations about short-term repairs and potentially bid on replacement. The town garage CIP calls for roof replacement in the near future. SB members further agreed to consider the capital improvement needs for the building during the upcoming budget process. Further discussions on this issue will occur Oct. 19.

5. **Request for E911 Road Naming:**

Galen Mudgett explained the need for new road names per E911 guidelines. The suggested name for the entrance to the town offices, Old School House, and elementary school is "School Street". The suggested name for the access from Rte. 14 to the town garage and Sharon Academy High School is "Academy Drive".

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve two new street names including "SCHOOL STREET" and "ACADEMY DRIVE". Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried.

In subsequent discussions SB members restated its prior action had been for the E911 Coordinator to replace *all* E911 number plates to assure consistent appearance and reflectivity. Galen Mudgett explained he is going to replace all number plates, except for the newest ones with good reflectivity.

6. Water System Updates & Recommendation for Standby Chlorinator:

Patricia Beavers of P2 Environmental met with Selectmen to discuss her recommendations for additional treatment of water distributed from the Elementary school well via a separate line to the Old School House, Town Offices, and Church. Installation of a standby chlorinator is required per State regulations. The apparatus will be installed after the water softener in the OSH basement. The quote from Jerry Swasey is less than \$1,000 to install, including his labor. Patricia Beavers indicated the Town had until next year to decide on installation.

SB members responded with several questions and requests for further justification for the standby chlorinator, noting that the new water softener has not yet addressed sulfur odors. Patricia Beavers noted the water softener is addressing iron levels by ion exchange. An 'efficacy' sample could check iron levels. Standby chlorination, which is required, may have the secondary benefit of removing sulfide gas. Matthew Perry inquired whether drought conditions could be compounding the sulfur problem, and Patricia Beavers responded yes. Sulfide gas is present due to geologic formations.

Patricia Beavers recommends a very low dose of chlorination. The efficacy of standby chlorination for sulfide gas removal will only be known when treatment is activated. She views activating this treatment as a "pilot" project concerning sulfide gas removal, referring to her experience with a similar situation in Benson, Vermont.

Mary Gavin inquired whether the State would consider letting the Town defer installation of a standby chlorinator for another year, due to the pandemic and resulting low occupancy rates of the buildings to-date? Kevin Gish noted that TSA could very well be back at full occupancy of the OSH building in the near future. Joe Ronan commented that the standby chlorinator needs to be installed regardless. Deb Jones noted the Old School House fund has a sufficient balance to cover the \$1,000 expense.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve purchase and installation of a standby chlorinator for an amount not to exceed \$1,000, including labor costs. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Regional Energy Coordinator Status Reports:

Geoff Martin, newly-hired regional energy coordinator, provided a status report on his activities on behalf of the towns' interests in energy conservation and efficiency. He has completed tours of all town buildings. He is in receipt of local energy audits, procurement policies, and data on town energy consumption.

The focus of Geoff's presentation was a recommendation that the towns adopt energy savings plans and energy efficiency upgrades through a contract with an energy services company or "ESCO". He is requesting the towns join in issuance of a Request for Qualifications for an ESCO. H would issue the RFQ by approximately mid-November.

Geoff Martin explained an ESCO would perform energy audits up front at no cost and with no obligation to the towns. It would then conduct cash flow analyses and make recommendations for a “bundled set of measures that can be paid for through energy savings”. Towns would select the measures they want to move forward with. The ESCO guarantees the energy savings and provides ongoing reports to the towns that would verify the actual savings. The ESCO would make up the shortfall in predicted savings, should there be one.

Mary Gavin inquired if there were ESCO’s in Vermont. Geoff indicated he was working with Efficiency Vermont, which has suggested the ESCO approach. A steering committee would make the selection for the ESCO. Joe Ronan asked whether energy efficiency measures would be selected on a present value basis, since savings are realized over time. He inquired how the ‘guarantee’ for a level of energy savings is agreed to. Geoff Martin indicated those details would be put forth in responses to an RFQ.

Finance Manager Deb Jones expressed concerns that the ESCO has an incentive to get work on speculation. This could result in inflated pricing. SB members echoed the concern. Deb Jones further suggested a value be assigned to the initial audits, so a town would have a way to “buy its way out” of the contract. Joe Ronan indicated this approach could help assure the ESCO’s recommendations make economic sense. SB members expressed their desire to proceed cautiously with further consideration of Geoff Martin’s request for endorsement of RFQ issuance at its next meeting on October 19.

8. **Ashley Community Forest Vote:**

Michael Sacca, Alliance for VT Communities, again encouraged the SB to move forward with the vote and to agree on the date. Bob Linck, VT Land Trust, indicated the VT Housing Conservation Board’s grant for \$120,000 expires in June 2021. This is a hard deadline. He has already requested an extension of the grant to give the towns more time to collaborate on moving the project forward. The actual closing on the property must occur by September 20, 2021. He further noted there is a lot of work the towns have to accomplish prior to the closing, inclusive of agreeing on details of a management plan, conservation easement, and an inter-local agreement – if there is to be one.

Dick Ruben, Sharon Conservation Commission, raised the concern that a subdivision of the parcel may be required, if the towns did not pursue ‘tenants in common’ (joint ownership). Bob Linck indicated the VLT attorney has ruled the town line serves as a boundary, thus there are two parcels and no need for a subdivision.

SB Chair Joe Ronan asked for additional public comments. Matthew Perry, Sharon appointee to the Ashley Forest Committee, voiced support for the community forest. Dick Ruben also expressed support.

Discussions ensued regarding the timetable for a vote. SB members noted the Sharon Town Clerk’s reservations concerning a December vote immediately following the national election. Joe Ronan asked for confirmation from AVC or Ashley Forest Committee

members that there was an urgent need for the towns to vote prior to March 2021 Town Meeting. There was no response. Mary Gavin expressed her desire to wait until March 2021 town meeting to vote. Kevin Gish spoke in support of a December vote, noting it could take the two towns a while to work out the details of forest management prior to closing on the property. Joe Ronan then suggested a January vote, perhaps the week of January 11. Mary Gavin indicated she could support a January date. The Chair asked for a motion to this effect. No motion was offered.

Kevin Gish made the motion to schedule the Ashley Forest Vote in December. There was no second. The motion failed.

Joe Ronan made the motion to schedule the vote on the Ashley Community Forest proposal in the first or second week of January 2021. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Joe Ronan will follow-up with Sharon Town Clerk, Debbie St. Peter.

9. **Appointment of Representative to TRORC:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to appoint Ira Clark as town representative to Two Rivers Ottawaquechee Regional Planning Commission. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Ira Clark thanked the SB for his appointment and commented that energy audits of some Sharon town buildings had already taken place. Those studies could serve as a 'check against' energy efficiency measures proposed by an ESCO. Ryan Haac indicated Geoff Martin was already in possession of copies of those studies.

10. **Harlow Road Updates:**

Kevin Gish provided the most recent update on the case. The overdose incident at 62 Harlow Road on Thursday did not involve a resident. Narcan was successfully administered.

Selectmen expressed their dissatisfaction with many aspects of the Board's prior discussions on the Harlow Road case with VSP Lieutenant Kessler and State's Attorney Ward Goodenough.

Joe Ronan spoke in favor of reconsidering how the town was contracting for policing services. Mary Gavin stated the town should allot more hours to policing and that the VSP should be asked to patrol. Kevin Gish countered it was already the VSP's job to patrol. Mary Gavin stated the VSP is not reporting on a lot of the activity occurring in Sharon. Joe Ronan suggested the SB consult with the VLCT's consultant on policing. SB members agreed. Kevin Gish commented policing services should be considered separately from the Harlow Road situation. Discussions on policing and the Harlow Road case will continue at the next meeting.

11. **Finance Manager Reports:**

Deb Jones reported FY20 audit field work has begun. Producing requested information to the auditor is a real challenge, since this now involves a lot of scanning and emailing. Tax payments continue to trickle in.

Deb reported on different opinions as to the impact of the asphalt adjustment on **Pike's final requisition**. She had settled on a credit of \$12,434. Pike's foreman on the project appears to indicate a \$17,777 credit. Jon Harrington suggests that the credit should be more in line with \$20,000, and he further suggests she hold off putting the Pike warrant before the SB. Deb will continue to report on efforts to reconcile these differences of opinions.

12. Approval of Warrants:

Kevin Gish made the motion to ratify the payroll warrant signed last week for the period Sept. 13 – Sept. 26 and a cash draw of \$15,049.49. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve check warrant #1078 in the amount of \$2,166.31 including payments to Compucount \$238.85, Consolidated Communications \$320.61, EC Fiber \$79.00, Evans Motor Fuels \$1,273.49, Ferguson Waterworks \$33.69, and Foley Services \$220.67. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve check warrant #1079 in the amount of \$5,663.55 including payments to Green Mountain Power \$419.13, Have Trash Will Travel \$52.00, Health Equity \$29.43, The Herald of Randolph \$107.88, Howard Fairfield LLC \$2,868.92, Ledyard Loan Operations for refund of taxes \$701.19, and Optimum Technical Solution for the Listers' CAMA License and Maintenance Agreement \$1,485.00. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve check warrant #1080 in the amount of \$18,647.38 including payment of 3 invoices from The Lincoln National Life \$223.24, 5 invoices from Pike \$8,851.68, 2 invoices from Royal Auto Parts \$86.07, Sabil & Sons \$162.47, Royaltown Area Senior Citizens \$2500.00, and South Royaltown Rescue \$6,823.92. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve check warrant #1081 in the amount of \$1,066,986.17 including payments to US Bank \$10,569.36, Sharon School District \$1,046,569.00, Twin State Sand & Gravel \$1,414.98, Valley News \$204.00, VMERS DB \$2,747.83, and Windsor County Sheriff \$5,481.00. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve check warrant #1082 in the amount of \$50.00 for payment to JB portable Toilets \$50.00. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve check warrant #1083 in the amount of \$265.00 from the Downer Fund for payments to Pine Hill Cemetery Association for mowing services \$180.00, and Windsor County Probate Court \$85.00. **Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

13. Coronavirus – planning/IC Meeting updates:

Mary Gavin reported on the IC 9/28/20 meeting. Reports indicate status quo. Keenan Haley reported things are going well at Sharon Elementary School. The Food Shelf was not represented at the meeting. The next IC meeting will be October 12.

14. Approve Minutes:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of September 21, 2020 with changes noted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

15. Unfinished business – suspended to October 19 Meeting:

- Anti-Racist/Implicit Bias Training
- Town ordinances
- OSH HVAC updates

16. Adjourn:

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:18PM. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by Margy Becker