

**SHARON SELECTBOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2020  
Minutes (Final)**

*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). Guest participants and listeners: Trevor Whipple (Policing Consultant for VT League of Cities & Towns), Michael Sacca (Alliance for VT Communities), Sharon residents Scott MacDonald, Alex Bird, Dan Deneen, Suzanne Jones, and Strafford resident Mark Friedman.

1. **Call to Order:**

Chair Joe Ronan convened the Zoom meeting at 6:30PM as warned.

2. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

**Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the agenda without modifications. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.**

3. **Public Comments:**

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

4. **Road Foreman Reports/Highway Matters:**

Frank Rogers indicated the trucks are ready for winter. The crew is finishing hauling sand, and some grading will continue to occur during the sporadic warmer weather forecasted for later in the week.

**Better Roads Grant closeout – Moore Road storm water ditching:** Margy Becker reported the Finance Manager's final tally indicates total costs of \$7,511 came in below budget. There were savings on subcontractor and materials costs. **Mary Gavin made the motion to authorize submittal of a request for a grant award of \$6,008.80 and a local match of \$1,502.20. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Driveway entrances at 765 Beaver Meadow Road:** Scott MacDonald explained that he has had to move his business to the property. He was unaware of any driveway permit requirements. Scott indicated he has narrowed the former field entrance above the house. He plans to construct a garage there to house equipment. He is parking trucks below the house at the pre-existing field access to the sugar house. This access point is now a U-shaped entrance with 2 curb cuts. The 4<sup>th</sup> access point is the driveway to the house.

SB members inquired whether any of the curb cuts were previously permitted by the town. Margy Becker indicated her research indicates the lot was created as part of a subdivision by a prior owner (Leland), yet there is no evidence of a driveway permit in either the vault records or SPC files.

Mary Gavin inquired whether Scott could eliminate any curb cuts by using the driveway to the house to access the land above and below it. Scott indicated the house and shop are too close together to permit a driveway extension between them. The leach field is located in the front yard. Scott further indicated the sight distance up and down Beaver Meadow Road from his curb cuts is better now than when he bought the property.

Scott asked the town to provide better speed control along the road, and he asked the road crew to re-post the cautionary 25 MPH speed limit sign in the vicinity of his house. He has found it lying in a roadside ditch. Frank Rogers indicated he would re-install the sign.

Discussions concluded with a request from the SB that Scott contact state personnel in the Springfield Office of the VT DEC to inquire about the need for an Act 250 permit for the improvements to his land. Scott agreed to do so. Scott also agreed to fill out and submit to the SB a driveway permit application for multiple curb cuts.

**High Risk Rural Roads Signage Upgrade – Fay Brook Road:** Margy Becker stated she had confirmed that the stakes along Fay Brook are consistent with VTRANS' plan to proceed with installation of signage upgrades at no cost to the Town. The VTRANS Traffic shop will oversee the project.

5. **Community Policing – Guest Trevor Whipple, VLCT Policing Consultant:**

Trevor Whipple, policing consultant for the VLCT, had been invited to join the meeting in light of the SB's concern about whether the Town is providing effective law enforcement services and its desire for additional perspectives and advice on enforcement of drug cases. Trevor Whipple indicated he has been a police officer for more than 37 years – including 23+ years as chief, first in Barre and then South Burlington. He continues to teach at the VT Police Academy and participates in animal cruelty investigations. He has been consulting full-time with the VLCT for the past several years, and he spends a significant amount of time advising local PD's on best practices, development of internal policies, and providing litigation and risk management support to local PD's. He also works with local constables on ordinance enforcement and ticket writing.

Trevor discussed a variety of community policing models. Waterbury has disbanded its police department and now contracts directly with the VSP for a specific trooper. Randolph has disbanded its police department and now contracts with the local sheriff's department. Those changes in delivery of policing services were based on the needs and desires of the each community. They were also economic decisions. Randolph decided there was zero value in having their own police force. More recently St. Albans City and Town reassessed their budgets, issued an RFP, and are now also contracting with the Sheriffs' Department in that region.

Mary Gavin inquired how the citizens of Randolph feel about the choice the Town made. Trevor responded he did not yet know. He indicated local police officers tend to fulfill a broader range of

functions than contracted officers. He suggested a town could request to contract with a specific officer. SB members inquired about the general costs for policing. Trevor indicated South Burlington averages \$100K per year per officer. Benefits are a major cost. Retirement packages need to be competitive. VSP, on average, recruits officers at \$51,000/year. Start-up year 1 costs are substantial.

Trevor Whipple voiced support for regionalization. Police officers have statewide jurisdiction. There are, however, challenges to regionalization as evidenced by slow progress of Chittenden County's development of a Public Safety Authority.

Joe Ronan inquired how a town knows it is providing the 'right amount' of policing. Trevor indicated there is no magic answer.

Kevin Gish commented the town is struggling with enforcement of a drug case and that the local sheriffs tend to be reactive. The Town has hired the Windsor County Sheriff's Dept. to provide traffic control services primarily. The VSP - and now federal agents - have stepped in.

Trevor Whipple indicated local PD's rarely have the capacity to enforce drug cases, which are lengthy and have to address the 'probable cause' threshold. He noted the Town of Thetford PD does not have the capability. Whereas the VSP is trained to take on these cases. Local PD's can be creative in how to be a nuisance to drug offenders. Housing was repossessed in South Burlington from landlords, for example. PD's can cause persistent distractions – i.e. run radar in problem areas. SB members thank Trevor for his comments and agreed to contact him again as-needed.

6. **Election Day Traffic Control:**

SB members noted the Town Clerk appears to have addressed traffic control. SB members will be working at the polls.

7. **Request to locate Food Truck in Sharon:**

SB members denied Ms. Furlong's request to park a food truck on town property, citing lack of suitable areas, lack of sufficient access to the Green, and precedent. SB members are not interested in establishing a permit process for concessions. Ms. Furlong was advised to work with private landowners to obtain a parking location. Margy Becker will follow-up with Ms. Furlong.

8. **Health Officer Appointment:**

Alex Bird stated he is interested in becoming Health Officer and that his life experience is very relevant to the position. He is very familiar with state codes and regulations regarding water/wastewater systems, and he and his wife Marcy are both certified water system operators for non-transient non-community water supplies. Alex has also been licensed for 24 years in the food services industry. Additionally, the Inn at Idlewood is inspected by health department personnel at least once per year. Lastly, Alex stated he would like to give back to the community.

**Kevin Gish made the motion to nominate Alex Bird to be appointed as health officer by the State of Vermont. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Finance Manager Deb Jones pointed out that the HO will be an “employee” of the Town, at the agreed upon rate of \$20/hour plus reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. This status will require time sheet submittals. Selectmen agreed the time and expense to attend HO training opportunities would be eligible for reimbursement.

**9. Finance Manager Reports:**

Deb Jones reported her final requisition to the VT Municipal Bond Bank regarding 2020 paving expenses is \$282,800. The Town, as borrower, is required to approve and sign a certificate of completion. The Treasurer will also be required to sign the certificate. **Motion by Mary Gavin that the SB approves and agrees to sign the VT Municipal Bond Bank’s “Certificate of Completion”.** Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin requested the November 9 agenda notice a discussion on investment of Norwich Technologies **solar decommissioning funds.**

**10. Ashley Forest Ballot Language:**

Michael Sacca, Dan Deneen, Mark Friedman, and Suzanne Jones listened to or participated in discussions. Joe Ronan reported Strafford has agreed to the January 18 town vote on whether to accept the donation of the Ashley Forest. Michael Sacca, Alliance for VT Communities, discussed VT Land Trust’s suggested ballot language vis-a-vis Strafford’s language. Sharon SB members agreed to adopt the Strafford model for Paul Gillies, Esq. to further review. The costs of this legal review will be split 50/50 between the towns.

Dan Deneen expressed interest in being appointed to Sharon Conservation Commission and to becoming an active participant in the planning initiative for the community forest.

**11. Anti-Racist/Implicit Bias Training:**

Discussions postponed to a future meeting. Kevin Gish noted there are members of the public interested in the SB’s progress on this matter.

**12. Ordinances:**

Discussions postponed to a future meeting.

**13. Coronavirus: planning/updates:**

It was agreed the Town Offices will remain closed to the general public, except by appointment. Employees will access the offices when they need to. Employees are expected to follow state guidelines with respect to travel restrictions, and they are encouraged to “re-think” plans for family gatherings at Thanksgiving. Selectmen expressed their wishes for a safe and healthy road crew as

winter approaches. SB members confirmed their position that the Town is liable for compensation of up to 80 hours of quarantine time. Deb Jones reminded the SB that the employer cannot require an employee to be tested for COVID.

Deb Jones reported Baxter Library has installed an air purifier, the expense of which she will include in the LGER grant. Deb is further researching HEPA air purifiers for the Town Office that meet the MERV 13 filter specification. Kevin Gish volunteered to inquire about TSA's research into air purifiers.

Deb Jones further noted that TASCOCO will complete **Town Office fire and security alarm upgrades** on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

#### **14. Harlow Road: updates**

SB members provided very brief updates on the Harlow Road situation, noting the arrests of Jeremy and Jasper Digby. One remains in jail on federal charges, the other has been released.

#### **15. Health Officer Reports:**

Joe Ronan, still serving in the capacity of Interim Health Officer, will re-inspect 46 Dyer Road to confirm that water and heating systems are functional.

#### **Approval of Minutes:**

**Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of October 26, 2020 as submitted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.**

#### **16. Approval of Warrants:**

**Mary Gavin made the motion to approve Check Warrant 1090 in the amount of \$6,881.27** which includes payment of an invoice to Blue Tarp (Northern Tool) for \$228 for 2 ratchet & socket sets; to Bethel Mills \$40.80 for 2x8x10's for truck sideboards; to Consolidated Communications \$326.11 for office & garage phone expense; to Evans Motor Fuels \$1,317.23 for 2 week's of fuel (which covered hauling from Pike); GMP \$462.27 for 5 accounts and 5 bills, including reconciliation of solar credits for the Town Offices account; Have Trash Will Travel \$26 for Sept. trash collection; USPS \$110 for stamps for AP; VMERS \$4,116.36 for employee & employer contributions for October (a 3-pay period mo.); and Worksafe \$254.50 for signs for School Street and Academy Drive signs and brackets. **Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **17. Adjourn:**

**Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 8:48PM. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Submitted by Margy Becker