

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 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); Treasurer Margaret Raymond. Guest participants and listeners: residents Marcy Marceau, Alex Bird, Tom Lober (Sharon Fire Dept), Ira Clark and Sue Sellew (Planning Commission), Dick Ruben, (Conservation Commission), Michael Sacca (Alliance for VT Communities), Kit Hood, Sandy Johnston.

1. Call to Order and Zoom orientation

Joe Ronan called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

2. Review/Approve Agenda

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the agenda; Mary Gavin seconded. The Motion carried unanimously. Joe Ronan indicated he would like to revisit the SB November 2nd discussions regarding community policing. This topic will be placed on the agenda for Nov. 16.

3. Public Comments: There were no public comments received apart from those received on warned agenda items.

4. Road Foreman Reports & Highway business:

Frank Rogers reported one crew member is on vacation. Marcy Marceau commented on the need for grading to the lower portion of Steele Road. Margy Becker reported no bids were received for sidewalk plowing and clearing of town building entryways. Joe Ronan agreed to follow-up with the Walton-Strong's. Margy Becker will follow-up with Pine Hill Cemetery Association. Deb Jones will determine if Jack Jones and Pauline Barrett, who provide winter maintenance of the SunGen Solar Array, have any interest in providing winter sidewalk maintenance. Joe Ronan provided indicated he has not heard back from ATG regarding the **Meritor claim** and that he plans to follow-up.

5. Sharon Fire Department: FY22 Budget:

Tom Lober presented the SFD's FY22 budget request of \$51,850, which is an increase over the current budget (\$50,100) yet similar to what the SFD requested for FY20 (\$51,665). Tom Lober noted he has yet to hear from Hartford dispatch regarding that line item. Discussions focused for a time on changes being proposed statewide for delivery of dispatch services. Currently the townspeople of Sharon are paying for dispatch services for South

Royalton Rescue and for SFD. It was noted that Bethel and Tunbridge fire departments are being dispatched through VSP.

Tom Lober explained the SFD is doing its best to maintain Engine 1, which is 25 years old but has only logged 6,000 miles and 2,000 hours. The SFD has turned to VTC, which is helping bring the engine up to LED standards. The 2004 Chevy Suburban 'Car 1' is in need of replacement. Bunker gear will soon need to be replaced. The SFD plans to apply proceeds from their gun raffle towards the costs of that equipment. 10 sets of bunker gear at \$3,000 each would equate to a \$30,000 investment to be made.

Tom Lober indicated morale in the SFD is good, and there are currently 23 volunteers including several younger folks (under 30) who have stepped forward. The SFD is honoring the retirements of Rex Dyer and Derrick Durkee this year. Tom Lober's report concluded with a status report on plans for a storage shed. There has been a delay in pouring the concrete for the 24 x 30 structure, but there are plans to continue construction. The Department is trying to keep its budget as stable as possible.

6. FY22 Budget Objectives:

Finance Manager Deb Jones asked SB members to provide guidance on budget parameters to consider for FY22. Bond payments now factor into the budget at \$110,000/year plus interest (variable). Deb Jones noted scheduled increases to highway reserve funds which have already been approved by the voters. After further discussion SB members asked Deb Jones to run three budget scenarios including a level-funded budget, a 5% increase, and a 5% decrease. Selectmen further instructed Deb to leave wages at current levels.

Frank Rogers expressed concern regarding vehicle replacement schedules. SB members cited the condition of the town garage as an additional concern. Mary Gavin expressed interest in participating in a planning process to investigate the costs for replacing the town garage. Deb Jones noted a portion of the \$56,000 surplus in the highway budget could be dedicated towards a future town garage. The SB will further consider convening the former "Finance Advisory Committee". **A special budget meeting was agreed to for November 30.**

7. Legal Trail-Whitney Road to Town Farm Road: updates

Kit Hood reported motorized use of the legal trail has fallen way off in recent weeks. She indicated she had no further complaints at this time. Frank Rogers confirmed the stolen sign had been replaced on the Town Farm Road end of the trail.

8. Ashley Forest: updates as available

Joe Ronan reported Paul Gillies, Esq. has not yet submitted comments to the towns regarding proposed ballot language. Margy Becker reviewed a tentative timeline for posting the warning, mailing Australian ballots, and holding public information meetings for the January 18th vote. Dick Ruben, Sharon Conservation Commission, indicated his interest in being the SCC's liaison in upcoming meetings regarding the cooperative agreements for management

of the proposed two-town community forest, should the vote be favorable to accept the donation of the Ashley Forest.

9. Review/discuss Regional Energy Coordinator Status Report:

SB noted they have questions and concerns regarding Geoff Martin's Sept/Oct. 2020 progress report to the towns. Board members agreed to follow-up with him via email.

10. Conservation Commission Appointment:

Mary Gavin made the motion to appoint Dan Deneen to the Conservation Commission. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

11. Municipal Planning Grant: Request for Extension:

Mary Gavin made the motion to authorize the Planning Commission to submit a request for extension of the Municipal Planning Grant due to delays caused by COVID19. The motion was seconded by Kevin Gish and carried unanimously.

12. Hazard Mitigation Plan Revisions:

Mary Becker indicated Vermont Emergency Management ("VEM") has received FEMA hazard mitigation funds, which it intends to pass-through to towns that are revising local hazard mitigation plans. FEMA funds will underwrite 75% of the costs associated with plan revisions; towns must cover 25% of the cost. FEMA reviews and approves all LHMP's. An approved LHMP helps assure the Town will receive maximum ERAF state funding in emergencies.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve issuance of an RFP for consultant procurement to assist the Town with revisions to its Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Finance Manager Reports:

Investment of Solar decommissioning funds: Treasurer Margaret Raymond met with SB members to discuss a plan for investment of solar decommissioning funds received from Norwich Technologies. The decommissioning fund will grow to \$15,000 as of Dec. 31, 2020. SB members suggested the Treasurer research a 'target date' fund with a 60/40 mixture of equities and treasuries. The goal for decommissioning funds is approximately \$32,500. The Treasurer will report back to the Selectboard.

14. Harlow Road: updates

Mary Gavin has reached out to Chris Noble of the Royalton Selectboard regarding a joint SB meeting. The SB desires to hear more feedback from Trevor Whipple (VLCT policing consultant) regarding neighborhood watch programs.

15. Health Officer Reports:

Joe Ronan will re-inspect 46 Dyer Road tomorrow, November 10th and report back to the SB. Joe Ronan also indicated willingness to continue serving as Deputy Health Officer. **Mary Gavin made the motion to appoint Joe Ronan as Deputy Health Officer. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.**

16. Anti-Racism/Implicit Bias Training:

Joe Ronan suggested the Board further postpone discussions on anti-racism/implicit bias training. Marcy Marceau expressed frustration at the announcement. She noted the topic had appeared on several SB agendas, yet discussions were being continually postponed. Selectmen agreed to schedule discussions for **November 16** under “new business”.

17. Ordinances

Discussions of town ordinances were further postponed.

18. Coronavirus Planning/Updates:

Mary Gavin reported on the most recent **IC meeting**. The Sharon Food Shelf is undertaking its annual appeal and has begun preparing holiday meal baskets. There has been an increase in the number of Food Shelf visits. Sharon Elementary School reports Election Day proceeded smoothly. The Sharon Fire Department has resumed in-person meetings (with social distancing). South Royalton Rescue reports all is well there. The next IC meeting is November 23, which Kevin Gish will attend.

Deb Jones and Mary Gavin indicated they had participated in a ‘Continuity of Operations’ planning seminar. SB members asked the **road crew to undertake contingency planning** to assure there is coverage for plow routes if one or more road crew were unable to report to work. Mary Gavin agreed to assist the crew. Discussions on this topic will continue at the next meeting.

Deb Jones inquired how the SB wanted to address quarantine requirements for a highway crew member returning from a hunting trip out-of-state. Road crew are considered ‘essential workers’ and are technically allowed to work if they are asymptomatic for COVID. The question is *should* the employee be allowed to drive a plow truck, if he could do so safely and without exposure to other crew members. SB members expressed concern as to how an employee could avoid using the restroom or maintain distance from other employees in the garage. Frank Rogers stated his concern that returning to work without the 14-day quarantine would be unsafe. Alex Bird provide an alternative scenario for consideration that could include 2 negative COVID tests within a certain timeframe in order to shorten the required quarantine period.

19. Selectboard Assistant Reports:

Margy Becker indicated the RFP for Old School House ventilation upgrades had been posted and distributed. Bids are due November 30th. She noted an incident of discharge of brown silty water from the Town Offices bathroom taps. The incident occurred on a Monday AM after installation of the new standby chlorinator. She has reported the incident to the Water System Operator.

20. **Approval of Minutes:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 2, 2020 special meeting as submitted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mary Gavin to amend the December 16, 2019 minutes to add documentation of SB action on the 25% match commitment for the FEMA hazard mitigation grant, in addition to other actions taken that were omitted in error. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

21. **Approval of Warrants:**

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period ending 11/7/2020 with a cash draw of \$13,170.43. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve AP Warrant 1091 for \$16,276.50 with invoices for BCBS \$5,987.98 for Dec, Compucount for \$158.90 for Oct's payroll service, Central VT Council on aging \$750 for FY21, EC Fiber for \$79 for Nov, Eyemed for \$57.67, Foley for \$168.99 for 3 weeks of uniform service, Health Equity \$57.20 for HRA reimbursements x 2wks, and Community Bank NA for \$9016.76 for the first semi-annual loan payment for the 2020 F550. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve AP Warrant 1092 for \$47,640.44 with invoices for Lucky's for 21.04 for a mirror, Pike Industries for \$7,095.20 for 886.9 tons of ¾" crushed stone and some ledge pak, Royal Auto for \$90.74 for shop expenses & parts for T1, Rouse Tire for \$1387.18 for tires – most for the F550, Sanel Auto for \$49.35 for a stud and wheel nut for T2, Sharon Firemen's Association for \$25,050.00 for the first of 2 payments for FY21, South Royalton Rescue for \$13,647.84 for October and November, Suburban Propane for \$288.81 for 235.5gals of propane for the Town offices, and Welch's for \$10.28 for paint for the garage. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

22. **Adjourn:**

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:00PM. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker