

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, December 7, 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: Royalton Selectboard members Chris Noble, Dave Barker, John Dumville, Tim Murphy; Victoria Paquin (Royalton Town Administrator), Sandy Clavelle, Loretta Stainaker (Police Chief, Royalton), Vince Gross, Colleen LeBaron, Steve Basham; John Roe, Dan Hudnut, Andrew Lane (Sharon Academy); Marcy Marceau, Alex Bird, Lucia Gagliardone, Steve Gagliardone, Suzanne Jones, George Ostler.

1. **Call to Order:**

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

2. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the agenda without modifications. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

3. **Public Comments:**

Public comments received primarily addressed warned agenda items.

4. **Sharon/Royalton Selectboard Joint Meeting:**

Kevin Gish opened discussions by noting his desire for the boards to work better together on issues related to the Harlow and Broad Brook road properties. He commented the two towns have differing law enforcement capabilities - Royalton relying on its own police department and Sharon relying on Windsor County Sheriffs, primarily for traffic control, in addition to the State Police.

Loretta Stainaker, Royalton Police Chief, summarized the PD's approach to policing the Broad Brook and Harlow Road neighborhood, provided a brief status report on the case involving Jasper and Jeremy Digby, and then indicated a second investigation is underway with respect to new folks living on the properties who were not caught in the original 'net'.

Tim Murphy, Royalton SB, indicated he also desires to work together. He reported Royalton has adopted a new ordinance with some actual 'teeth' to it. A Montpelier ordinance was used as a model. The Town also sought legal counsel. The ordinance is to be implemented

throughout town. Tim Murphy suggested the Town of Sharon could adopt the same ordinance.

Royalton SB members stated their belief the town is moving in the right direction, with respect to getting the troublesome properties slowly cleaned up. Additionally, the ordinance enables the Health Officer to intervene on substandard housing as-needed. Loretta Stainaker indicated more than 15 junk cars have been pulled off the Digby property, and others are scheduled to be removed. The ordinance allows up to 4 unregistered vehicles on a property.

Joe Ronan inquired what the Town of Sharon could do to assist Royalton with its efforts. Dave Barker, Royalton SB member, indicated Royalton's new ordinance mirrors state statutes. Enforcement provisions allow the Town to work with landowners on mitigation measures before fines are assessed. This was in response to input from residents. He encouraged the Town of Sharon to adopt a similar ordinance.

Mary Gavin asked if there was a 'plan' for enforcement. Dave Barker responded the Town is starting with removal of cars. The trash on the property is not a public health issue. Loretta Stainaker reported she has not seen any rats. Chris Noble indicated the Town will next address waste water and septic problems on the properties. Tim Murphy explained the Town has to be careful not to 'act' for action's sake. He acknowledged the process of cleaning up the properties was painfully slow.

Vince Gross, Sharon resident on Harlow Road, commented that it appeared the Town was only applying the ordinance provisions to a portion and not all of the Digby property or picking and choosing which ordinance provisions to enforce. Chris Noble respectfully disagreed, noting the Town was opposed to potentially 'draconian' measures and wanted to act with 'deliberate urgency'.

Joe Ronan thanked Royalton SB members for their input and suggested that each town appoint a selectboard liaison on the Harlow/Broad Brook Road matter. SB members then acknowledged the frustration of neighbors and abutters listening in on the Zoom meeting. Chris Noble said 'we do hear your pain, and we ask that you give us a little more time'. Kevin Gish stated the problems really needed to be fixed and Sharon should consider adoption of a public nuisance ordinance. Tim Murphy stated he thinks other towns were watching how Sharon/Royalton work together on this matter.

5. FY22 Budget Preparations:

Budget preparation discussions continued with consideration of highway budget line items for wages/overtime, equipment, town garage overhead, and road maintenance. The budget scenario indicates no change in revenues over the prior year and no change in the amount to be raised in property taxes in support of highways.

The budget for overtime wages has been decreased, to better reflect Frank Roger's efforts to minimize overtime outside of the winter season. Fuel pricing was discussed. Replacement of the plow on Brad's truck was accounted for. Budgets for sand and annual top dressing

will remain unchanged. The budget includes a new line item to reflect a \$5,000 transfer out to a new town garage reserve fund. Deb Jones explained the funds could be earmarked for engineering assistance on plans for a new garage. Mary Gavin made the cautionary observation that the \$15,000 set-aside pushed the highway budget above the \$1 million mark for the first time.

Deb Jones indicated the current draft highway budget projects a FY22 year-end fund balance of \$71,000. Selectboard members indicated this seemed 'tight'. Deb Jones responded the projected combined year-end FY22 fund balance for general plus highway funds would be 25% of combined budgets – well above the level the Town's policy requires. She cautioned this positive position is predicated on staying within budget during FY21. Joe Ronan expressed overall support for the highway budget. Mary Gavin said she is concerned regarding the gap in the State budget. VLCT has indicated it would not support a 9% increase in the education rate.

Frank Rogers informed SB members Royalton is minus two crew members, and the labor pool for highway workers is almost non-existent. Many towns have vacancies on their crews. The SB began consideration of a cost of living increase, but suspended formal action until the next meeting. Deb Jones was asked to forward pay table information. Budget discussions will continue December 14th.

6. Highways: Sidewalks/School Street Plowing;

SB members reviewed a proposal from Chase Site Services to maintain sidewalks, plow School Street, the Town Offices and Baxter Library parking lots, and to clear town building entryways and ramps. **Mary Gavin made the motion to approve Chase Site Services bid to complete all work for \$620 per occurrence for the period December 15 - April 15, 2021. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

7. TSA Solar Project:

TSA representatives Dan Hudnut and John Roe met with SB members to further consider a proposed easement to TSA to run conduit under the access road as part of its solar project installation. The TSA has explored the option of torpedo drilling, and finds it to be a satisfactory approach. Dan Hudnut indicated the contractor could do the work the week of December 14th. The statutes, however, indicate the Town has authority to require a permit for such work within the town's highway right-of-way. After some discussions Joe Ronan suggested the SB approve the proposed easement and work out a process for obtaining a permit for the work.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the proposed Underground Line Easement Deed to Sharon Academy as presented. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8. OSH Bathroom Ventilation Bid Award:

Andrew Lane joined the SB meeting as the board further considered bids to install bathroom ventilation in the Old School House. Andrew commented that a bid from an HVAC contractor might be preferable versus bids from electricians. After further discussions SB members indicated their satisfaction with the bids in the range of \$3 - \$3700, whereas Alliance Mechanical had bid \$7,220.

Mary Gavin made the motion to accept the bid from Christian Electric for \$3,700 dated November 30, 2020 for installation of two exhaust fans, sensors, and ducts. Joe Ronan seconded. The motion carried 2-0-1, Kevin Gish abstaining.

Andrew Lane stated he wants to work with the Town on long-range capital plans for the Old School House building, inclusive of painting and siding.

9. **Racial Justice Issue in Sharon:**

Joe Ronan reported he had consulted the VT League of Cities and Towns (“VLCT”) and the Town’s attorney regarding Marcy Marceau’s prior statement that offering employee and officials training opportunities on anti-racism was outside the SB’s purview. Both the VLCT and town attorney indicated that offering training was within the Selectboard’s purview. Joe Ronan further reported the VLCT is in the process of exploring training programs. Marcy Marceau inquired as to who Joe Ronan had spoken with, and he agreed to provide those contacts to her.

10. **Extension of TRORC Planning Services Agreement re: Town Plan**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the extension to the planning services agreement with Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (“TRORC”) for preparation of town plan revisions. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

11. **Renew Brookfield Service Maintenance Agreement: Generator at Town Offices**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve Brook Field Services’ proposal for one annual servicing of the generator at the Town Offices for \$358 and to be paid by 12/31/20. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

12. **Coronavirus response/planning:**

Joe Ronan reported he had attended the recent Incident Command meeting. Keenan Haley has reported the Elementary School has been faced with imposing quarantine restrictions. Plans have been made for virtual learning as-needed. The school community is seeking contributions of stocking gifts. Watch for Keenan’s emails. Deb Jones has purchased two air purifiers for the Town Offices. The expense is to be charged to the LGER grant. She has also purchased an additional printer for the SB/Treasurer office to reduce the need to use the Town Clerk’s copier, thereby reducing the need for in-person contact.

13. Selectboard Assistant Reports:

Margy Becker indicated bids were due December 10th for technical assistance on revisions to the town's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which FEMA dictates must be revised every five years. The Plan expires in August 2021. Action on these bids will be scheduled for December 14. Margy Becker noted she must take vacation time prior to December 31st or lose the time. She will be taking two weeks off over the Christmas holiday.

14. Ashley Forest Ballot language:

To be acted on at the December 14th meeting. Joe Ronan will provide final language.

15. Ordinances:

Selectmen agreed to consider adoption of a public nuisance ordinance as suggested by Royalton Selectboard. Margy Becker agreed to forward materials describing the ordinance adoption process.

16. Review & Approve Minutes:

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the minutes of November 30, 2020 special meeting without changes. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the minutes of December 3, 2020 special meeting with one correction. Joe Ronan seconded. The motion carried 2-0-1, Kevin Gish abstaining due to absence from the meeting.

17. Approve Warrants:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the payroll Warrant for Period Ending 12/5/2020 for a cash draw of \$13,366.46. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1100 for \$6,722.71 with payments to **Cargill for \$3,822.47 for 55.23 tons of salt @\$69.21/ton, to **Compucount for \$162.05** for November payrolls, to **Consolidated Communications for \$328.62** for November phone charges for Town Offices & Garage, to **EC Fiber for \$79** for Town Office internet service, to **Evans Motor Fuel for \$1,064.31** for 2 diesel fuel deliveries, to **Foley Services for \$168.99** for 3 weeks of uniform service, to **Gatekeeper Lock & Safe for \$166.25** for repairs to the front door lock at Baxter Library, to **HP Fairfield for \$175.23** for plow parts for the F550, to **Indelible Inc.** for a progress payment of **\$317.11** for web development and assistance, to **Deb Jones for reimbursement for a \$438.67** printer purchased through Amazon for Margy's work station related to Covid safety. **Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.****

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1101 for \$9,152.65 with payments to **McCoy Diversified for \$1,333.05 for repairs to the Town Office heating system, **ATG Westminster for \$81.55** for parts for the Western Star, to **Pike Industry for \$785.84** for crushed stone for Cross Rd, to **Royal Auto for \$53.46** for shop supplies, to **So Royaltown Rescue for \$6,823.92** for December's payment, to **Welch's True Value for \$74.83** for paint & paint supplies, trash bags, and fasteners for the garage. **Mary Gavin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.****

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve AP Warrant # 1102 for \$1914.69 with a payment to the **Sharon School District for \$1,717.49 for 80% of the water project debt service (bank waived interest and admin fees due to Covid this year), and the **Valley News for \$197.20** for RFP for bathroom ventilation bid advertising. **Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.****

18. Adjourn:

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 9:15PM. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Submitted by, Margy Becker