

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
SPECIAL MEETINGS
TUESDAY February 16, 2021
MINUTES (FINAL)**

*This meeting was held in compliance with the Vermont
Open Meeting Law with Electronic and Telephonic Participation*

6:00PM EXECUTIVE SESSION:

The Chair called the *teleconference* meeting to order at 6:02 PM. Meeting Participants: Joe Ronan, Mary Gavin, Kevin Gish, Deb Jones, Frank Rogers

Kevin Gish made a motion to enter Executive Session with the Road Foreman and Finance Manager at 6:04PM for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter and a contractual issue. Second by Mary Gavin. The motion passed unanimously.

At 6:30 PM Mary Gavin made the motion to leave Executive Session. Second by Kevin Gish. Motion passed unanimously.

No decisions were made or actions taken upon exiting from executive session.

Motion to adjourn the teleconference meeting at 6:31pm by Mary Gavin. Second by Kevin Gish. The motion carried unanimously.

6:30PM SPECIAL MEETING:

Participating via Zoom: Selectboard members Joe Ronan, Mary Gavin, Kevin Gish; Frank Rogers (Road Foreman), Margy Becker (SB Assistant), Deb Jones (Finance Manager), Debra St. Peter (Town Clerk), Margaret Raymond (Treasurer), Ken Wright, Andrew Lane, TSA; Sarah Danley, Royalton (Four-Town Coalition).

1. Call to Order – Zoom Meeting as Warned:

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:35PM.

2. Review/Approve Agenda:

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the agenda. Mary Gavin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Highway Business:

Road Foreman Frank Rogers provided a report on the progress of plans for a small 8' x 13' office to be located on the mezzanine at the town garage. Johnathan Rugg, a structural

engineer, has provided an inspection and recommendations for proper support for the floor. Frank agreed to forward this report to the Board and staff. The crew will assemble a materials price list for the next meeting. Frank explained the purchase of plow edges. A salesman is coming to the garage this week to inspect the truck to be traded against the upcoming purchase, which has already been bid.

4. **2021 Certificate of Highway Mileage**

V.S.A. 19 Sec. 305 stipulates that ‘annually, on or before February 10, the selectboard shall file with the town clerk a sworn statement of the description and measurements of all class 1, 2, 3, and 4 town highways and trails then in existence, including any special designation such as a throughway or scenic highway’. Selectmen noted there was no change in town highway mileage compared to 2020. The current highway mileage being reported is as follows:

Class 1	0
Class 2	14.52
Class 3	33.09
State Hwy	16.167
Total Hwy	63.777
Class 4	6.62
Legal Trail	6.04

Mary Gavin made the motion to accept and sign the 2021 Certificate of Highway Mileage. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

5. **Coronavirus planning/updates:** *(reordered agenda item)*

The COVID19 Incident Command meeting scheduled for 2/15 was cancelled; the next meeting will be March 1st.

6. **Harlow Road Updates:** *(reordered agenda item)*

SB members reported having heard from the neighborhood that Jasper Digby had been arrested for an attempted break-in in East Barnard, and that he had already been released. The VSP website confirms the arrest and bail amount. Selectmen noted anxiety being expressed from neighbors. Kevin Gish reported one family has already moved, due to the ongoing situation. It was agreed SB members will once again contact state senators and representatives regarding the situation. SB members also discussed the need for provision of mental health services for repeat offenders.

7. **7:00PM The Sharon Academy re: Old School House**

Andrew Lane summarized TSA’s request to install a 40 ft. x 32 ft. tent behind the Lighthouse and Town Offices. The purpose of the tent is to provide COVID19 outdoor classroom space. The tent will be outfitted with two propane heaters. The tent is to be installed in early April and taken down during June 12 – 20th. Following discussions regarding safety of the propane

heat supply, provision of electricity and WIFI, insurance coverages, and related issues – the following SB action occurred:

Mary Gavin made the motion stating the Town will allow TSA Middle School to construct a 40 ft. x 32 ft. tent behind the Town Offices with a start date during the 1st week of April through June 12-20th. The TSA will be responsible for provision of electricity, WIFI, it will carry the appropriate liability insurance rider, and grass will be re-established. Joe Ronan seconded. The motion carried 2-0-1, with Kevin Gish abstaining.

Town Clerk Debra St. Peter inquired whether the Town could use the tent as a polling location. Andrew Lane stated the TSA would be happy to consider this request. Plans for snow removal in late March/early April to accommodate tent delivery were discussed and agreed to.

Brief discussions were held regarding short-term maintenance action items and items to be considered over the ensuing months, including OSH rental terms and potential sale of the OSH building to the TSA. TSA's current 5-year lease of the Old School House building to house its Middle School expires June 30, 2022. The TSA has recently financed major leasehold ventilation improvements as a result of a grant from Efficiency Vermont.

8. 2021 Town Meeting Preparations – cont.'

Joe Ronan reported he had received a recent call from Don Shaw, School Board Chair, who had inquired whether the Selectboard would reconsider its decision made on February 10th to move all Town Meeting business to Australian ballot. Don had indicated he was concerned about voter confusion. Margy Becker then reported the School Board is delaying its final decision on its annual school meeting format to its March meeting.

Selectmen noted in-person meetings allow debate on articles. Yet the downside of in-person town or school meetings could be lack of attendance as a result of people feeling unsafe. SB members agreed to adhere to their decision to press forward with Australian ballot voting on May 8th, in light of pandemic conditions.

Town Clerk Debra St. Peter explained her frustration at the Board's decision to move all May 8th Town Meeting business to Australian ballot, indicating she has had to rethink how she will hold elections. The Town Clerk takes minutes of the annual school meeting. She will now have to make arrangements to fulfill this responsibility to the school district, while voting is underway. She did acknowledge she could appoint another election official to mind the polls, while she attended the school meeting – should the School Board proceed to hold an in-person meeting that day.

It was noted that recent legislation regarding conduct of 2021 municipal elections (H.48) provides selectboards the authority to require a proactive mailing of Australian ballots to all registered voters. The current practice is for voters to request absentee ballots for early voting. SB members asked for Debbie's perspectives on a proactive mailing, which she then

shared. Debbie noted she thought school and town business could fit on one ballot. But preparing a mailing to all voters is a lot of work. She further noted many voters still voted in-person for the national election in November, despite having received absentee ballots in advance.

SB members inquired whether the State has agreed to pay for the cost of a proactive mailing. Debbie reported the State will pay for the cost of mailing ballots to all voters and programming of tabulators. But the State will not pay for the postage on return envelopes. In concluding discussions SB members noted its preference for a proactive mailing of Australian ballots to all voters, which reduces possible exposure to COVID-19. SB members agreed the voters will pay for the cost of the postage on return envelopes.

Kevin Gish made the motion, pursuant to H.48, to direct the Town Clerk to mail 2021 Town Meeting early voter absentee Australian ballots to all active registered voters. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

SB members decided against placing an article on the warning addressing the cannabis ‘opt-in’ choice. This item can be addressed next year. A draft warning will be considered March 1st. SB members also agreed to prepare a draft Selectboard town report for consideration at the March 1st meeting.

9. **VCRD 4-Town Americorps VISTA Position:**

Sarah Danley of Royalton, and Ken Wright of Sharon, joined the meeting as representatives of the Four-Town Coalition (representing Royalton, Sharon, Tunbridge, Strafford). The Four-Town Coalition was born out of 2018 community visioning meetings sponsored by the Vermont Council on Rural Development (“VCRD”) Community Visit Program. The Coalition is comprised of working committees focused on issues and projects around housing, economic development, food resiliency, recreation and natural resources.

Green Mountain Economic Development Corporation (“GMEDC”) has offered the Coalition the opportunity to utilize a full-time 3-year Americorps VISTA position. The costs to the community is \$6,000-\$10,000/year. The Coalition hopes to secure \$10,000 for the first year through contributions from member towns of \$1,000 each plus donations. General discussions were had about the focus of the position and supervisory responsibilities of GMEDC and the Coalition. SB members will further consider the Coalition’s request for funding at a future meeting.

10. **Finance Manager Reports:**

Deb Jones provided an update on February’s property tax collections. The Town has received approximately \$15,500 less in second payments than it did last year. But the current budget year-to-date numbers are favorable. Treasurer Margaret Raymond joined the meeting to express willingness to further discuss an investment policy at an upcoming meeting. Deb Jones agreed to present a draft RFP for Independent Auditors to the SB prior to issuance.

11. Selectboard Assistant Reports:

Margy Becker noted the SB will need to schedule its Australian ballot informational meeting or meetings within 10 days of Town Meeting on May 8th. She encouraged board members to consider how best to facilitate them, as they can be held virtually via Zoom.

12. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of February 1, 2021 as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the minutes of February 10, 2021 as presented. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Approval of Warrants:

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period January 31-February 13, 2021 with a cash draw of \$14,986.93. Mary Gavin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1124 in the amount of \$25,827.21 including payments to Patriot ATG (\$2,728.26), BCBS of VT (\$5,861.37) for health insurance premiums, Cargill \$5,658.26) for winter salt, Casella (\$90.86) for rubbish removal, Chase Site Services (\$4,500) for Sharhart Rd plowing, Compcount (\$479.60) for W-2 preparation, ECFiber (\$79) for telephone service, Evans Motor Fuels (\$2,775.68) for fuel, Evolution Edges (\$4,070) for plow edges, Eyemed (\$57.67) for premium expense, Fastenal (\$26.51) for shop expenses. **Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1125 in the amount of \$8,446.53 for payments to Foley Services (\$112.96) for uniform services, Granite State Glass (\$284.75) for garage window replacement, Vermont GreenUp (\$100) for FY21 contribution, Health Equity (\$344.04) HRA expenses, Maine Oxy (\$276.03) for acetylene, South Royalton Rescue (\$6,823.92) for Feb2021 invoice, The Herald of Randolph (\$62.93) legal notice expenses, Valley News (\$224.40) legal notice re: tax payments, Wyatt's Welding (\$217.50) for welding repairs. **Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1126 OSH for \$596.98 for payment to ARC Mechanical for boiler service at OSH. Mary Gavin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Adjourn:

Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn at 8:40PM. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by, Margy Becker