

SHARON SELECTBOARD
Regular Meeting
Monday, JUNE 7, 2021
6:30PM

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; Margy Becker (SB Assistant), Deb Jones (Finance Manager), Road Foreman Frank Rogers; Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk; Mike Chamberlain, Tom Battista, Claude Weyant, Windsor County Sheriff's Department; Residents Bill Kitchel, Susan Root, Ruben Sotak, Ashley Denk; Nathan Potter (Fire Chief).

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

1. Review/Approve Agenda:

Motion by Kevin Gish, second by Mary Gavin, to approve the agenda modified to add a meeting with Sharon Town Clerk to discuss a training proposal. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Comments:

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

3. Review/Approve Minutes:

Motion to Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of May 17 as modified, and the minutes of May 20 and May 24th as submitted and without changes. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Warrants:

Motion by Kevin Gish, second by Mary Gavin, to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period ending 6/05/21 and a cash draw of \$13,547.75. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve AP Warrant #1168 (Old School House) in the amount of \$4,325 for payments to Jack Jones Construction Inc. \$280.00 for 8 hours @\$35/hr for railing install, Town of Sharon \$4,045 to reimburse Town for OSH parking, ramp and entry snow clearing. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Kevin Gish, second by Mary Gavin, to approve AP Warrant #1170 in the amount of \$55,776.67 including payments to Community Bank NA \$47,140.23 (last payment on grader), Compucount \$176.50 (payroll service for May), Consolidated Communications \$264.99 for Office and Garage, D&D Excavating \$5462 for sand for FY21, Deb Jones \$120 to reimburse for a year of Docusign @\$10/mo, Econo Signs \$125.30 for safety clothing, Evans Motor Fuel

\$2,423.24 for 3 wks of diesel, and Eyemed Vision \$64.41 for vision insurance fully paid by employees. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve AP Warrant #1171 in the amount of \$2,734.84 including payments to Fastenal \$28.56 for masks, Fifield Electric \$2,052.20 for electrical and alarm work (new office area in garage), Foley Services \$112.96 for 2 weeks of uniform service, and Green Mountain Power \$541.12 (5 invoices for May/June). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Joe Ronan, second by Mary Gavin, to approve AP Warrant #1172 in the amount of \$9,944.84 including payments to Indelible \$2,952.99 for several invoices, Innovative \$4,151.96 for magnesium chloride, Kofile Preservation \$208.39 for lien book, Magee Office \$73.69 for office supplies, Pike Industries \$2,525.12 for 3/4 crushed stone, and Royal Auto Parts \$32.69 for 3 invoices for miscellaneous parts & supplies. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve AP Warrant #1173 in the amount of \$14,395.99 including payments to South Royalton Rescue \$6,823.92, Spaulding Press \$410 for election supplies, Suburban Propane \$547.98 for fuel, Twin State S&G \$47.97 for gravel, VMERS DB \$2,854.12 retirement fund contribution, and Windsor County Sheriffs \$3,712 for law enforcement services. **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve HRA Reimbursement Warrant for payment of 5 invoices from Further with ACH deductions totaling \$612.26. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kevin Gish, second by Joe Ronan, to approve AP Warrant #1174 in the amount of \$29,860 including FY21 appropriation payments to HIV/HCV Resource Ctr (formerly Acorn) \$300, Sharon Firemen's Association \$25,050.00 (2nd of 2 payments), Sharon Health Initiative \$3,000, Safeline \$700, VT Association of Conservation Districts (VT Rural Fire Safety) \$100, Vital Communities \$100, White River Partnership \$500, and to the USPS \$110 (stamps for office). **The motion carried unanimously.**

5. Finance Manager Reports:

Approval of FY21 Pay table:

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve the 2021 pay table dated June 7, 2021. The motion carried.

Winter sand purchasing & hauling:

Frank Rogers and Deb Jones reviewed the results of the bids for purchasing and hauling. The Town heard from D&D Excavating, Pike, and Twin State Sand & Gravel.

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to purchase approximately 3,100 cubic yards of winter sand from D&D excavating at \$7.85 per cubic yard (\$24,335) and to award the bid to haul from the D&D pit to the garage for \$7.00 per cubic yard (\$21,700), AND to purchase 2,100 tons of 'super grit' sand from Twin State Sand & Gravel at \$9.25 per ton for \$19,425

(Sharon crew to haul) for an estimated total expense of \$65,460. The motion carried unanimously.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA):

Deb Jones provided updates on what she has been learning about ARPA and the potential funding available to Vermont communities. The Town of Sharon will be categorized as a 'non-entitlement unit' of local government (NEU). NEU's are defined in section 603(g)(5) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, as local governments typically serving populations of less than 50,000. NEUs include cities, villages, towns, townships, or other types of local governments."

Deb Jones indicates the total dollars available for NEU's in Vermont is currently estimated to be \$58,788,245. The statute requires that all allocations to eligible governments be based on population. ARPA funds will rely on a per capita distribution using 2019 Vintage Census figures, which is a 1,530 population for Sharon. Deb estimates the Town could potentially receive \$160,000. She has not been able to confirm this amount yet. In addition to the NEU portion, Sharon should receive a portion from the amount dedicated to counties in Vermont. That appropriation formula is not available yet.

Deb explained the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) will play a major role in helping the State and municipalities with understanding and administering these funds. The VLCT reports that each Vermont city, town and village allocated funding will need to appoint an **authorized representative** that can go to the State's ARPA portal site to certify that: 1) that they wish to receive their allocation, 2) that they will meet the U.S. Department of Treasury's Non-entitlement Unit of Local Government Award Terms and Conditions, 3) that they will comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964), and 4) that their allocation does not exceed 75 percent of the unit of government's annual budget. At this point the VLCT believes an authorized representative refers to someone appointed by the municipality's governing body (selectboard, city council, village board of trustees) to undertake this certification process. The authorized representative does not have any known responsibilities aside from completing this certification process on behalf of the municipality. Deb Jones subsequently indicated she is willing to serve in this role. The Town will also need a contact person, and she offered to be that person.

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to appoint Deb Jones, Finance Manager, as the Town's representative and contact person pursuant to the American Rescue Plan Act. The motion carried unanimously.

Deb Jones then suggested the SB consider establishing a citizen's committee to explore ways to best utilize these funds and to advise the Selectboard. More discussions will occur on this topic at future meetings.

Windsor County Sheriffs' FY22 Contract Renewal:

Sheriff Michael Chamberlain and Captains Claude Weyant and Tom Battista met with Selectboard members. Joe Ronan described the Board's shared concern that the Town is under-funding law enforcement and its willing to hear suggestions for additional services that could be provided by the WCS. Of particular concern to the Board is the creation of a working relationship with a LE officer, more community policing, and increased surveillance and

enforcement of active drug cases and other low-grade criminal activities affecting the quality of life in town and on back roads. Discussions focused on how the WCS might amend the FY22 contract to meet these needs, inclusive of additional shifts in order to foster the relationship with one deputy the Board desires. It was agreed the WCS would consider the Board's comments and respond. The matter will be placed on the June 21st agenda for continued discussions and action.

6. **Sharon Fire Dept: Wildfire Prevention: White River WMA/Honey Brook Rd**

Nathan Potter, Fire Chief, restated his opinion of the need for improvements along Honey Brook Road (legal trail) to guarantee access for emergency vehicles to several dwellings now located there. He suggested the legal trail be reclassified as a Class 4 road. He also asked for the SB's assistance in drawing the State's attention to a significant blowdown of hemlocks, etc. on the Wildlife Management Area backing up onto properties served by Honey Brook Road. Ruben Sotak and Ashley Denk confirmed the existence of this blowdown. Ruben estimates approximately 800 ft x 1500 ft area of downed hemlocks. Ashley indicated the timing of the blowdown to have been approximately four years ago.

SB members noted the Town's highway policy would require landowners to pay for any upgrades to the legal trail. The Town would only maintain bridges and culverts, if the legal trail were upgraded to Class 4 status. This would not address corridor clearing of brush, which SFD is also suggesting.

Margy Becker reported she has yet to hear back from Tim Morton, Stewardship Forester for Windsor County, as to whether he is the right person to represent State interests in the discussions concerning wildfire prevention. Ruben Sotak suggested contacting Forester John McClaine, who may represent the Webster family retained logging rights. It was agreed the SB would contact Mr. McClaine and to continue discussions with VT ANR to clarify the State's representation for future discussions.

With the Chair's consent, Nathan Potter raised a concern not on the agenda. He explained SFD's interest in acquiring a new vehicle (a 'side-by-side') estimated to cost \$25,000. The vehicle is part of SFD's pre-plan for wildfire response. The SFD also needs a cold storage building, estimated to cost \$55,000, in order to clear equipment out of the Fire Station to make room for the new vehicle. Discussions followed regarding how the equipment purchase and building construction might be funded. It appears the Fire Equipment Reserve Fund established in 2002 by the voters is to cover only "purchases of fire-fighting equipment and vehicles". It was agreed these discussions would continue at a future SB meeting.

7. **Town Clerk Training:**

Cathy Sartor reported on Debbie St. Peter's proposal to provide further training for her as incoming Town Clerk. After brief discussions **Mary Gavin made the motion to authorize Debbie St. Peter to provide town clerk training for an amount not to exceed \$300 at a rate of \$30/hour. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

8. **7:40PM Highway Business/Road Foreman Reports:**

Frank Rogers provided brief reports and noted that all roads have been graded at least once.

Drum Heller Road Signage & Limits of Public ROW:

Margy Becker reported her research of town records confirmed the SB classified Drum Heller Road as a legal trail from Beaver Meadow Road through to State Forest Highway (#1). The upgrade of 1900 feet of the road to Class 3 was a later action of the Board's. This indicates the sign that has appeared along Drum Heller Road is in violation to several statutes assuring public access to the legal trail. The SB agreed a letter be sent to residents to inform them the town road crew will remove the sign, if it is not removed by the landowner who installed it at the advent of mud season. Bill Kitchel requested, and it was agreed, that the letter make it clear what the status of a legal trail is, should include a copy of relevant statutes, and should emphasize that civil fines may be assessed for placement of this misleading and unauthorized sign.

Dyer Road – site visit:

SB members declined further action, inclusive of a site visit, regarding a resident's request that the narrow Class 4 segment of Dyer Road be kept closed permanently. The Town currently closes it from November 30 through April 30. Susan Root reported the ambulance does use this section of road, when it is open. SB members agreed the Class 4 section will remain open except during the winter season. Mary Gavin suggested that perhaps a 'share the road' sign was warranted, to remind vehicles to yield to walkers and bikers.

Annual Financial Plan for Highways:

This item will be acted upon at the June 21st meeting. The Board has 60 days from Town Meeting when the highway budget is approved to file this report with VTRANS.

2020 Bridge Inspection Reports:

Margy Becker drew the Board's attention to bridge inspection reports from 2020 for four bridges in Sharon. Each year District 4 VTRANS office reminds its towns about these reports, which are no longer mailed and which are now accessed through the VTRANS Transparency portal. VTRANS staff inspect bridges in excess of 20 feet in length on a bi-annual basis. The reports include condition ratings and recommended maintenance activities. Margy Becker indicated copies of the inspection reports will be made available to the road crew, should they have difficulty printing them.

9. Approval of FY22 IRECSA Agreement (re: Regional Energy Coordinator):

SB members expressed concern that the Town did not get much back for its FY21 contribution. Though building assessments occurred in April, the report will not be made available until later in the summer. The configuration of towns in the compact is changing year-to-year. It was agreed the Board would approve the Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator Service Agreement (IRECSA) dated May 18 for one year and re-evaluate its commitment to the program next May.

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the May 18, 2021 version of the IRECSA Agreement for FY22. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Approval of FY22 Dispatch Agreement with Town of Hartford:

Mary Gavin noted the Agreement did not appear in the SB meeting packet in Dropbox. Action on this item was postponed to the June 21st meeting.

11. Vermont Inclusion Pronouncement and Juneteenth: consideration of Town Policy:

Joe Ronan asked the SB to consider a) consider how the Town might recognize Juneteenth, and b) to consider whether it is appropriate for the Town to adopt a policy, or policies, in keeping with the State's Inclusion Pronouncement.

Joe indicated Vermont is the 29th state to recognize Juneteenth (June 19). He thinks it has been designated as a state holiday, but that this needs to be confirmed. The State observance is on a Saturday. Deb Jones indicated the personnel policy indicates holidays that fall on a Saturday are observed on Friday. But employees do not work Fridays, since the offices are closed.

After further discussion **Joe Ronan made the motion to designate Juneteenth (3rd Saturday in June) as a town holiday. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

In later discussions regarding the State's Inclusion Pronouncement, SB members expressed interest in creating a policy which mirrors certain – but not all – provisions in the Pronouncement. More discussions will be held in the course of future meetings on the content of such a policy.

12. Unfinished business:

Margy Becker reported on the status of OSH repairs and maintenance items. She indicated uncertainty as to how to move the Baxter Library drainage project along. Keenan Haley has indicated the SB would be best served by consulting the SU's facilities management staff. Margy Becker will follow-up with Jacob Mayer regarding repairs to the Library front walkway.

There was no discussion or action regarding degradation of the condition of certain legal trails off Chapel Hill, Sugarhouse & Copperas Roads. SB members agreed to hold more in-depth discussions of a potential plan for 're-opening' consistent with any actions of the Governor to lift the emergency order.

Harlow Road reports included a comment that the two Digby brothers are currently in federal prison for the time being. Junk vehicles are being removed and a potential property sale may occur in the future.

13. Adjournment:

Motion by Mary Gavin, seconded by Kevin Gish, to adjourn at 9:08PM. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by,
Margy Becker