

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
August 2, 2021**

MINUTES (Final)

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

Participating via Zoom from Town Offices: Joe Ronan (Selectboard) Margy Becker (Selectboard Assistant), Frank Rogers (Road Foreman), Deb Jones (Finance Manager); Selectboard members participating remotely: Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin, Margy Becker; Public participating via Zoom: Margaret Raymond (Treasurer), Chris Pelletiere (White River Partnership), Kevin Eaton, Galen Mudgett (Lister), Nathan Potter (Fire Chief), Ira Clark (Planning Commission), Alex Bird (Health Officer), Mary Marceau.

Call to Order: The Chair convened the meeting at 6:30PM.

1. Review Approve Agenda:

Mary Gavin made the motion, which Kevin Gish seconded, that the agenda be approved without changes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Comments:

There were no public comments apart from agenda items.

3. Review/Approve Minutes of July 19, 2021:

Corrections were made to note those present and attending the meeting from the Town Offices. The Finance Manager approved her year-end financial reports as summarized. Meeting business then intervened, and further action to approve the minutes was suspended. The approval of the July 19 minutes will occur August 16th.

4. Approval of Warrants:

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1193 in the amount of \$18,580.00 for payment to Landmark Property Maintenance; second by Mary Gavin. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Joe Ronan to approve AP Warrant #1194 in the amount of \$2,157.91 including payments to ATCO International (\$100), Consolidated Communications (2 invoices \$288.17), NE Delta Dental (4 invoices \$467.64), Evans Motor Fuels (2 invoices \$1,042.25), Eyemed (\$64.61), Foley Services (3 invoices \$169.44), and Have Trash Will Travel (\$26). Kevin Gish seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1195 in the amount of \$6,181.83 including payments to Green Mountain Power (9 invoices \$501.33), Green Mountain Mowing (3 invoices \$1,267.50), Greater Upper Valley SW District (2 invoices \$4,313) and HCRS (\$100 annual appropriation). **Mary Gavin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Joe Ronan to approve AP Warrant #1196 in the amount of \$28,802.08 including payments to Indelible Inc. (annual subscription to Relavanissa for website \$199), Mascoma Bank (2018 truck loan \$12,633.38), Sabil & Sons (\$86.20), Sharon Fire Department (for 6 sets of fire gear \$15,800.53), Suburban Propane (\$10), and WB Mason (office supplies \$72.97). **Mary Gavin seconded. The motion to approve carried unanimously.**

Motion by Joe Ronan to approve the HRA Reimbursement Warrant for June 2021 in the amount of \$520.61 as resubmitted. **Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Joe Ronan to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period ending July 31, 2021 with a cash draw of \$13,093.49. **Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.**

5. Finance Manager Reports:

Approval of the new truck loan documents was postponed until the next meeting.

ARPA funds update: Deb Jones explained how the process for receiving and spending ARPA funds differs from other federal assistance programs. The ARPA is being passed through to state, county, local entities now and prior to the final regulations governing spending are in place. There are 4 general categories of eligible expenditures. The money is to be spent by 2026. The Town expects an \$80,000 year payment shortly, and another \$80,000 payment a year from now. The Town will also benefit from a Windsor County allocation. The SB agreed to give consideration about the formation of one or more citizens' committees to make recommendations for investment of these ARPA funds. Mary Gavin suggested the town wait until early 2022 to form the committees. Hopefully the expenditure guidelines will be finalized by that time.

Deb Jones mentioned the Town's independent auditors will want more information, when available, as to how Strafford and Sharon will manage the funds for the Ashley Community Forest.

6. Highway Business:

Frank Rogers discussed quotes for hard pack with the SB. Twin State has bid \$8.55/ton; Pike has bid \$8.50/ton. The Town will be purchasing approximately 5 – 7,000 tons and as the budget permits. The crew will haul.

Mary Gavin made the motion to accept Pike's low bid of \$8.50 per ton for ¾ inch hardpack and to authorize the Chair to sign the bid. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Frank Rogers reported on the progress of grant-funded construction projects related to stormwater infrastructure on Mosher Lane and Moore Road. He also indicated he is now working with the State F&W personnel to install beaver baffles on the culvert on Downer Road. If this does not work, the beavers will have to be trapped and removed. F&W personnel believe the food supply around the pond will be diminished within a few years, and then the beavers will not return. Chase Site Services has begun to haul winter brown sand. The crew will haul the 'super grit' material. Crack Seal bids are due August 12; action on those bids is scheduled for August 16th.

Mary Gavin reported she is monitoring the progress of the federal infrastructure bill and requested that the road crew prepare a list of projects to be considered for funding. Frank Rogers stated the concrete bridge at the bottom of Quimby Mountain Road is in need of replacement. This could be a potential project.

7. 2022 Tax Rate:

Lister Galen Mudgett reported he is basing his tax rate calculations on a FY2022 Grand List of \$1,658,231. This means each \$.0001 raises \$165.82.

At May 2021 Town Meeting voters set the amount to be raised in taxes at \$1,266,569. The municipal tax rate needed to raise those funds calculates to be \$.7639, which raises \$1,266,722.66. This is a rate decrease over last year of \$.0033 or 33 one-hundredths of a cent.

The amount needed to be raised for the Veterans off-set is \$4,023.36. The tax rate of \$.0025 raises \$4,145.58, which is a decrease of \$.0002 over last year.

Mary Gavin made the motion to set the municipal tax rate at \$.7639 and the Veterans off-set rate at \$.0025. Kevin Gish seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Galen discussed state education tax rates. The homestead tax rate of \$1.6764 is an increase of \$.1506 over the prior year, and the non-homestead tax rate \$1.6981 is an increase of \$.1081 over last year.

TOTAL homestead tax rate:	\$2.4428 (increase of \$.1475)
TOTAL non-homestead tax rate:	\$2.4645 (increase of \$1.053)

Galen reports the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) is currently 94.93, down from 102.39 in FY2021. He forecasts another drop in the CLA for next year.

8. Sharon Fire Department Storage Building:

Fire Chief Nathan Potter described the 24' x 30' storage building the SFD would like to construct behind the fire station for an estimated cost of \$15,000. The SFD is in the process of acquiring an additional vehicle for wildland fire and remote rescue operations. After discussions of 2018 research into permitting requirements, Margy Becker agreed to make final confirmation regarding stormwater and Act 250 permits. The proposed site is on an elevated bench and lies outside locally-regulated flood hazard areas.

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve SFD's request to construct a 24' x 30' storage building, pending final confirmation of the applicability of Act 250 and stormwater permits. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Nathan Potter asked for, and received permission from the SB, to move SFD Old Home Day tents and activities from the horseshoe pit and Park'n Ride to behind the Town Offices. The location behind the Town Offices is safer for pedestrians.

9. Animal Control Officer:

Alex Bird, Town Health Officer, met with SB members to review responsibilities of the Animal Control Officer. There is some overlap in duties between the two positions. Alex noted there are many legal processes to be observed when enforcing the Town's animal control ordinance. He expressed some uncertainty about his ability to provide temporary impoundment of stray dogs, as he is in the hospitality business. He agreed to continue to review the information sent to him and to report whether he would be willing to assume the role of ACO.

10. Sharon Dam Project:

Kevin Eaton, a long-time kayaker with knowledge of the White River, and Chris Pelletier of White River Partnership joined the meeting to further discuss Mr. Eaton's vision for a new paddlers' crossing at the old Sharon Dam. Mr. Eaton provided an updated report on the possibility of a private underwriter for the project. There is still the possibility that grant funds from Forest & Parks will need to be obtained to complete the project. But the VT Paddlers Club now is willing to be the potential grant applicant. Mr. Eaton reported he will be working with Doris Howe (Backus) regarding an easement across her property for access and parking.

Kevin Eaton reported the Town's assistance in financing the project may no longer be required. He inquired whether the SB would be willing to formally support the project, if the Town did not have to contribute any funds. SB members expressed support for the project, noting the need for more locations where the public can access the White River. Joe Ronan indicated he would like to see more information on the proposed easements. He expressed his support for the project, even if a modest Town contribution were required.

Kevin Eaton inquired whether a site visit will be helpful to SB members to better understand the project. SB concurred that it would. **A site visit (open to members of the public) was**

then scheduled for NOON on Sunday, August 8th. There is some parking available at the pull-off on northbound Rte. 14.

11. Administrative Officer position:

The SB is in receipt of a draft job description for an administrative officer position as requested. The SB Assistant currently provides administrative support to both the SB and Planning Commission. An increase in the number of subdivision applications has resulted in an increased demand for the SB Assistant's time on Planning Commission business. This means there is less time available for SB business. Margy Becker reported that the model job description was borrowed from another town that has no zoning and which has flood hazard and subdivision regulations in place. Should the Town of Sharon follow this model, the position of Flood Hazard Bylaw Administrator and SPC administrative assistant would be combined into one position.

SB members expressed appreciation for the draft job description, while also expressing some concern over the budget implications and timeline for creation of the position. The SB invited Planning Commissioner Ira Clark to share his insights into the nature of the business before the Planning Commission. Those discussions concluded with the consensus that Ira would raise the issue of bylaw administration at the August 10th SPC meeting. Selectboard members agreed to attend a SPC meeting during September.

Ira Clark noted the SPC's timeline for finalization of town plan revisions. The SPC will host a public information both/exhibit at Old Home Day on August 14.

12. Ashley Forest:

Kevin Gish reported the Ashely Forest negotiating committee will meet with the VT Land Trust this week to fine-tune the conservation easement. The easement will then be sent for legal review.

13. Coronavirus planning/updates:

The SB acknowledged the need for a larger meeting space for boards and commissions, as the pandemic era continues. SB members wondered if the Seven Stars Arts Center could be a suitable location. This option will be further researched. Nathan Potter reported the SFD is unable to accommodate both first and third Monday Selectboard meetings. The SB will also reach out to the SES to explore whether a classroom (i.e. the music room) may be available on Monday nights.

Mary Gavin reported the Town of Royalton is using a new device called The OWL for conduct of its remote/hybrid meetings. She encouraged town staff to contact Victoria Paquin and to observe the device in use.

SB members and staff discussed the latest news regarding the progress of the Delta COVID variant. The pros and cons of once again requiring masks upon entry to the Town Offices

were discussed. The SB heard public comments from Marcy Marceau, who encouraged the Board to move forward with allowing residents to conduct town business with a semblance of normalcy. Margy Becker reported the VLCT has guidance on the process to introduce mask mandates when no state of emergency exists. She will provide the VLCT information in SB packets for the August 16th meeting.

The process for collection of September property tax payments was discussed. The process agreed upon will be the same as last year. Residents will be advised to pay their property taxes in-person only as a *last resort*. Residents will be encouraged to pay online, by mail, and by deposit in the drop box behind the Town Offices.

14. Selectboard Assistant Reports:

Margy indicated she was to meet with Mike Blaise of Countryside Lock & Alarms the next morning. Mike will be asked to assess the Old School House fire alarm system and report on any violations of fire codes. The SB is in receipt of TASCOS's proposed upgrades to the system. Fifield Electric (which monitors the Town Offices fire alarm system) has already assessed the OSH system and reported it could not perform the work before school starts. Countryside Lock & Alarms will provide the additional quote needed to satisfy the Town's procurement policy. CL&A currently monitors fire alarm systems in the Old School House and Sharon Elementary school buildings.

Margy Becker provided status reports on State review of the Town's draft 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan. She has contacted Mike Tisdale with regards to computer upgrades for certain workstations. She is also waiting for Mike's confirmation that he will attend the August 16 meeting to discuss SB's concerns regarding cyber security.

15. Harlow Road:

There were no substantive reports on this matter.

16. Adjournment:

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

Submitted by Margy Becker