

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
REGULAR MEETING
October 18, 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: **Kevin Gish** (Selectboard), Margy Becker (Selectboard Assistant); Participating remotely via Zoom: Frank Rogers (Road Foreman), Deb Jones (Finance Manager); Joe Ronan (Selectmen) Mary Gavin (Selectmen), Will Davis, Sharon School Board; Sue Sellev, Sharon Historical Society;

Call to Order: The Chair convened the meeting at 6:35PM.

1. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

In-person attendance of Selectboard meetings: Mary Gavin noted it would be prudent for the SB to prepare a schedule of in-person attendance for upcoming Selectboard meetings. The open meeting law requires that one SB member or 'representative' be present in the Town Offices during electronic or 'remote' Zoom meetings. This enables the public to attend from the Town Offices as the need arises. Kevin Gish agreed to attend meetings in-person during the month of November. Joe Ronan will be present in Sharon Town Offices for December meetings. **Mary Gavin made the motion, which Kevin Gish seconded, to approve the agenda without changes. The motion carried unanimously.**

2. **Public Comments:**

There were no public comments apart from agenda items.

3. **Approval of Minutes:**

Motion by Kevin Gish, seconded by Joe Ronan, to approve the minutes of October 4, 2021 as submitted. The motion carried unanimously 3-0-0.

4. **Finance Manager Reports:**

Motion by Mary Gavin to ratify Board signatures and approval of the Payroll Warrant for the period ending 10/9/21 with a cash draw of \$13,088.01. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve AP Warrant #1220 (Downer Fund) in the amount of \$265.00 for payments to Pine Hill Cemetery Association for annual interest on investment income (\$180) and the annual fee to the probate court for Windsor County (\$85). **Second by Kevin Gish. The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1221 in the amount of \$18,980.32 including payments to ATG (\$408.79), BCBS (\$6,593.13), Casella Waste (\$42.86), D & D Excavating (\$9,482.80) for sand, Dave Phillips (\$50) for cemetery maintenance, DeLage Landen Financial (\$94.53) copier lease, and Evans Motor Fuels (\$2,308.21). **Mary Gavin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

Motion by Mary Gavin, second by Kevin Gish, to approve AP Warrant #1222 in the amount of \$3,284.73 including payments to Ferguson Waterworks (\$885.60) for culverts, Foley (\$175.44), Granite State Glass (\$695) door and windshield glass replacement, GMP (\$155.05), Green Mountain Mowing (\$845), Haun (\$223.61) and Kofile (\$305.03). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Kevin Gish, second by Mary Gavin, to approve AP Warrant #1223 in the amount of \$10,189.57 including payments to Magee Office (\$303.97), Mudgett Jennett & Krogh-Wisner (\$4,500) progress billing for the FY21 audit, Pike Industries (\$4,281.33), Royal Auto (\$129.86), Sabil & Sons (\$187.88), Suburban Propane (\$158.65), Tarrant Gillies et al (\$520) for legal services on behalf of the Planning Commission, and the Herald of Randolph (\$107.88). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Motion by Joe Ronan, second by Kevin Gish, to approve AP Warrant #1224 in the amount of \$7,302.09 including payments to Twin State Sand & Gravel (\$1,295.01), Valley News (\$149.60), WB Mason (\$286.98) for a new shredder, and Windsor County Treasurer for one-half of the FY22 bond payment (\$1,778) and for one-half of FY22 county taxes owed (\$3,792.50). **The motion carried unanimously.**

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the HRA Reimbursement Warrant for Sept. 2021 in the amount of \$354.92. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Selectmen are in receipt of financials for year-to-date FY22. Deb also reports the final audited FY21 budget numbers remained unchanged except for minor tweaks to revenue figures.

Employee Health Insurance for Calendar Year 2022:

Selectmen continued their review of Blue Cross Blue Shield plans to be made available to employees for Calendar 2022 renewal. Deb Jones presented her analyses of BCBS group plan options. Selectboard members discussed and agreed to the levels the Town would 'cap' its contributions towards off-setting the costs to employees of health insurance premiums and out-of-pocket expenses.

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the caps for 2022 employer contributions towards monthly premiums and annual HRA expense as follows:

<u>Plan Type</u>	<u>Monthly Premium Cap</u>	<u>Annual HRA Cap</u>
Single/Individual	\$660/month	\$2,000/year
Couple	\$1190/month	\$2500/year

Parent/Child	\$1150/month	\$2500/year
Family	\$1620/month	\$2700/year

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Deb explained the high-end plans offered by BCBS were not considered as renewal options, because employees have not selected them in recent years past. Among the 7 plan options the Town will make available to employees for 2022 are ‘standard’ and ‘select’ plans at the silver and bronze levels and ‘Vermont preferred plans’ at the gold and silver level. The 8th plan offering for renewal is the Blue Care 65 plan, which is a medicare supplemental plan. Premium costs for several plans have decreased over last year.

Mary Gavin made the motion to offer the Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans as summarized in Deb Jones’ spreadsheet analyses entitled “Health Plan Options Calendar 2022 10/18/21”. The motion was seconded by Kevin Gish and carried unanimously.

(The 10/18/21 spreadsheet of “Health Plan Options Calendar 2022” is attached to these minutes.) Deb Jones explained she is still researching how COBRA affects the Town’s obligation to fund an HRA.

Employee Wage Adjustments:

Selectmen reviewed two spreadsheet scenarios for across-the-board wage increases and impacts on the FY22 and FY23 budgets. Deb Jones noted the FY22 budget increases associated with either proposal remain less than the projected savings to be realized through reductions in the cost of FY22 employee health insurance.

Board members expressed support for a wage adjustment. Kevin Gish noted, and fellow Board members agreed, that an across-the-board wage increase is not a ‘merit’ award. The Selectboard will address rewarding performance via the traditional performance review process. The disparity in certain highway position hourly rates will also be addressed via separate board action.

Mary Gavin made the motion to accept Proposal #2 for a 5% wage increase effective November 1, 2021 for administrative, finance, and highway personnel. This proposal reflects a 3.5% wage increase for the FY23 budget. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Deb Jones concluded her reports by stating she is still researching Town Office telephone upgrades and will soon be able to present a revised cost proposal from Key Communications.

5. Baxter Library Parcel Drainage:

Road Foreman Frank Rogers, School Board member Will Davis, SES Principal Keenan Haley, and Seven Stars Board member Michael Barsanti joined Selectmen to discuss mutual interests in developing a proper drainage plan to collect and channel stormwater from the

three properties to a drainage inlet on Rte. 14. Stormwater and snowmelt shedding from the school property and parking area behind Seven Stars has caused library basement flooding.

An existing drainage plan prepared by Will Davis two years ago needs to be revised to better accommodate stormwater from the SES playground and Seven Stars' parking lot. Will Davis displayed his proposal for a revised plan which collects stormwater on the three parcels in swales and yard drains and channels the runoff into a 12" pipe alongside the library driveway and into a Rte. 14 drainage inlet. He stated the 12" pipe could most likely accommodate the addition of stormwater from Seven Stars' and playground. The Town has already procured the VTRANS 111 permit to connect the pipe to the Rte. 14 drainage inlet.

After some conversations regarding potential conflict of interest, it was agreed among the parties that an engineer other than Horizons is needed to prepare a final plan and bid specifications. Will Davis and Frank Rogers agree the engineer needs to perform a topographic survey to provide bidders a grading plan.

Options for sharing the costs of engineering services among the three parties were discussed. Michael Barsanti indicated the grant Seven Stars has received only covers the costs of collecting stormwater but not piping it out to Rte. 14. He expressed his hope that Seven Stars could connect to the 12" pipe. It was then suggested the School and Town consider splitting equally the costs of engineering services. Will Davis and Keenan Haley agreed to bring the matter back to the WRVSU and School Board for discussion and to report back at an upcoming Selectboard meeting. Allocation of future maintenance responsibilities of these drainage improvements has yet to be agreed to.

Will Davis inquired whether the Town intended to pave all of School Street, including the circle in front of the Elementary School. Selectmen indicated the project will be considered during FY23 budget development. Frank Rogers indicated more paving work is needed there than a shim and overlay. Will Davis also inquired about the Town's plans for a reassessment, and Selectmen suggested he contact the Listers to further discuss that matter.

6. FY23 Budget Preparation Schedule:

A timetable for budget preparation was briefly considered. The SB will add preliminary highway budget discussions to the November 1st agenda.

7. Highway Business:

Frank Rogers indicates that hauling is almost complete and the crew is now focused on preparing vehicles for winter. He requested that the costs to purchase an Ipad or tablet be researched. The State will require town crews to track and update culvert replacements and stormwater infrastructure upgrades.

Plowing and Winter Maintenance of Streets, Parking Lots, Building Entries: Chase Site Services is the one bidder for this contract. The need to potentially adjust the scope of work

for the contract was discussed. Frank Rogers indicated he had not planned to plow the school parking lot. Snow removal at the Historical Society building may needed to be added.

Motion by Mary Gavin to accept Chase Site Services' bid not to exceed \$745 per occurrence for plowing and winter maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and building entries as bid. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried.

Kevin Gish made the motion to authorize the Chair to sign the Better Roads grant requisition for Moore Road stormwater ditching and culvert upgrade. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to authorize the chair to sign the Grants-in-Aid requisition for Mosher Lane stormwater ditching and culvert upgrade. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Frank Rogers indicated Avery Construction had completed installation of the new cement culvert on Quimby Mountain Road, and he encouraged the Selectboard to commend Mike Avery on his work.

8. Cyber Security:

Margy Becker reported on her attendance at the VLCT Town Fair's cyber security workshops. Selectmen agreed to devote 45 minutes early in the November 1st meeting to discussions on this issue.

9. ARPA Funding: Public outreach

Plans were discussed for preparation and mailing of a survey and other means for soliciting public input on prioritization of ARPA funds. Selectmen agreed to host a public information meeting on ARPA funding on Tuesday, November 30.

10. Historical Society Building Painting:

Sue Sellew, who serves as a Trustee for the Historical Society, explained exterior painting of the door, trim, and windows of the Old Town Hall is badly needed. Selectmen agreed to add this work to the specifications for painting of town buildings to be bid in early winter 2022.

Margy Becker reported Joe Willis, who helps maintain the Green, is concerned about the health of the maple tree in front of the Historical Society. Selectmen suggested, and it was agreed, that she would consult Tree Warden Vince Gross about whether the tree needs to be cut down.

11. Liquor License Renewal– Inn at Idlewood:

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the application to renew the Inn at Idlewood's Third Class Hotel liquor license. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

12. 45-Day Notice: Proposed 100kW Expansion of Rte. 132 Solar:

The Town and Planning Commission have been put on notice by Norwich Technologies of its intent to install additional solar panels within the approved limits for the solar array on Rte. 132. NT will be requesting an amendment to its Certificate of Public Good. It intends to submit that application to the Public Utilities Commission in late November. The Town has until that time to submit comments on the proposed expansion. Kevin Gish expressed support for the 100kW expansion. Mary Gavin indicated her only question was whether or not this expansion should affect the provisions of the Decommissioning Plan negotiated between NT and the Town. Selectmen agreed to invite a representative of NT to an upcoming meeting to talk about the project.

13. Ashley Forest:

A joint meeting with Strafford Selectmen to review and discuss the final proposed conservation easement and inter-local agreement has been scheduled for 6PM October 25th at the Justin Morrill Education Center in Strafford. Approval and adoption of these documents by both Selectboards is essential for creation of the two-town community forest.

14. Coronavirus planning/updates:

Selectmen reaffirmed the Board's position that employees who are sick should stay home and use their sick time. Sick time can apply to COVID quarantining until testing is completed, including absence from work the day of the tests.

15. Harlow Road:

Kevin Gish noted Jim Beraldi continues to work for WCS. Follow-up is needed to confirm the lead deputy on Harlow Road issues.

16. Executive Session (Personnel):

Mary Gavin made the motion to enter Executive Session at 9:19PM to discuss a personnel issue. Margy Becker was asked to attend. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously. The Board exited executive session at 9:30PM. No formal action was taken subsequently.

17. Adjournment:

Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn at 9:30PM. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by Margy Becker