

**Sharon Selectboard
SPECIAL Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2021 (Final)**

This meeting was held in compliance with the VT Open Meeting law for electronic meetings with remote and in-person attendance.

Attending In-Person from Sharon Town Offices: Margy Becker, Selectboard Assistant;
Attending remotely via Zoom: Selectmen Kevin Gish and Mary Gavin; Finance Manager Deb Jones; Road Foreman Frank Rogers; Absent: Joe Ronan, Selectboard Chair.

Kevin Gish convened the meeting at 5:23PM;

1. Approval of Agenda:

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the agenda as submitted. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Approval of Warrants:

Mary Gavin made the motion to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period of 10/24-11/6/2021 with a cash draw of \$13,873.34. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Kevin Gish made the motion to approve AP Warrant #1230 in the amount of \$69,340.47 including payments to Avery Excavation Inc (\$68,161.00) for the Quimby Mountain Road box culvert project and Key Communication (\$1,179.47) for 50% deposit for the new phone system for the town offices and garage. **The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.**

3. FHWA Funding Status: Rte. 132 Box Culvert

Selectmen met with town staff to discuss new challenges imposed by FHWA for its continued funding of the culvert upgrade on Rte. 132. The culvert is under-sized. Stormwater ‘over-topped’ it during the July 1, 2017 storm and caused washouts and pavement damage for the second time in recent history. VTRANS District 4 has provided the Town technical assistance for bidding FHWA projects. Since 2018 District 4 has undertaken in-house design and permitting work to help the Town bring this project to construction.

But in a status conference last week, VTRANS personnel informed Frank Rogers and Margy Becker the FHWA has ‘raised the bar’ for continued funding for projects which are 4 years out from the storm event and have not gone to construction. FHWA now indicates the project must be ‘shovel-ready’ by August 2022. FHWA will also require certification of all design and permitting work by a professional engineer. A municipal project manager will be required in addition to a construction/inspection engineer.

These requirements cause sizable increases in project costs. The funding ratio, however, remains 90% (state/fed), and 10% local share. Permanent repairs are now estimated at \$550,000. The projected local match is \$55,000.

VTRANS has informed town staff the Town will be eligible for expedited procurement of a Design Engineer and Municipal Project Manager through the VTRANS 'at-ready' consultant selection process. The MPM will be responsible for overseeing all phases of project development, which takes the pressure off town staff who lack such expertise. The Town will still have a 'project liaison'.

There is uncertainty about the availability of FHWA funds for this project beyond August 2022. But it is hoped by then the Town will have a project that could be bid and funded through another grant program, should FHWA funds disappeared.

Frank Rogers, Road Foreman reported there are other culvert projects which are of concern to him. He indicated an under-sized squash pipe on Downer Road needs to be replaced this year. A short span bridge at the bottom of Quimby Mountain Road also needs repairs. Margy Becker stated she thought the Downer Road culvert replacement costs would be more in line with the VTRANS Structures Grant program, which has an increased maximum funding limit of \$200,00.

Selectmen shared concerns about the uncertainty of continued availability of FHWA funds for the construction phase of the project and whether achieving 'shovel-ready' status by August 2022 is achievable. Discussions concluded with a cautious agreement to accept the revised DDIR, and to pursue continued FHWA funding.

Motion by Mary Gavin to accept the revised D4-FAS0177-16 DDIR (Rev. 1) in the amount of \$550,000 in permanent repairs, an estimate of \$90,500 in emergency repairs (completed in 2017) for a revised DDIR total of \$640,500 and to authorize Deb Jones to sign. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Adjourn:

Mary Gavin made the motion to adjourn at 5:50 PM. The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Submitted by Margy Becker