

**Sharon Selectboard
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 6, 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: Selectboard member Mary Gavin; Special Assistant to the Selectboard Nicole Antal; Attending remotely via Zoom: Selectboard Members Joe Ronan and Kevin Gish; Finance Manager Deb Jones; Road Foreman Frank Rogers; Selectboard Assistant Margy Becker; Town Clerk Cathy Sartor; Baxter Memorial Library trustees Stephanie Davis, Kit Hood, Emma Basham, Marian Weatherbee, and Mary Stoddard; Municipal Project Manager on the FHWA Rte 132 culvert project Rita Seto; Energy Committee member Ryan Haac; Sharon Fire Department Captain Tom Lober; Sharon Resident Vince Gross; 4-towns coordinator Meghan Asbury, Sharon Resident Sue Sellew.

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

1. Approval of Agenda:

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

2. Public Comments:

Vince Gross inquired about new development on Harlow Rd, as he has witnessed increased traffic in the past few weeks. Joe Ronan was tasked to contact Chris Noble to schedule a meeting, but there hasn't been any response. Joe Ronan will pursue again. Ronan hasn't heard of any new development on the Royalton side. Kevin Gish called and left a message with VSP but never heard back from them. He will contact VSP again to inquire about any new development and will share Vince's comments about increased traffic. Mary Gavin suggested to Kevin Gish to contact the VSP to ensure that these locations are on the radar for the Vermont Drug Task Force, and to keep pushing that information to them. Joe Ronan and Mary Gavin suggested that it might be also beneficial to schedule another Joint Special Meeting with the various parties to this issue.

3. Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting with Strafford on October 25, 2021. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of November 15, 2021 without changes. Joe Ronan seconded. Kevin Gish absent from the meeting (internet disconnection). Motion carried 2-0-0.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of the special meeting of November 30, 2021 as amended. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Warrants:

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve AP Warrant #1241 in the amount of \$8,011.07 including payments to Alta Material \$207.50, Bethel Mills (Central Supply) \$65.11, Blaktop \$223.44, Casella Waste \$63.09, Compucount \$179.44, Consolidated Communications \$216.76, D&D Excavating \$5102.50, EC Fiber \$79, Evans Motor Fuels \$1874.23. Kevin Gish seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1242 in the amount of \$1,3479.36 including payments to Ferguson Waterworks \$9044.00, Foley Services \$229.92, Have Trash Will Travel \$26, HP Fairfield \$171.74, Magee Office Products \$216.80, NE Truck Tire \$3790.90. Mary Gavin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Motion by Joe Ronan to approve AP Warrant #1243 in the amount of \$1,543.24 including payments to NEMRC \$778.99, Royal Auto \$20.82, Sabil & Sons \$53.62, Sanel Auto \$12.52, Tyler Wight Heating \$372.35, VLCT UI Employment Resources \$271, WB Mason \$33.94. Kevin Gish seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve AP Warrant #1244 in the amount of \$7,062.78 including payments to Chase Site Services \$3959.00, VMERS DB \$3103.78. Kevin Gish seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

5. Finance Manager Reports

Deb Jones gave an update on the phone system being set up for the Town Offices and Garage.

6. Highway Business/Road Foreman Reports

Frank Rogers shared that morale is ok and that it has been a busy few days. Rogers met with Mike Clark to review the concrete bridge below Mountain Avenue on Quimby Mountain Road on December 4. Clark inspected the bridge and told Rogers he is confident the bridge is structurally safe and sound. He has no concerns about the bridge, and he concurred that the wing walls need to be replaced. Margy Becker will inquire about Mike Clark's qualifications and if he is certified for bridge inspections. Gavin suggested it might be a good idea to have the bridge officially certified.

Rogers talked about the different rate of salting between VTrans and the Town. VTrans tends to salt the roads they service at 300 lbs of salt per mile, sometimes 500-600 lbs on interstate and heavy storms, Rogers and his team put between 150-250 lbs, and adjust based on condition with safety at the forefront of their decision. Gish thanked Rogers for minimizing the use of salt on Town roads.

MOU with Sharon School District: Plowing SES Parking Lot

Margy Becker received an MOU from the School Board for the plowing of the SES Parking lot. The MOU states it is for one season, through April 1, 2021. The School is requesting the threshold to be 2 inches, for the lot to be cleared by 7 am for overnight storms, \$90 per snow event reimbursed by the School District, with a minimum of \$2500 for the season: Margy Becker thinks all is ok. Rogers wanted clarification on snow storms during school days: snow clearing during school days will take place after the parking lot is substantially clear of vehicles. Margy Becker will check if the 2 inches the School has in the MOU aligns with the contract the Town has with Chase Site Services.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the Snow Removal Agreement between Town of Sharon and the Sharon School District pending the review that the definition of snow events align with the contract the Town of Sharon has with Chase Services, and authorize the Chair to sign. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

FHWA Rte. 132 Culvert: Select Design Engineer

Rita Seto, designated Municipal Project Manager on the FHWA Rte 132 culvert project, updated the Board on the proposals she and Margy Becker worked on. In the end, after a selection process including review of staffing capacity and a ranking system, Rita Seto is recommending the **Stantec** proposal. They have done a lot of box culvert projects, their proposal was clear and concise, and their assurance of 100% staffing capacity for this time-constrained project. Rita Seto explained to the Board that the review process only covered the qualification of the firms, now the next step is to ask the company chosen to provide the scope of work and financial aspect of the project and start negotiation. Gavin asked if there was a scenario where there is no meeting of the minds between the town and the other party involved. Rita Seto thinks it's unlikely, as the firms understand the Town's need and budget constraint. Gavin shared her dissatisfaction with the process, of having to accept a proposal based on solely qualification without a scope of work or financial figure.

Kevin Gish made a motion to accept the project selection committee's recommendation to engage Stantec as design engineer. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Request from Green Mountain Power for Pole, Guy Wire Locations: Moore Road

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the notification of pole and wire location for Moore Road. Joe Ronan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

7. FY 23 BudgetSharon Fire Department:

Deb Jones noted the SFD budget proposal has been included in the draft budget. SB members agreed to further discuss and reach out to Tom Lober if questions arise.

Baxter Memorial Library:

The Baxter Memorial Library Trustees presented their proposed budget and justifications for their request. Mary Stoddard described the library as a tremendous community asset and she noted the increased level of services. Emma Basham shared information regarding library hours of operation in towns of similar population and budgets. Trustees are asking for an 18.8% increase of approximately \$7,300, which is mainly for the proposed increase of wage and hours of the librarian. They would like to start paying the librarian a livable wage of \$22 an hour and increase librarian hours to 28 hours per week. They are also looking to increase the line item for Adult books to what it was prior to the pandemic (it was \$2000, decreased to \$1650, they would like to increase it back to \$2000). Kit Hood and Stephanie-Gergley Davis noted the great community programs sponsored by the BML.

Kevin Gish noted his appreciation for all the background information and inquired about COVID contingency plans. Mary Gavin noted the budget increase was very high, and she asked the Trustees to come back with another proposal. She further indicated this is a year when other departments in Town are also in need of money. She inquired if Trustees could perhaps spread their budget increase over more than one year. Kevin Gish indicated Trustees should not toss out this initial proposal yet. In concluding discussions, the Selectboard asked Trustees to return with a counter-proposal at the December 20th or early January meeting.

8. Town Clerk Land Record Updates

Cathy Sartor shared progress of her research on digitizing the land records for the Town of Sharon. Land Records from 2015 until now have been scanned, and Cathy has been scanning and indexing documents prior to 2015. She indicated that based on her research, COTTS software seems to be the best choice for Sharon. Mary Gavin indicated that this project would probably qualify for ARPA funding, and a fully-formed proposal would need to be written to see how much of ARPA funding we could capture. Mary Gavin and Kevin Gish indicated that this will need to go through the formal bidding process. Procurement procedures might need to change based on ARPA funding requirements. The Selectboard thanked Cathy for her work on the issue and for joining the meeting.

9. 4-Towns Coordinator: Status Reports

Megan Asbury, Americorps Vista staff, presented updates to the Selectboard:

4-Town Committee Updates:

Conservation & Recreation: Ashley Community Forest was officially accepted by Sharon and Strafford; updated the board on trails work; collaboration between 4-towns conservation commissions.

Economic Development: the North Tunbridge and Tunbridge stores are being reopened.

Community Development: Megan is working with Nancy Lerow and Becky Bailey from Vital Communities to have a chapter of "Vermont Welcome Wagon" in this region, which is an initiative to keep young people, workforce age, in Vermont by creating strong communities around them. They are hoping to launch the Upper Valley chapter sometime in

January. Tunbridge is discussing a community nursing need and will be looking at what Sharon has done. This might potentially be something the 4-towns could collaborate on. Coalition structure: the group has been presented with some structural proposals to move forward, non-profit or being adopted by an existing entity (AVC or BALE, or similar entities.) These proposals will be presented to the entire coalition in late January.

10. EEI Baxter Library Proposal

Ryan Haac and the Selectboard discussed the EEI Baxter Library proposal, and they are not looking to pursue or accept this proposal. The Selectboard members all agreed that the proposal was not a good fit. Mary Gavin confirmed that the audits were free and were not committing the Town to accept a proposal. Ryan Haac will seek guidance from Geoff Martin regarding preparation of an RFP for updating the Baxter Memorial Library heating system.

11. Approval of 2022 Brook Field Annual Service Agreement (Town Offices Generator)

Margy Becker reports the costs associated with generator annual maintenance plans from Brook Field Service are up 3% from the prior year. Last year the Selectboard selected the less expensive option of one maintenance visit. Deb Jones asked if it would be prudent to accept the option of two maintenance visits, as the monthly oil checkup is not being regularly done at this point. Mary Gavin asked if the Road Crew could do an oil check every month. Kevin Gish doesn't think it is necessary, as it is not running constantly, and will therefore not burn that much oil. Kevin Gish offered to call Brook Field, as he is somewhat familiar with generators. He will ask about monthly oil changes and the Vermont State inspection. He will ask about details on the difference between the two annual maintenance programs offered. Formal action on the annual service agreement was postponed.

12. Approval of Hartford-Sharon EMS Agreement 2021-2022

Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the interlocal agreement for emergency response with the Town of Hartford Fire Department for services from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022, with a per capita fee of \$35 per person and a \$175 per response fee on I89 in Sharon. Kevin Gish seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

13. Ashley Community Forest:

Kevin Gish noted final documents remain in legal review.

14. Opioid Settlements; update as needed

No update

15. Selectboard Assistant Reports

No further updates.

16. Coronavirus planning/updates

No updates.

17. Harlow Road - updates

(refer to agenda item 2. Public Comments)

18. Tentative agenda & Town Office coverage for next meeting

Selectboard members agreed to hold a special meeting on Monday December 13, at 6:30 pm to discuss the budget only. Joe Ronan will attend the special budget meeting in-person from the Town Offices.

FY23 Budget discussions-Cont.?

Deb Jones shared her findings through VLCT about wages for her position for the Selectboard to budget for her replacement. She thinks budgeting a range around \$55,000 for the finance department to offer some flexibility in the hiring process and management of the position. Mary Gavin suggested to Deb Jones to put more money towards building infrastructure, around \$30-35. Mary Gavin suggested that wages for the Administrative + Finance Department be increased in the proposed budget to anticipate the changes in those departments. Ronan agrees with those suggestions to be reviewed at the Special Meeting of Monday Dec. 13 meeting, at 6:30 pm.

19. Adjourn

Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn at 8:34PM. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Submitted by Nicole Antal