

## SHARON SELECTBOARD

Sharon Town Offices - 15 School Street, Sharon, VT

### Special Meeting

Virtual Meeting held on Zoom

Tuesday, January 18, 2022 - 6:30PM (FINAL)

**Attending remotely:** Selectboard members Mary Gavin, Joe Ronan and Kevin Gish; Finance Manager Deb Jones; Road Foreman Frank Rogers; Selectboard Assistant Margy Becker; Town Clerk Cathy Sartor; Special Assistant to the Selectboard Nicole Antal; Town Treasurer Margaret Raymond; Resident Carol Langstaff; Energy Committee member Ryan Haac; Regional Energy Coordinator Geoff Martin; Sharon PTO member Angie Carpenter; Library Trustees Mary Stoddard and Marian Weatherbee; Planning Commission member Ira Clark.

The Chair convened the meeting at 6:31 pm.

### **1. Review/Approve Agenda**

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

### **2. Public Comments**

None

### **3. Review/Approve Minutes: 1/3/22 regular meeting**

**Motion by Mary Gavin to approve the minutes of January 3, 2022 without changes. Joe Ronan seconded. Motion carried. (Kevin Gish absent from voting due to brief internet disconnection).**

### **4. Approve Warrants**

**Motion by Mary Gavin to approve AP Warrant #1256 in the amount of \$28,219.27 including payments to ATG Westminster \$87.67, BCBSVT \$4,700.20, February Cargill \$7,317.83, Catherine Sartor reimbursement \$37.09, Chase Site Services \$3,900.00, Community Bank NA \$12,000.00 (loan payment), and Compucount \$176.48. **Kevin Gish seconded. Motion carried unanimously.****

**Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1257 in the amount of \$4,637.84 including payments to DeLage Landen Financial \$94.53, EC Fiber \$557.24, Evans Motor Fuels \$3,986.07. **Mary Gavin seconded the motion.** Deb Jones showed and explained the details of the EC Fiber bills that had errors and the credits that were added to the Town account. **Motion carried unanimously.****

**Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1258 in the amount of \$1,880.37 including payments to Foley Services \$173.79, HP Fairfield \$1,429.30, Identification Source \$120.76,**

Magee Office Products \$122.64, Royal Auto Parts \$33.88. **Mary Gavin seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Joe Ronan to approve AP Warrant #1259 in the amount of \$5,357.07 including payments to Sabil & Sons \$17.55, Studio Nexus Arch \$631.25, Suburban Propane \$1305.73, Tasco Security \$602.00, Treasury Operations Division \$130.00, TRORC \$2,478.00, USPS \$124.00, Valley News \$30.60, Viking \$37.94. Kevin Gish seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Joe Ronan to approve AP Warrant #1260 in the amount of \$10,690.22 including payments to VT Recreational Resurfacing \$4,121.00 (to replace guardrails), Welch's True Value \$55.43, Windsor County Sheriff \$4,814.00, Worksafe \$1,699.79. Kevin Gish seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1261 in the amount of \$1,937.24 including a single payment to TRORC \$1,937.24 for Rita's work on the Rte 132 FHWA project. Mary Gavin asked why the Town is being billed even though continued FHWA funding was denied. Deb Jones and Margy Becker explained that the Board signed a contract for their services, and Becker confirmed there will be no more invoicing from TRORC for this work. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Kevin Gish AP Warrant #1263REC in the amount of \$485 (from the Rec Fund) including a payment to Big Green T's \$420 basketball shirts and Jennifer Alden \$65. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Kevin Gish to approve AP Warrant #1262 in the amount of \$2,797.20 including a single payment to the OSH account for \$2797.20. Margy explained that this is for Sharon Academy reimbursement for 10% match for Efficiency VT rebate on lighting & boiler controls work at OSH, not to exceed \$3,000. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Kevin Gish to approve HRA Reimbursement Warrant for December 2021 for \$684.30. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Motion by Mary Gavin to ratify the Payroll Warrant for the period ending January 15, 2022 with a cash draw of \$14,947.27. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

##### **5. Highway Business/Road Foreman reports:**

Frank Rogers reported two trucks have issues. One may be fixed the following day, as he thinks it is just a hydraulic leak. Frank is waiting to hear from ATG for repairs to the other truck (Allen's truck). They are both in the garage.

Frank reported that the snowstorm was much needed to insulate the ground, as a lot of ice has started forming on the roads. There is a buildup of ice on Rte. 132, and the road crew will work on it. Kevin said no one has called him to complain about the roads. Joe Ronan mentioned that there are good comments on the Facebook page about the roads.

## **6. Finance Manager Reports & YTD Financials:**

Deb Jones asked the Board to consider allowing her to adjust a number in the Highway Budget Report to include a line that she missed when budgeting for the new truck. She is suggesting that net expenses do not change. She proposed to take \$500 from each of the line items for the 5 pieces of equipment and move the \$2500 to the Western Star for FY23. The budget figure approved for the Town Meeting Warning will not change. Selectmen agreed with her request.

Deb usually has two pages for budget notes in the Town Report. This year she will have one page for budget notes and one page dedicated to ARPA Funding (now called SLFRF). She is assuming that people will want to know what ARPA funds have been received, what is planned to be collected, and where the money is (and that nothing has been spent). She will add a notice to taxpayers that the Selectboard will look for input and where to look for information to attend ARPA informational meetings.

Resumes have been received and shared with the Selectboard for the positions of Finance Manager and Administrative Assistant. Interviews will be scheduled.

## **7. Carol Langstaff Inquiry re: ARPA Funding relevance to the arts:**

Carol Langstaff inquired about the progress the Selectboard has made on ARPA funding. Joe Ronan replied the Town has not prioritized how to spend the funds at this point. The public will be invited to share ideas of what the money could be used for. The meeting is scheduled for February 10th. Carol shared her hope that the Arts will be supported, as art venues were the first to close to protect the health of the community. Seven Stars would like to create an outdoor venue. The Selectboard thanked Carol for her comments.

## **8. Town Clerk Land Records Digitization Proposals & Bid Award:**

Cathy Sartor shared the proposals she received in response to the Land Records Digitization RFP. She reviewed 3 proposals with Selectboard members. Cathy stated she is recommending awarding the bid to COTTS. Mary Gavin asked if there was money in the budget for this project. Cathy Sartor explained the project is eligible for ARPA funding, and that is how many towns are digitizing records. Deb Jones suggested that the Selectboard could prioritize this project, as they have money in the Record Preservation Fund. There is a fund balance of approximately \$22,000 for that fund.

Joe Ronan asked which proposal Cathy thinks is best suited to the Town for the long-term. Cathy indicated as far as safety and security concerns COTTS is housed in a data center. COTTS is also innovating and bringing more services on-board that the Town could use going forward. And more importantly from the health and safety perspective, digitization of records for online access reduces the number of people that come into the vault. Deb suggested that should the project move forward, money could be pulled from ARPA Fund now. The Town has currently received \$228,678.

**Mary Gavin made a motion to award the bid to COTTS Systems in the amount not to exceed \$19,000 for the purpose of digitizing the Sharon land records and related documents per the Town Clerk's RFP. Joe Ronan seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **9. Sharon Town Plan – status report from DRB/SPC:**

Ira Clark shared that the Sharon Planning Commission has been working on the rewrite of the 2015 Town Plan. They are in the final stages, but it will take a few months to finish revisions. The Planning Commission met informally last week with Black River Quarries. They are interested in developing an undeveloped portion of their property in a fairly significant way. Black River Quarries approached the Planning Commission to see if their project would be compatible with the Town Plan. The other Commissioners and Ira mistakenly believed a Town Plan was in effect and that either the original 2015 Town Plan had been readopted by the Selectboard in early 2020 or that the 8 years' rule governing the applicability of Town Plans meant the 2015 was still in effect.

Ira stated he had recently met with Kevin Geiger and Victoria Littlefield (TRORC) to clarify the status of the Sharon Town Plan. TRORC staff confirmed the 2015 Plan has expired. It was adopted prior to the existence of the 8-year rule. Ira noted his recollection is that the 2015 Plan was supposed to be considered by the Selectboard in February/March 2020, which is when COVID happened. It is possible, according to TRORC, to adopt a plan that has expired with a single hearing and a waiting period of not less than 30 days, provided that substantial changes are not made to the document. This would not require Regional Planning Commission approval either.

Kevin Gish asked where the Planning Commission stands on the new Town Plan. Ira said they have read through revisions to each chapter, and the SPC probably faces another few months of meetings before the revised plan is finalized for public hearings. Joe Ronan asked if the readoption of the 2015 Town Plan would have an adverse affect on the Black River Quarries' proposal. Ira said that readoption could probably have an adverse affect as far as BRQ's interests went. Joe Ronan suggested the Town's attorney be consulted regarding the readoption process and its implications on any impending Act 250 application, while members of the Selectboard take time to think about the course of action they want to take. Selectboard members thanked Ira Clark.

### **10. Baxter Library Heating System Replacement Bid Specifications:**

Geoff Martin shared the RFP he and Ryan Haac have prepared for replacement of the Baxter Library Heating System. The RFP specifications are designed to get the building completely off fossil fuels with installation of a ducted heat pump system. The key features of this RFP are as follows: 1) getting rid of the oil-fired furnace and oil tank; 2) installation of a ducted heat pump system, which uses less refrigerant than a ductless system; 3) the base bid: backup electric resistant heat, to only operate during the coldest days of the year when the ducted system doesn't function. There will be controls on that system to avoid for it to run when not needed.

The RFP offers a few bid alternates as follows:

The first bid alternate would add an option for energy recovery ventilator to improve indoor air quality. The second bid alternate would give an option to add a zone in the basement to provide a second thermostat. The third alternate is to propose a different backup system in the basement. This is a choice for each contractor to propose to forego the electric resistant heat backup, with the stipulation that they cannot propose a choice that uses fossil fuels.

Geoff reports he wrote the RFP to meet federal procurement guidelines, in case the Town wants to use ARPA funds to pay for part or all of the project. He also reminded the Selectboard that this project would be eligible for a 15% Community Facilities grant through USDA Rural Development. Geoff doesn't believe ARPA and the grant can be used together. Mary Stoddard asked why not just use the current furnace as the backup system for a couple of years? Geoff explained the Town's goal and the State's goal is to reduce fossil fuels gas emissions. The current furnace is at the end of its life, and it would not be reasonable to use it as a backup system. Mary Gavin and Joe Ronan both shared their opinions that the furnace will probably not last much longer. Selectmen agreed Geoff Martin should proceed to advertise the RFP and to request proposals be submitted within 30 days from the date the RFP is circulated. Geoff indicated he will place an ad in the Valley News, put the bid notice on the TRORC website, and upload the RFP to the Vermont Bid System.

#### **11. Town Meeting 2022: Vote to Adopt Australian Ballot system of Voting:**

Cathy Sartor confirmed Australian ballots will be mailed to voters, but the return envelopes will not be prepaid (people will have to pay for postage). The ballot box outside the Town Offices is a free option for dropping off ballots. Selectboard members agreed to hold the Australian ballot information meeting on February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00PM.

**Motion by Kevin Gish to adopt Australian ballot voting for all Town Meeting business to be conducted on March 1, 2022, and that the Town will mail ballots to all registered voters. Joe Ronan seconded. Motion carried.**

#### **12. Town Meeting 2022: Review VLCT comments on draft warning:**

Margy presented an initial draft Town Meeting warning. The warning reflects the Board's intent to add two new articles as follows: one article addresses changing the way the town report is distributed, and the second article considers changing the Treasurer position from an elected position to an appointed position.

Margy explained she plans to submit the warning, as approved by the SB, to the town attorney for review. Mary Gavin asked if anything needs to be put in the warning regarding the second constable position. Margy indicated the VLCT advises the voters do not have to be asked to do away with the position, because the second constable is not a required position. The position also does not need to appear on the warning. The first constable position should stay on the warning. By law the first constable is the default collector of taxes. And the VLCT advises the Selectboard should appoint someone, if a first constable is not elected.

**Motion by Mary Gavin to accept the draft warning that Margy presented for legal review by town counsel. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion carried unanimously.** The warning will, tentatively, be approved and signed at 5:45 pm on Monday Jan. 24.

**13. Sharon PTO and Rec Committee re: scoreboard:**

Angie Carpenter explained she was attending the meeting as a PTO member. The need for a new scoreboard for the Sharon Rec Program was discussed at the last PTO meeting, and PTO members agreed to fund \$500 of the cost. Angie reported the Rec Committee has agreed to fundraise \$600 towards the cost, which would leave a \$2500 expense for the Town. Mary Gavin asked about the costs of installation. She indicated the earlier proposal shared by the Sharon Rec Committee was lacking that information. Mary Gavin and Joe Ronan suggested that the Rec Committee needs to request bids that include the costs of installation. Mary also stated she stands by her earlier comments. She is uncomfortable spending Town funds on a scoreboard that is in the school building which should therefore be funded by the School. Nicole inquired about who paid for the original scoreboard. She will inquire with Don Shaw, who might have been on the School Board at the time the school was built. Joe Ronan suggested that having the school contribute some money towards the project might help the Selectboard come to a decision.

**14. Selectboard Assistant Reports:** None

**15. Coronavirus planning/updates:** None

**16. Harlow Road – updates:**

Joe Ronan contacted Chris Noble (Roylton Selectboard) but has not heard back from him. Kevin reported more traffic to and from the property. Frank Rogers reported the same. Joe Ronan will try reaching out to Chris Noble again.

**17. Tentative agenda & Town Office coverage for next meeting:**

It was noted recent and temporary changes to the Open Meeting Law allow for fully-remote meetings once again, due to pandemic conditions. There is no need for a physical presence at the Town Offices for the next meeting.

**18. Adjourn:**

**Motion by Mary Gavin to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 pm. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion carried.**

Submitted by, Nicole Antal/Margy Becker