

**Sharon Selectboard
REGULAR Meeting Minutes
April 4th, 2022 DRAFT**

This meeting was held in compliance with the January 2022 VT Open Meeting law amendments regarding fully-remote electronic meetings.

Attending via Zoom: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Mary Gavin, Selectboard Vice Chair, Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Deb Jones, Finance Manager; Margaret Raymond, Treasurer; Scott Henkels, resident; Michael Sacca, AVC; Ira Clark, Planning Commission; Ryan Haac, Energy Commission; Geoff Martin, TRORC

Attending via Phone: Frank Rogers, Road Foreman

Call to Order: Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:30PM.

1. **Review/Approve Agenda:**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the agenda with a change to remove the Item 11 due to a timing conflict. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Public Comments:**

No public comments.

3. **Selectboard Member Reports:**

Mary Gavin let the members know that she met with Andrew Lane. They have a plan for forward movement, and they will meet again at the end of April. Andrew Lane is satisfied with the current lease and isn't looking for any change, but Mary wanted to review the lease since it was last reviewed back in 2017. Mary Gavin said that during their discussion the question came up as to whether the town might consider selling the Old School House to The Sharon Academy. Nicola Shipman will add this for discussion onto the agenda for the next meeting. Mary Gavin believes any action would need to be voted on by the town and the TSA board would also need to work in concert with the town and vote if that was to be something both entities were willing to consider.

Kevin Gish provided an update from Jim Beraldi, including that recently the Sheriff's Department had investigated a suspicious person at Stationmasters Road. The department also arrested an adult female for an outstanding warrant. Kevin Gish was also made aware via the South Royalton Police Department that there was no one actively living at a problematic location on Harlow Road. The Sheriff's department also has continued issuing traffic violations and warnings, and they responded to a juvenile issue at the Middle School. Deb Jones also confirmed that the VSP made an arrest of a resident on an outstanding warrant.

4. **Selectboard Assistant Reports:**

Nicola Shipman provided an update to the board that Tri-Valley Transit has a board opening, and she will let the community know of the opening. The Selectboard is not required to make a nomination to the Tri-Valley Transit board, but it would be beneficial to have a Sharon representative working in concert with Tri-Valley Transit. Nicola also updated the board about the LEMP updates required by the state. Additionally, the Grounds and Maintenance Bids came in on March 31st, to be discussed later in the meeting. Finally, Nicola and Frank are working with Rita Seto to complete the VTrans Structures Grant due April 15th, 2022.

5. **Approve Minutes:**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the March 7th, 2022 minutes with modifications. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed 2-0-1 with Mary Gavin abstaining as she did not attend the March 7th meeting.

Mary Gavin made a motion to rescind the motion where a misstated March 22nd date may have been included accidentally instead of March 21st, 2022. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the March 21st, 2022 minutes with modifications. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the March 28th, 2022 minutes as presented. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. **Approve Warrants:**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to ratify the payroll warrant for the pay period ending 3/26/2022 with a cash draw of \$19,366.70. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Gish asked a clarification question regarding payment for the COTTS Systems. Deb Jones confirmed that the total of the contract has now been paid in full and now the town is only responsible for the ongoing monthly maintenance fees. COTTS payments were placed into the SLFRF line as a Revenue Replacement Funding for Digital Replacement of Records. Deb Jones said her understanding was that the expense needed to be paid via SLFRF versus land record preservation. Mary Gavin has asked that going forward the town should be looking for a complete, overarching vision for the SLFRF funding rather than making small expenditures without a comprehensive plan for the funding.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1295 in the amount of \$27,655.24 for Cargill \$5006.47, Chase Site Services \$3300.00, Consolidated Communications \$60.96, COTT Systems \$9390.00 (final payment for set up & first monthly fee), D&D Excavating \$3226.70 (add'l sand), Evans Motor Fuels \$6155.25, and Foley Services \$115.86. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1296 for \$2,867.32 for GMP \$823.51, Magee Office Products \$60.00, Margaret Raymond, \$113.10, Lucky's Trailer Sales \$5.44, Pike Industries \$1865.27. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Deb Jones clarified that Pike Industries quoted ¾" stone at \$8.50/ton, and they are honoring that price. The price is likely to increase soon.

Kevin Gish asked for clarification about the \$932.80 bill paid to Tarrant, Gillies & Shem as noted in AP Warrant 1297. Deb Jones communicated that the legal fees were related to a complicated issue for which the listers required substantial legal counsel.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1297 for \$23,495.97 for US Bank \$6591.20, Tom "Geo" Honigford \$20.16, So Royalton Rescue \$6824.50, Southworth-Milton CAT \$181.29, Tarrant Gillies & Shem \$932.80 legal research by listers on application for tax exemption, Valley News \$59.50, VMERS DB \$6631.52, Wholesale Distributors \$2255.00. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1299REC for \$856.66 for Central VT Cal Ripken League \$601.66, Deb Jones \$255 reimbursement for purchase of 10 tokens for 10 baseball coaches for background checks. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

7. **Appointees:**

Mary Gavin made a motion to appoint David Karon as representative and Clare Holland as the first alternate to the ECFiber ECVTD Governing Board each for a one-year term. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to appoint incumbents John Roe and Lee Simek to the Planning Commission, each for a three-year term. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish asked a question regarding the school board treasurer. There was discussion that there has been conversation with the school board with regards to its need to appoint a treasurer. Mary Gavin commented that she has personally brought this issue to the Sharon School Directors. At this point, the Selectboard will appoint Margaret Raymond in accordance with the requirements of State Statute 17 V.S.A. § 2651f, but the school also needs to appoint a treasurer.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to appoint Margaret Raymond as Town Treasurer through June 30th, 2022. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to appoint Mary Gavin to the South Royalton Rescue Advisory Board for a three-year term. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

8. **Finance Manager Reports:**

Deb Jones reported that there is currently about \$55,000 in outstanding 2022 delinquent taxes. She also shared that the SLFRF/ARPA site for reporting has launched and there will be a VLCT webinar on this topic. Additionally, Katie Buckley (VLCT) is willing to assist the Town to find ways to maximize the SLFRF funding by combining other grant funding opportunities. Two Rivers may also have staff who can assist with finding additional funding sources. Deb said she is working on a worker's comp audit. She also noted that she has had a significant amount of tax requests, specifically related to filing Homestead Declarations.

Mary Gavin wondered if maybe the Town can help communicate to the Sharon Residents about how to effectively file a Homestead Declaration Act and which forms should be filed. Deb Jones and Nicola Shipman will work together to disseminate that information.

Deb also brought to the board's attention the Letter of Engagement for FY22 audit services requiring the Chair's signature.

Mary Gavin made a motion to authorize the chair Kevin Gish to sign the Letter of Engagement for services to be provided by Mudgett, Jennett and Krogh-Wisner, P.C. for the FY22 audit. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

9. **Highway Business/Road Foreman Reports:**

Frank Rogers said all-in-all roads are in better shape. The team is getting a little worn down with this challenging mud season. Kevin Gish continued to encourage the team to take a break whenever possible. Frank is hoping for some drying weather.

Frank also communicated that the Town 1-ton has been out of commission for about three weeks due to a safety recall issue. Frank had returned the Royalton truck, so in the meantime has used his personal pick-up in order to check roads. Frank feels there should be a discussion soon about how best to resolve the fact that he is using his personal vehicle. Kevin Gish will stop by and talk with Frank. Mary Gavin agreed that this is an unusual situation. Normally there wouldn't be a town vehicle tied up for extended periods of time. Kevin Gish said that Frank should submit his mileage based on this unusual circumstance of having limited access to town trucks during mud season. Nicola Shipman will add this for further discussion to the April 18th agenda.

Frank reaffirmed a point made by Deb Jones earlier in the meeting that this is the cheapest time to purchase more gravel. The town will be looking at a double-digit increase for the next contract period. Mary Gavin asked if there was funding still available in the budget. Frank confirmed the gravel line has been used up, and now the only money available is the resurfacing line. There will be a significant amount of work still to get roads up to their usual condition, but right now the crew is mostly using ¾" hardpack moving forward.

NEW BUSINESS: Action Items**10. Informational Kiosk Presentation: Michael Sacca**

Kevin Gish introduced Michael Sacca. Michael mentioned that he is involved with the Alliance for Vermont Communities (AVC) and 4-Town Committee, and stated that AVC is willing to put in some money for this proposed kiosk project. Michael shared with the Board a slide show presentation.

The visitor kiosk as presented by Michael could be designed as multi-use with a focus on recreational access. Recreation in Vermont is on the upswing especially since the pandemic, and outdoor activities are on the rise. Sharon is lucky to have wonderful resources at their disposal, including river access points, the Green Mountain Loop, Broad Brook Trail, Ashley Community Forest and Downer State Forest. Michael shared that the demand for outdoor access in Vermont is strong. AVC has been involved in work around conservation and recreation including on the Manning Farm Trail and a gravel bike route network. The proposed kiosk could provide maps, list of services, area recreation information, biking routes and more to visitors and residents.

Where could it be located? Michael suggests that it could be in a central location in Sharon, perhaps on the green, but that would be up to the town.

What would it look like? There are attractive options for information kiosks that are inviting and welcoming to visitors and residents alike.

Michael's presentation also included the idea of a bike repair station which generally cost between \$700-1000 per unit.

Creative bike racks are also an opportunity for animated infrastructure, which can bring art and functionality to the town to create a statement.

Who pays for it? AVC is ready to contribute to a kiosk and there may be also some state grants for recreation. He wondered if there may be ARPA/SLFRF money and suggested there is always the possibility of local fundraising.

Michael asked the board for thoughts from the Selectboard and Planning Commission Chair, Ira Clark for comments.

Ira Clark did confirm that the Town Plan includes verbiage regarding encouraging programming and activities including access for cyclists and pedestrians. He commented that this kind of project would be compatible with the goals in the current town plan, and it would be a helpful amenity.

Kevin Gish noted that there are more and more cyclists coming through Sharon. Kevin also wants to steer people to acceptable recreation areas, including how to access the river without going through private property or to guide bike riders to scenic routes, for example.

There was agreement that this is just the start of the conversation and there should be a community-wide discussion for if and where this might fit into the town's plan. AVC would like to encourage this activity and Michael would like to leave this concept with the town for future discussion.

11. **Grounds and Mowing Bid Review**

The Town received three bids for two seasons of Grounds Maintenance and Mowing with services to include weekly mowing and trimming of the Town Offices, the Old School House and the Baxter Library/Rte. 14 Roadside Parcel.

Green Mountain Mowing, LLC submitted a base bid of \$6,040.00 and alternate bid of \$3,120.00 for a total of \$9,160.

Guilmette Landworks, LLC submitted a base bid of \$7,310.00 and an alternate bid of \$1,440 for a total of \$8,750.00.

Whitcomb Property Services submitted a bid for a total of \$16,000.

Nicola Shipman provided clarification on the bids, including the level of responsiveness. The apparent low bid came in from Guilmette Landworks, LLC at \$8,750.00. However, there were some issues with clarity of the bid. Additionally, the company is based out of Burlington Vermont. Green Mountain Mowing is a more locally-based company and has a history of performing high-quality work on behalf of the town. The difference between those two bids is nominal.

After discussion, the Selectboard members asked Nicola Shipman to work with Green Mountain Mowing to renegotiate the terms of the alternate bid to reflect a reduction in services from bi-weekly (12 mows) to 6 mows per season inclusive of the 3 special holiday weekends (Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day)

Mary Gavin made a motion to accept the base bid submitted by Green Mountain Mowing for the contracted amount of \$6,040.00 for the two-season period. The Selectboard Assistant, Nicola Shipman, is authorized by the Selectboard to renegotiate terms of the alternate bid with Green Mountain Mowing. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

12. **Review Liquor License Applications**

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve three applications of Chateau Industries LLC DBA Inn at Idlewood/Marceau's Fine Foods including: a renewal request for a First Class Hotel License to sell Malt and Vinous Beverages; a renewal request for a Third Class Hotel License to sell spirituous liquors; and a renewal request for Outside Consumption and to authorize all three selectboard members to sign the license renewals. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Annual Cookout/Staff Picnic:

Kevin Gish recalled that in the past the Staff Picnic was offered during lunch on a Thursday and then employees would be able to take the afternoon off. Mary Gavin concurred. A Staff Picnic would require sourcing a grill and a suitable indoor/outdoor meeting space. Mary Gavin wondered if the location could be at the Fire Department. Alternatively, Kevin Gish also offered his barn. Mary Gavin said Selectboard Members would contribute food to the menu. The dates suggested for the staff picnic include either May 19th or June 2nd. Sarah Pfeiffer will reach out to the Fire Department to find out if the facility could be available from 11am to host the event.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Status Reports/Action as needed**13. Baxter Memorial Library Heat Pump Bid: Geoff Martin and Ryan Haac:**

Geoff Martin provide the Selectboard with a comparison of the old oil furnace versus the cost of installation of the heat pump. The average of the last three winters was 581 gallons of fuel oil. The heat pump is estimated 6,940 kWh. The total cost for the Heat Pump would be about \$1,319. This is a savings of about \$300 per year per heating season. The ERV does not have to run when the building is empty. The actual savings will vary on the actual costs of fuel oil and electricity. Ryan Haac noted that the energy bill essentially doubles when the Library uses the current outdated air conditioning unit. Mary Gavin asked for clarification that if the Selectboard approves the project, the Trustees will be on board with the project. Ryan confirmed that the Trustees are in favor.

Mary Gavin made a motion to award the bid to Vermont Mechanical for the Baxter Memorial Library Heat Pump Installation as specified in the RFP with a base bid of \$30,532.00 and alternative bid of \$4,572.00 for a total price of \$35,104.00. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Deb Jones asked for clarification as to the source of funds for payment. Mary Gavin confirmed that the ARPA/SLFRF would be a good use for this project.

Mary Gavin amended the motion to award the bid to Vermont Mechanical to also show that the funds for payment for the Heat Pump Installation will come from the ARPA/SLFRF funds. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Geoff Martin will respond to both companies with the Selectboard's decision.

14. Coronavirus Planning/Updates as needed

Given the continued uncertainty with the COVID-19 variants, the Selectboard will continue to host fully-remote meetings and masking at the town offices is still recommended.

15. Harlow Road Updates:

Kevin Gish said he was told by officials there shouldn't been anyone living in the property due to a possible eviction, but he feels the information may or may not be correct. He does feel there is a possible health code issue as it seems bears have been going through the garbage at the property. Kevin Gish would like South Royalton to consider action. Mary Gavin shared that there is a new chairman, Tim Murphy, and he may or may not be aware of the garbage issues.

16. Kendall Property Update:

Kevin Gish noted that the matter had been taken up by the Flood Hazard Bylaw Administrator and that he had no further updates. Mary Gavin stated for the record that she is not comfortable with the recall of the Notice of Violation that was sent by Preston Bristow. Geo Honigford did send a letter to the Kendall's rescinding the Notice of Violation on March 29th, 2022 and a copy was sent to the Selectboard. Mary Gavin will continue to investigate this issue to determine if there is any further action needed.

17. Executive session: Personnel

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to enter executive session for the purposes of discussing a personnel issue related to a candidate for the Finance Manager position at 8:51PM to include the selectboard board members and Finance Manager, Deb Jones. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

18. Reconvene Open Meeting

Mary Gavin made a motion to exit executive session at 9:27PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion that the Selectboard make an offer to a candidate for the role of Finance Assistant at a rate of \$22.00/hour for 32 hours per week pending satisfactory references. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

19. Adjourn

Mary Gavin made a motion to adjourn at 9:29PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Nicola Shipman