

**Sharon Selectboard
REGULAR Meeting Minutes
April 18th, 2022 FINAL**

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

Participants attending via Zoom: Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Mary Gavin, Selectboard Vice Chair; Christian Pelletier, White River Partnership; Sue Sellew, Historical Society/Planning Commission; Dave Phillips, Historical Society/Cemetery Committee; Deb Jones, Finance Manager; Scott Henkels, Resident; Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk; Ken Wright, Lister/Delinquent Tax Collector

Participants attending via Phone: Frank Rogers, Road Foreman; Damon Dyer, Animal Control Officer

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

1. **Review/Approve Agenda**

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments.

3. **Selectboard Member Reports**

Current Use Letter: Kevin talked with the State and with David Paganelli of Strafford. The consensus is that the Current Use letter sent to the town is automatically generated by the state, and there are two possible responses for the town. Since a municipality cannot have any land in current use, eventually that will be reconciled with the state even if the towns of Sharon and Strafford do not take any action in response to the letter. Alternatively, if the towns wish to respond, each town can formally file to remove the Ashley Forest parcels from Current Use. Regardless, there will be no tax due, the easement prevents development, and there is no need to remove the current use lien from the land, thereby preventing the tax use. Mary Gavin asked for confirmation that there would be no financial implication to the town with either option. Kevin Gish stated that so long as the tax lien remains in place, there is no cost to the town, and the best way forward is to coordinate with the town of Strafford so both towns respond to the state in the same manner.

Staff Picnic Location: Andrew Brackett said the Fire Department is happy to provide a space for the Town of Sharon Employee Staff Picnic on May 19th with a possible back-up date of June 2nd. Nicola Shipman will send out an invitation to town employees with RSVP

with 10 days' notice (by May 9th) for attendance. Deb Jones offered to help with contact information.

Outlook Functionality: Mary Gavin is looking for solutions to improve the Office 365 experience, particularly for Outlook. Nicola Shipman will provide a link to download the software to install on a PC. Also, Mary feels Dropbox is a frustrating tool. Nicola Shipman will explore options for shared files. Mary also asked about the protocol for the old Selectboard Gmail accounts. Nicola shared that in the past, IT support Mike Tisdale Consulting recommended creating an archive of the Gmail files to be delivered to him, so files are archived, secure but continue to be accessible.

4. **Selectboard Assistant Reports:**

Nicola Shipman reported that the Exterior Painting RFP went out on April 14th and has been widely distributed to multiple publications including Valley News, Seven Days, the state Bid site, VLCT, and through direct communications and digital bulletin boards. The bids are due April 28th at noon.

Additionally, there is a Grounds and Maintenance Contract signed with Green Mountain Mowing in time for the current mowing season. Mary Gavin asked for clarification regarding the Wallace Doubleday Cemetery. Nicola will reach out to follow up with Dave Phillips to ensure that he is still willing to maintain the cemetery for the town. Green Mountain Mowing could mow that site but only if specifically requested by the Town and with some guidance so as not to damage the headstones.

Finally, the FY 2023 VTrans Structures Grant was submitted to District 4 on April 14th 2022. The town is now waiting to hear if funding will be awarded for the Downer Road culvert replacement.

5. **Approve Minutes:**

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the April 4th, 2022 minutes with modifications. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

6. **Approve Warrants:**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to ratify the payroll warrant for the pay period ending 4/9/22 with a cash draw of \$18,437.38. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to ratify the offer letter to Lucy Miller dated April 11th, 2022 offering the role of Finance Assistant. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Deb Jones confirmed that the signed offer letter has been returned.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP WARRANT 1300 in the amount of \$8,284.26 with payments to Allen Wight \$210.60, Alta Material dba Alta Construction NE \$137.56, BCBS of VT \$4700.20, Cargill \$1736.11, Casella Waste \$80.78, Chase Site Services \$1040, Compucount \$284.48, DeLage Landen Financial \$94.53. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP WARRANT 1301 in the amount of \$7,044.08 with payments to EC Fiber \$151, Evans Motor Fuels \$6040.09, EyeMed \$70.42, Fastenal \$349.86, Foley Services \$115.86, Key Communications \$134.07, Lucky's Trailer Sales \$42.23, Magee Office Products \$136.22, Margy Becker \$4.33. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP WARRANT 1302 in the amount of \$13,138.26 with payments to Pike Industries \$9299.40, Radio North Group \$685, Royal Auto \$8.63, Sabil & Sons \$254.10, Southworth Milton \$28.86, Ted Green Ford \$426.22, The Herald \$84.44, Twin State Sand & Gravel \$2351.61. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP WARRANT 1303 in the amount of \$5,329.59 with payments to United Ag & Turf \$181.99, Valley News \$224.60, Windsor County Sheriff's Dept \$4727, Winter Equipment \$196. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP WARRANT 1304 RECREATION for \$300 with payment to Upper Valley Portables \$300. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

The Selectboard decided to table the AP WARRANT 1305 OSH for \$1,808.51 with payment to Hartigan dba Wind River Environmental LLC due to unclear understanding as to which entity might be responsible for payment of the problem, the Town of Sharon or The Sharon Academy Middle School.

There was some discussion about the clog that had backed up the toilets at the OSH over the winter which appeared to be related to excessive amounts of toilet paper in the system. Accessing the clog was particularly challenging due to location and the design of the system, and the high cost also reflects the fees associated with an emergency weekend call. Kevin Gish will discuss the solution for resolving who would be responsible for payment with Head of School, Andrew Lane.

Mary Gavin made a motion to ratify HRA WARRANT dated March 1st – March 29th 2022 for \$1,463.93 ACH reimbursement to HRA company. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1306 in the amount of \$9,488.66 with payment to Mascoma Bank for the semi-annual payment for the principal and interest

for the JCB Backhoe loan, which is payment #7. **Mary Gavin seconded. Motion passed unanimously.**

7. **Appointees:**

Mary Gavin made a motion to appoint Ryan Haac as liaison to the Regional Energy Coordinator for a 1-year term. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to appoint incumbents Samantha Potter, Tiffany Clark and Georgia Potter to the Recreation Committee each for a 1-year term. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish also mentioned the Recreation Committee is not limited to three members, and he wants to encourage additional people to join and assist with the work of the Recreation committee.

8. **Finance Manager Reports**

Deb Jones presented the board with quarterly Budget to Actual reports as well a projected End of Year Balance Report for review. Deb asked if there were any questions about the reports she provided. She stated that the projections for the end of year seem to be looking good at this time, and there are even still opportunities to improve the budget outcomes with possible funds from the state via the Vermont HAP/VHFA funding for residents who were financially affected by COVID-19 and needed assistance with property tax payments.

Deb mentioned that she and Sarah have not yet had a chance to meet as a working group to bring forward a plan for the ARPA funding. Deb wondered if the town might consider using a large chunk to possibly start funding repairs/improvements to the Town Garage.

Mary Gavin also mentioned an idea of a Rescue House with three communities working together to bring that concept forward.

After additional discussions, Deb Jones also shared that while she was participating in the ARPA webinars, the presenters shared this guiding principle when considering proposals: if the Board wouldn't go before the voters to ask them to spend the money on a particular project, then the idea/project is unlikely to be a good use of the ARPA funding.

Kevin Gish suggested the town continue to get back to the listening process with residents to construct a plan for the ARPA funding. Sarah and Deb are going to meet to start driving the efforts forward.

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

Frank Rogers said the roads are in decent shape except for some trouble spots on Downer Road and a couple of other challenging locations. Frank and the team are waiting for things to dry out to begin grading.

Mary Gavin asked what the projects might be on the schedule for the summer. Frank responded that there are some culverts, there is some ditch work and other work similar to what has been done over the past two years. Also, it is possible that there could be work initiated on the Downer Rd. culvert replacement if the Town is awarded funding through the FY23 VTrans Structures Grant.

Frank also will reach out to Deb to see what funds are available for funding additional gravel purchases, and what funds might be left in the top-dressing line to purchase gravel. Trucking in gravel will likely start in the next couple of days to ensure there is enough material to get through the end of the fiscal year.

Kevin Gish mentioned that he and Frank did meet recently to discuss several topics, including the possibility of the Road Crew helping to remove the aging ramp at the historical society.

Kevin said they also discussed a potential retirement that might be coming from within the Road Crew which might be a difficult position to fill. After some questions and discussion about the challenges of hiring, Frank also thinks that once the first round of grading has been completed, he may be able to add some training for crew.

Cathy Sartor asked if a CDL is required for the position. Frank confirmed yes and mentioned there is now no capacity to train someone for a CDL in house, as CDL training must now take place off site. Mary Gavin was wondering if it is possible to hire someone without CDL training and include training reimbursement in the offer. There was agreement that there would need to be some strategizing regarding how to hire someone especially with the need for a CDL.

Kevin Gish also mentioned continued discussion about the possibility of purchasing a Town pickup truck. Mary Gavin asked if this would be a fifth truck in the fleet. Frank confirmed, yes. The Selectboard will discuss further if this could possibly save money for the town and if so, how a truck could be purchased and where the money would come from. There will need to be a cost-benefit analysis of cost to compare the use of the 1-ton (wear and tear/fuel costs) versus the cost of adding a used pickup truck.

NEW BUSINESS:

10. White River Partnership Report Regarding Broad Brook River Access

Christian Pelletier, the program coordinator of the White River Partnership, announced that the Partnership has been awarded \$30,000.00 for improvements to the Town's Broad Brook River access point including improving a trail, adding a five- or six-stone step to access the river, and improving parking at the site (which is mandated by the management agreement for the Broad Brook Management Access). Originally this was presented as a two-year project, starting with the trail and steps in 2022 and adding safer parking in 2023.

Christian asked the board what time frame would be good for the town to start the work for the project. Also, Christian asked members of the Selectboard and other town officials to join him for an on-site visit to establish a parking plan.

Kevin Gish asked how long the project would likely take to complete. Christian responded that this summer would be only a couple of days and could take place midweek to minimize disruption to the river access. Christian did say the grant agreement hadn't yet been signed, but the likely timeframe would be mid-summer for about 2-3 days of work in 2022.

The Board agreed that as soon as the Partnership can begin, the Board would be amendable to whatever the proposed timeline would be.

Christian also shared that the management plan requires parking for 2-3 cars. There is going to need to be earth work, but Christian wants to get stakeholders involved to ensure there is safe parking. Christian will coordinate scheduling the meeting, and he will work with Nicola Shipman who will assist. The members thanked Christian for his efforts and for securing the funding for the project.

At this transition, the board received a question from Scott Henkels, a Sharon property owner. Scott asked if this would be an appropriate time to discuss the process for how he might gain access to his currently undeveloped property. The Board provided some clarification to his questions about the process for how he might secure access to his property. The Selectboard recommends that Scott and Frank discuss Scott's plans for property access, and that Scott bring his plan before the board once there is a plan approved by the Road Foreman.

11. Historical Society Update on Accessibility Ramp at Old Town Hall

Sue Sellew explained that the Vermont Arts Council has facility grants to improve accessibility for municipality-owned buildings. The council awards 50/50 matching grants up to \$30,000.00. Sue has strong evidence showing that not only would the project qualify for the grant, but the town would be a likely recipient. The ramp design is a key element for the submission of the grant, and Sue has worked to obtain architectural drawings in advance, which works in the Town's favor.

At this point, based on the architectural estimates, the cost for the replacement looks to be about \$22,000. Mary Gavin asked, given the matching requirement, if and where the funding is tracked in the budget. Deb Jones communicated that there is \$45,000 for town buildings in general, and additionally \$1,000 per year has been included in the budget for the upkeep of the historical society building, so there is an unmet obligation coinciding with some deferred maintenance. Additionally, there is a possibility the Downer Fund would be able to help with some of the cost. Deb noted that there isn't a capital schedule in the same way that there is an infrastructure plan for town roads. Deb also suggested that the project could qualify for ARPA/SLFRF funding since there have been changes to the wording of the funding to include non-federal grant matching.

Mary Gavin reiterated her wish to refrain from contemplating smaller expenditures for the ARPA/SLFRF funding, as it is a large sum of money that may be best suited to a project of larger scope.

Sue Sellev mentioned the ramp project cannot start before September 1st, 2022 and is to be finished no later than August 31st, 2023. The funding isn't awarded until August.

As a reminder, Mary Gavin noted that the ramp project would need to go out to bid as it needs to meet the requirements of the Town's procurement policy even with the grant funding. Mary proposed that a timeline include an RFP to go out as soon as possible upon notification of funding if it is awarded. Bids could then be on schedule to be awarded in mid to late September. Sue Sellev will create the RFP. She also thought that would be a suitable time frame as deconstruction of the old ramp could happen in the fall of 2022 and new construction could be scheduled for the spring of 2023.

Kevin Gish mentioned that Sue had asked if the Road Crew could assist with the removal of the existing ramp. Frank Rogers does not think the backhoe is an appropriate tool for the removal, and the town does not have an excavator available. Frank thinks an excavator would be a more appropriate machine to remove the ramp given the amount of concrete.

Mary Gavin wondered if removal is in fact the way to proceed.

Sue Sellev confirmed that the current ramp is causing rot and water damage to the sill and damage to the integrity of the interior of the building; the ramp needs to be removed to inhibit further damage.

Mary Gavin made a motion to authorize the Chair Kevin Gish to sign the Arts Council of Vermont Cultural Facilities Grant Application for submission upon completion. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Dave Phillips made a note that he has struggled to get estimates for this kind of work in the past, and the State is aware that are limited contractors out there to submit estimates and is willing to work with municipalities who show they have done their due diligence in their attempts to secure estimates.

12. Animal Control Officer Report

Mary Gavin suggested that, in reference to a letter submitted by Damon Dyer requesting a wage increase, it might be wise to consider an introductory period for 3 to 6 months with a two-hour minimum at his current pay rate of \$20.00/hour to understand more about how this might work. Mary would also appreciate a more complete list of equipment needed that the Town might need to purchase on behalf of the Animal Control Officer (ACO) and how those items might be tracked and returned to the Town should the ACO step down in the future.

Damon Dyer, ACO for the town, did join the meeting but there were technological challenges with his ability to participate. He was able to communicate that given his

commitments to his full-time work, and the rising cost of fuel and the complications of possibly needing to be available at short notice and on nights and weekends should a call come in, \$20/hour is an outdated rate and \$30/hour is fair in his estimation. The phone line was breaking up and it was hard to hear Damon. Mary Gavin asked that Sarah Pfeiffer be authorized to speak with Damon as a representative of the Selectboard, so Sarah and Damon could meet face-to-face to find out Damon's needs and to learn the details of his role as Animal Control Officer.

Mary Gavin made a motion to authorize Sarah Pfeiffer to address the role of Animal Control Officer with Damon Dyer including discussions of his request for an increase in wage, the fee for overnight kenneling, and any equipment required in his role as the Town's Animal Control Officer. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

13. Baxter Memorial Library Lighting

Per an email from Trustee Emma Basham, Shana Hickman alerted the library trustees that the outdoor lights and the vestibule lights are on the same switch. The outdoor lights are left on at night but there is no need to leave the vestibule light on. Kevin Gish suggested it is an interesting idea but only if the scope of work is affordable. There was agreement within the board. Mary Gavin suggested Zach Wood as a possible contact who might be able to look to give an estimate for whether or not it would be worth paying to rewire the light. Since this is a commercial building, it needs to be a licensed electrician. Nicola Shipman will track down a suitable person to provide this estimate.

14. Tech Support for Residents Applying for Property Tax Assistance

Mary Gavin asked for clarification about the source of funding for this program.

Kevin Gish explained that the funding is available to Vermont residential homeowners who apply and is available on a first-come, first-serve basis. If funds are awarded, the payment is made directly to the municipality via an online portal.

Ken Wright said he wants to create opportunity for residents who may need additional assistance with tax payments due to COVID-19 related financial difficulties but who simultaneously may experience an undue burden to file due to limited access to technological resources. Ken suggested that to apply to receive financial assistance from the state, the resident would need to have reliable high-speed internet and be comfortable navigating a relatively complicated application form.

Ken said he spoke to Deb Jones, who, as financial manager for the town, said she already gives out much of the financial information needed to successfully complete the application.

Mary Gavin asked if there could be any conflicts of interest if Deb Jones were to assist, but since Deb does not oversee tax collection, there is no conflict.

Cathy Sartor also wanted to clarify that the funding is broad in scope and is available to residential homeowners in Vermont who have been financially affected by COVID-19 and who experience difficulty with mortgage payments, utilities payments and tax payments for example.

Deb agreed to be the point-person for application assistance for residents, and Ken Wright will let librarian Shana Hickman know that there may be residents who need assistance, and she is welcome to refer them to Deb for support. Ken also plans to include a flyer with his delinquent tax notices to inform taxpayers of the Vermont HAP/VHFA program and to remind taxpayers to submit their Homestead Declaration Act to reduce their tax burden.

15. Adopt the 2022 Local Emergency Management Plan and the National Incident Management System (Due May 1st)

Mary Gavin made a motion to adopt the 2022 Certified Local Emergency Management Plan and the National Incident Management System and to authorize Chair Kevin Gish to sign the Adoption Form. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

16. Adoption of Resolution 22-01 -- A resolution for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Allocation

Mary Gavin made a motion to adopt Adoption of Resolution 22-01 – A resolution for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Allocation and authorize the selectboard members to sign the resolution. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Status Reports/Action as needed

17. Old School House – Lease and Other Discussions

No updates currently, but Andrew Lane and Mary Gavin intend to meet next week. Nicola Shipman will include a 10-minute time slot on the May 2nd agenda for the topic of selling the OSH to TSA.

18. Coronavirus planning/updates as needed

Given the uncertainty still surrounding the transmission of COVID-19 and rising cases, the Selectboard will stay the course with encouraging masking and holding virtual meetings.

19. Crescent Lake Dam as needed

Updates to be included more fully in the next meeting if needed. The property owners are moving forward with improvements, but the timeline is extended to 2023 due to impending regulatory changes.

20. Harlow Road as needed

Kevin Gish said the problem homes seem to be unoccupied. The garbage continues to be an issue.

21. Kendall Property as needed: No updates currently

Deb Jones had questions about DocuSign documents that had not yet been addressed including the TA-60 and Certification of Compliance

Mary Gavin made a motion to authorize the Selectboard members to sign the 2022 TA-60 Annual Finance Plan and Annual Certification of Compliance for District 4. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

22. Adjourn

Mary Gavin made a motion to adjourn at 8:48PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Nicola Shipman