

**Sharon Selectboard
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 5th, 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; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Mary Gavin, Selectboard Vice Chair; Rebecca Holcombe, Representative Elect; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Trudy Brock, Sharon Health Initiative; Joyce Dion, Camp Downer

Participants 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. Mary Gavin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Public Comments

Representative-elect Rebecca Holcombe introduced herself to the Board and staff members and encouraged the Town officials to reach out with questions. Representative-elect Holcombe also noted that there is federal grant funding coming through to the State, and she will provide information about those opportunities.

3. Review/Approve Minutes: November 21st

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the November 21st, 2022, minutes with minor changes. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. Selectboard Member Reports: Members

Kevin Gish reported that the Stewardship plan for the Ashley Community Forest is close to finalization after their public session. Once finalized, the plan will be submitted to the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board for review.

Kevin Gish also mentioned that he and Jack Jones looked at the flooring of the Old Town Hall building, and Kevin said he was relieved to see that the condition of the floor was better than expected. Kevin Gish also noted that the Town received confirmation from the Assistant Fire Marshall that the next step for the building improvements is to submit the Division of

Fire Safety Permit application and await the results of the inspection before moving forward with the RFP for the ADA-ramp replacement.

5. Finance Manager Reports: Lucy Pierpont

Lucy Pierpont reported that the Town received a significant payment from VHFA, the State program providing delinquent tax payment assistance to homeowners. VHFA also notified the Town there was an inquiry from another homeowner seeking assistance through the VHFA program.

Lucy also reported that the Town received the second opioid settlement payment.

6. Highway Business/Road Foreman Reports: Frank Rogers

Frank Rogers requested that the Selectboard approve the purchase of materials for framing out a tool storage area in the Town Garage. Frank said that the road crew would build out the storage area, but there would need to be some electrical work done to ensure the room had sufficient lighting. All agreed electrical work would be an additional cost as the work will need to be completed by a licensed electrician.

Kevin Gish asked where in the budget these funds should come from. Frank said it would come from the Buildings and Grounds budget. Sarah Pfeiffer agreed that adding some tool space makes sense especially since it could also eliminate potential safety issues for the Road Crew when accessing the equipment.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the purchase of materials as listed on the purchase order supplied by Bethel Mills for building a tool room in the amount of \$1,230.61. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

7. Selectboard Assistant Reports: Nicola Shipman

Nicola Shipman presented a calendar of meetings to the Board for the weeks leading up to Town Meeting. Nicola also asked the Board to select a date for the Australian Ballot Hearing in advance of Town Meeting. The members agreed that Monday, February 27th, 2023 would be an appropriate day to hold the Australian Ballot Hearing. Nicola will send final meeting schedule to the Board members.

Nicola said the Town is waiting for quotes for the Better Roads grant application, but those will not be available until mid-week. Since the grant application is due December 16th, which is before the next Board meeting, Nicola asked the Board to authorize Chair Kevin Gish to sign the Better Roads FY23 Grant Application. If awarded, the grant funding would require a 20% Town match and would be used for repairs to a box culvert on Quimby Mountain Road as well as some bank stabilization on the inlet side of the culvert.

Mary Gavin made a motion to authorize Chair Kevin Gish to sign the Better Roads FY23 Grant Application. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Nicola noted that since the next step for the Old Town Hall repairs includes submitting a permit application with the Division of Fire Safety, someone needs authorization to sign the application on behalf of the Town.

Kevin Gish made a motion to authorize Nicola Shipman to sign the Division of Fire Safety permit application for ADA-ramp replacement to be conducted on the Old Town Hall building, which functions as the Sharon Historical Society Museum. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Nicola Shipman also mentioned that Ryan Palmer, Windsor County Sheriff Elect, has reached out and is seeking an opportunity to meet with the Board to discuss the future of the program offered by the Sheriff's Department. The Board felt that since Mr. Palmer is a Sheriff Elect and has not yet been sworn in, and since there is a contract in place with the Windsor County Sheriff's Department through the end of the FY23, it may be difficult to have any meaningful discussions about budget or programming at this time. The Board asked that Nicola reach out to VLCT for guidance.

Finally, Nicola brought up a question raised by a member of the Cemetery Committee concerning how private donations may be accepted by a Town and under what circumstances a restricted gift may be made, if at all. Nicola will reach out to the VLCT for guidance as to how Town's might be able to handle private donations that are restricted or not.

8. Approve Warrants: Selectboard

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve the payroll for the pay period 1120/2022 - 12/3/2022 with a cash draw of \$14,907.13 Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1402 in the amount of \$19,306.68 with payments to Alta Construction \$425.31, ATG Westminster \$111.00, Community Bank NA \$17,236.35, Consolidated Communications \$122.96, Cott Systems \$170.00, Evans Motor Fuels \$544.13, Fastenal Company \$696.93. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1403 in the amount of \$1,272.38 with payments to Foley Services \$122.28, Green Mountain Mowing \$503.33, Green Mountain Power \$646.77. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1404 in the amount of \$1,734.35 with payments to Key Communications \$133.62, Madison National Life \$221.30, Magee Office Products \$126.23, North East Delta Dental \$516.12, Royal Auto Parts \$71.38, Silver Lake Plumbing \$665.70. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1405 in the amount of \$40,516.83 with payments to Andrea Morgan \$117.99, Compucount \$196.37, EC Fiber \$254.79, South Royalton Rescue \$39,947.68. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1406 in the amount of \$3,202.72 with payments to Southworth Milton \$1,872.33, Twin State Sand and Gravel \$1,115.89, Valley News \$110, VLCT Municipal Assistance \$104.00. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Mary Gavin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1407 in the amount of \$13,562.61 with payments to VLCT Property & Casualty \$10,148.85, VMERS \$3,413.76. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1408 from the Old School House fund in the amount of \$3,625.80 with payments to Sharon School District \$2,377.40, VLCT Property & Casualty \$1,248.40. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

9. Review of Liquor License Application: Inn at Idlewood

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve a Class Three Hotel License LP-014133 submitted by Chateau Industries LLC. Mary Gavin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

10. FY24 Budget Discussions and Action as Needed

Sharon Health Initiative: Sharon Health Initiative representative Trudi Brock shared that the Community Health Care Coordinator (CHCC) is currently serving the community for about 8 hours a week. As COVID restrictions have eased, the SHI has found that there is a greater community need and an increase in the number of clients. Dena Wilkie, the current CHCC, would like to expand her hours to support that need. Trudi said that grant funding is not as easy to secure, and, while individual donations to the SHI are increasing, they are not yet enough to cover the difference between the current hours offered by the Sharon Health Initiative and the number of hours they would like the CHCC to be available to the community. Trudi said the Sharon Health Initiative is requesting \$6,000 from the Town for FY2024 predominantly to support an increase in the CHCC's hourly wages and to increase the number of hours the CHCC would be available per week.

Camp Downer Appropriation Request: Joyce Dion, on behalf of Camp Downer, made an appropriation request of \$2,000 for weed harvesting in the Downer Road CCC pond.

Joyce shared some background about the history of weed harvesting in the pond and noted that, since about 1998, the Town of Sharon and Camp Downer have worked together to harvest the nuisance pond weeds in the CCC pond. Joyce said that years ago, the Town of Fairlee had a contract agreement with Camp Downer for the use of a large aquamarine harvester. Town of Fairlee has since sold the weed harvester, and the Camp no longer has access to the harvester or a harvester operator. Joyce also noted that due to changes in State regulations restrictions and due to COVID, no weeds were harvested in the CCC pond for four years.

After some research, Joyce said Camp Downer decided to harvest for a total of four days in 2022 and paid \$6,100 for four days of weed harvesting between June – July. Given these costs are likely to remain stable or increase in the future, the Camp is requesting a defined Town contribution of \$2,000 for weed harvesting as a replacement for in-kind work.

Kevin Gish asked if the Camp plans to harvest four days again next year. Joyce confirmed that this would be the plan as it is the most effective. Joyce reminded the Board that the Town of Sharon also holds the permit for the weed harvest as the State considers the CCC pond to be a Town responsibility. Joyce did say that in the past grant funding for this kind of weed control had been available through the State, but now those funds are primarily directed to controlling invasive species.

Continued budget discussions:

Kevin Gish wondered if the Board would be ready to decide about FY23 Wages.

Mary Gavin suggested that with all the demands on the budget this year, it is worth considering carefully how to move forward. Mary is noticing a lot of increases in appropriation requests, she sees that the cost of health insurance has increased, and she noted that diesel and heating fuel costs have increased this year. Mary Gavin also said there is still a lot of uncertainty for the economy.

The Board members were presented with a draft budget using Wage Proposal 1 as a placeholder for wages in FY23 and FY24.

The Board reviewed line items of the budget, and there was continued discussion about how to deal with the rising costs while navigating increased budget appropriations requests and proposed wage increases without creating an unacceptable tax rate increase.

Mary Gavin asked that Lucy Pierpont provide a draft budget using the Wage Proposal 6 in place of Wage Proposal 1 for comparison. Lucy said she would provide that in time for the next meeting on December 12th.

11. Town Meeting Articles

Nicola Shipman presented draft articles for Tax Penalty changes that had been discussed by the Board in July. The Selectboard members were all comfortable with the language as submitted. Nicola Shipman will use these articles in the preparation of the warning for Town Meeting.

Nicola Shipman said she reviewed the procedure for repealing an Ordinance, and the Selectboard should be able to repeal the Code of Conduct Ordinance and substitute a Policy on its own motion so long as it has a Code of Conduct policy to take the place of the Ordinance. The Town must also notify the public of the Ordinance repeal and make clear the public's right to petition. Since this would not need to be included in the warning for Town Meeting, the topic can be addressed by the Board after the budget discussions are finalized.

12. Jack Jones Construction Inc. Contract

Mary Gavin made a motion to sign the contract with Jack Jones Construction Inc. for services to the town. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

13. TAP Scoping Study Grant Application

Mary Gavin made a motion to sign the letter of support for the Transportation Alternatives Program Scoping Study Grant Application. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

14. Other business:

No other business was discussed.

15. Adjourn

Mary Gavin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:08PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Submitted by Nicola Shipman