

**Sharon Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
January 2nd 2024 6:30PM**

Attending In Person: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Scott Henkels, Selectboard Vice Chair; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Frank Rogers, Road Foreman; Martha Fisk, South Royalton Area Senior Center; Mary Ayers, South Royalton Area Senior Center; Sue Coburn, South Royalton Area Senior Center

Attending via Zoom: Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Joyce Amsden, Sharon Historical Society; Dave Phillips, Sharon Historical Society

Attending via Phone: Sue Sellew, Sharon Historical Society

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 as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments

3. **Selectboard Member Reports**

Kevin Gish asked Nicola Shipman to include the Ashley Community Forest Board request in the next meeting agenda.

4. **Finance Manager Reports**

Finance Manager, Lucy Pierpont, reported on changes to the payroll tax enacted by the State. Lucy noted that she incorporated this change into the draft FY25 budget which is slated for discussion later in the meeting.

5. **Road Foreman Report**

Frank Rogers said the Town dodged any major damage during the December rains, but the warmer temperatures created mud season conditions for the roads.

6. **Selectboard Assistant Report**

Nicola Shipman reported that she is waiting to hear back from Green Mountain Mowing regarding iron balusters needed for the ADA ramp at the Old Town Hall.

Nicola confirmed that the Town submitted its application for Better Roads Grant funding for Town Farm Road ditching and culverts. She noted all FEMA repairs and FHWA repairs are complete and invoiced. All invoices will have been paid in full by January 3rd, 2024. Nicola and Lucy Pierpont are now in the document reporting phase for the reimbursement process from FEMA.

Nicola noted that the Town does not yet have a fully executed contract with South Royalton Rescue at this time, and there is no resolution regarding service.

The Board confirmed the addition of a special meeting scheduled for Monday, January 29th, 2024 to approve the warned articles for Town Meeting.

7. **Minutes:**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the minutes from 11/20/23 with changes. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved 2-0-1 with Sarah Pfeiffer abstaining.,

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the 12/4/23 minutes with one minor change. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the 12/16/23 minutes as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the 12/18/23 minutes as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

8. **Warrants**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to ratify Payroll for the period 12/17/23-12/30/23 with a cash draw of \$14,480.52. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1588 in the amount of \$45,437.82 with payments to ATG \$39.86, Bethel Mills \$67.76, Blue Cross Blue Shield \$9,262.56, Cargill \$7,509.08, Chase Site Services \$1,585.25, Consolidated Communications \$135.46, Cott Systems \$170.00, D&D Excavating \$24,160, Evans Motor Fuels \$2,507.85. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1589 in the amount of \$1,656.14 with payments to Foley Services \$113.07, Green Mountain Power \$1,181.94, Kimball Midwest \$162.00, Madison National Life \$199.13. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1590 in the amount of \$27,570 with payment to Green Mountain Mowing \$27,570. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1591 in the amount of \$6,952.47 with payments to Magee Office Products \$178.08, Mudgett, Jennett, and Krough-Wisner \$2,500, Northeast Delta Dental \$296.14, Sabil and Sons \$3,300, Suburban Propane \$582.85, Valley News \$95.40. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1592 in the amount of \$5,985.33 with payments to Viking-Cives \$1,869.02, VLCT \$20.00, Vermont Old Cemeteries Association \$100.00,

VMERS \$3,590.08, W.B. Mason \$39.15, White Cap \$367.08. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1593 from the Old School House fund in the amount of \$500 with payment to Jack Jones Construction \$500. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

9. **Budget Discussions**

Kevin Gish welcomed Martha Fisk, Mary Ayers and Sue Coburn, three South Royalton Area Senior Center representatives who came to help answer questions posited by the Selectboard regarding the increased appropriations request. Initially, the Senior Center had requested \$3,500 in appropriations for FY25, but they recently increased their request to \$10,000 due to financial constraints.

In response to questions regarding fundraising, Sue Coburn shared that when the Senior Thrift Shop closed, this affected the Senior Center's fundraising efforts. Sue also said COVID put a financial strain on the Center's budget, as in-person meal attendance is significantly lower and has not returned to pre-COVID attendance levels. Sue further noted that the cost of meal delivery is much higher than the cost of in-person meals, as delivery includes the cost of additional packaging and mileage reimbursement. Sue said the Center is also trying to find the original agreement with the four Towns from the 1970s when the Center was established. This might help clarify the actual agreement terms. Sue also asked the Town of Sharon to help generate buzz to get seniors back to the centers. The Center representatives noted that all are welcome to eat at the center, not just seniors.

After further discussion, the Board decided it would allocate \$5,000 of funding from ARPA as well as increase the annual appropriation for the Senior Center from \$3,500 to \$5,000 for FY25.

Kevin Gish made a motion to allocate \$5,000 from the ARPA funds to be distributed to the South Royalton Area Senior Center under the community health category. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

The Selectboard continued to discuss the general fund budget as proposed for FY25.

The Board decided to table the FY25 highway budget discussion until after the Old Town Hall discussion since the Sharon Historical Society representatives were all present.

10. **Old Town Hall/Sharon Historical Society**

Kevin Gish welcomed Dave Phillips, Joyce Amsden and Sue Sellew of the Sharon Historical Society. Jack Jones was also available by Zoom to assist in answering questions about the current building conditions and needs.

Kevin Gish opened the floor to the Sharon Historical Society.

Joyce Amsden asked that the Town be in close communication with the SHS Board. Joyce said she does not intend to minimize the fact that the building may be unsafe. She said her primary concern is that the historical documents will need to be removed and many are fragile and in need of preservation.

During the continued discussion, the Board discussed how to move the larger objects, including the safe and the stage, which may prove to be unwieldy and possibly more of a safety concern than some

other smaller items. Regardless, these items will need to be relocated to a different facility. A concern for the SHS and the Selectboard is finding an appropriate space for the collection while the Old Town Hall is closed.

Jack Jones noted that he has reviewed the draft report on the current Old Town Hall floor from the December inspection, and he will work with Nicola Shipman to finalize the report.

Joyce mentioned that ideally there would be a climate-controlled storage solution for some of the more vulnerable documents.

Cathy Sartor mentioned the vault might have some room for particularly sensitive documents or most treasured items could be pulled into the Town vault.

Joyce also asked what it would look like to get permission to enter the building. Scott Henkels volunteered to join Joyce, so that she could enter the building and assess the collection to formulate plans for removal.

Kevin Gish noted that removing the SHS items from the building will make the flooring repair much easier.

Jack Jones added that the full scope of work will only be apparent once the flooring has been removed, and the support beams can be assessed more fully.

Dave Phillips noted that there is a possibility of a storage unit 20' or 50' long and placement would be straightforward. He believes storage containers are a few hundred dollars a month at most.

The Sharon Historical Society will research storage options for the collection. In the meantime, the Town will set up meeting times for assessment for how best to support the SHS during this relocation and to make plans for repairs to the building.

11. Budget Discussions Continued

Kevin Gish asked Lucy Pierpont and Frank Rogers to summarize any changes to the draft FY25 Highway Budget.

Sarah Pfeiffer asked about the equipment reserve schedule. Kevin Gish noted that the grader replacement will be moved out by a year to FY29. The Board noted other adjustments were made to the replacement schedule overall, which could be helpful when navigating financing.

The FY25 budget discussions concluded.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the FY25 Budget with total municipal expenses of \$2,020,889 in expenses, including highways and transfers, of which \$1,480,000 shall be raised in property taxes. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

12. **Other Business**

Nicola Shipman and Cathy Sartor will work with Scott Henkels to ensure the Deputy Health Officer paperwork will be completed in time for a February 1st appointment.

18. **Adjourn**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to adjourn at 8:21PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Nicola Shipman