

**Sharon Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 4th, 2023 FINAL**

Attending In Person: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Jerry Barcelow, SRRS; David Kimball, SRRS

Attending via Zoom: Scott Henkels, Selectboard Vice Chair; Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Nicole Antal, WRV Herald; Heather Devine, Legal Counsel

Attending via Phone: Frank Rogers, Road Foreman

Call to Order:

Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:32PM.

1. **Review/Approve Agenda**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments

3. **Selectboard Member Reports**

Scott Henkels noted the Strafford Craft Fair event he attended was a good local event, and he said it got him wondering about how the Town's Congregational Church could be a good location for similar events in Town.

4. **Finance Manager Reports**

Lucy Pierpont noted that about \$36,000 of outstanding taxes are currently owed to the Town.

5. **Selectboard Assistant Reports**

Nicola Shipman reported that the LED lighting upgrade is predominantly complete, and the electrical contractor came in under budget despite some challenges experienced during the installation phase. This project is expected to be 75% reimbursed through Efficiency Vermont once we file our report.

Nicola reported that she and Frank Rogers would be meeting with FEMA on Wednesday morning to discuss the Fay Brook bank stabilization with the mitigation officer. It sounds as though there may be a possibility to move the project forward as a mitigation project.

Finally, Nicola requested guidance as to whether to use the FMLA/VPFLA as the benchmark for the revised personnel policy currently in development. After receiving some clarification to their

questions, the Board members agreed to include the FMLA/VPFLA in the working document as a stand in for Parental and Family Leave for Town Employees until a decision can be made.

6. **Road Foreman Reports**

Foreman Frank Rogers joined the meeting.

After discussing a dangerous driver who did not reduce their speed or yield to the Town plow truck, Frank and Kevin agreed that if there is a road incident involving a Town Highway truck it would be best to file a police report. Fortunately, in this instance, Frank was able to avoid the motorist, and no one was injured, but when Frank moved to avoid a collision, there was some minor damage to the wing of the plow. Frank Rogers reported that drivers are more frequently not slowing down or moving over for Highway Trucks, and drivers are more aggressive and more dangerous than have been in the past.

The Selectboard Offices will increase communication about highway safety and driver awareness. Frank wants drivers to remember they are best served by slowing down for plows and giving them much more room to pass

Frank also reported that the 2018 Freightliner is having mechanical issues which has been frustrating.

7. **Review Minutes: November 20th**

Tabled until the next meeting

8. **Warrants**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1573 in the amount of \$951.70 with payments to CED Twin State \$37.04, Cott Systems \$170, North East Delta Dental \$431.66, Deb Jones (Petty Cash) \$313.00. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1574 in the amount of \$4,071.03 with payment to Evans Motor Fuels \$3,957.84, Foley Services \$113.19. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer AP Warrant 1575 in the amount of \$1,129.10 with payments to Green Mountain Power \$1,722.60, Identification Source \$121.21, Key Communications \$146.59. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1576 5 checks for \$17,116.23 with payment to Lucy Pierpont \$22.50, Madison National Life \$110.67, Magee Office Products \$56.50, Community Bank \$16,782.94, ATG Westminster \$143.62. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1577 in the amount is \$14,858.41. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1578 in the amount of \$13,599.36 with payments to VLCT PACIF \$9,365.44, VLCT Employment Resource \$262.00, VMERS \$3,542.84, Waweco \$62.00, White Cap \$367.08. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1579 in the amount of \$47.49 with payment to WB Mason \$47.49. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1580 from the Old School House Fund in the amount of \$1,141.06 with payment to VLCT PACIF \$1,141.06. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1581 in the amount of \$2,453.34 with payment to Tilden Electric \$2,453.34. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the payroll warrant for the period 11/19/23-12/02/23 with a cash draw of \$12,815.88. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

9. **SRRS Representatives Appropriations Request**

Kevin Gish recognized Dave Kimball and Jerry Barcelow, who both serve on the SRRS Board as representatives for their respective Towns. They joined at the request of the Selectboard to help answer questions regarding the proposed budget increased to the FY25 which would affect the SRRS per capita rate bringing it to \$67.13. This is above and beyond the budget cap of \$65.00 per capita stated in the current contract.

Jerry Barcelow indicated that the SRRS budget going back as far as 2018–2019 had been held in line over time with just a 7.2% increase between 2018 - 2023. In the same amount of time, he noted that the CPI increased 24%.

SRRS needs more staff and would like to be competitive with pay rates and benefits like those offered by White River Valley and First Branch.

The increase in the per capita rate reflects a pay rate increase and added employee benefits all of which is an effort to be more competitive in the labor market. SRRS has struggled with filling vacancies as their pay packages have been seen as less attractive than other area response teams.

SRRS FY25 benefits include vacation pay, a health insurance contribution, and retirement plan benefits. The FY25 budget proposes a rate of \$67.13 per capita which is the difference of \$3,300 above and beyond the \$65.00 rate cap in increased costs to the Town. Kevin Gish asked if the increase reflects any additional personnel or increase in services. Both Jerry Barcelow and Dave Kimball confirmed the proposed budget did not reflect an increase in personnel or added/additional service to the Towns. Jerry added that White River Valley Ambulance rates are currently \$72 per capita.

Jerry Barcelow also noted that both Sharon appointees to the SRRS Advisory Board have stepped down, and SRRS is now seeking two new Sharon representatives to serve and attend monthly meetings. Nicola Shipman will further publicize these openings in the search for potential appointees.

10. **Executive Session: Legal Counsel**

The Selectboard agreed that premature public knowledge regarding the town's ongoing case in environmental court would clearly place the town at a substantial disadvantage as it would require disclosing its legal strategy in public, and therefore Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to receive confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing

professional legal services to the body. 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1). Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Exit Executive Session

Kevin Gish made the motion to exit executive session at 7:28PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Resume Open Meeting

No action taken.

11. Budget Discussion: Appropriations/Budget Overview

FY25 Appropriations discussions included decisions to include all FY25 appropriation requests from organizations who have requested funds of the Town in past years.

The Selectboard did not decide with regards to the SRRS request for an increase of the per capita rate, but they have included one new appropriation in the working budget for \$500 in support of the Sharon Historical Society. The Board agreed not to include a request from the Public Health Council of the Upper Valley as they feel there are other more locally based organizations within our Town they would rather fund instead.

12. FY23 Audit Report Review

Lucy Pierpont noted that Deb Jones, Treasurer, has been allocating interest from the interfund this year since interest has increased. All interest was allocated to the appropriate funds as interest income. Lucy noted that there is a new GASB rule for Leases requiring that Old School House revenue must be deferred for five years. Lucy also noted that Deb Jones identified one error in the audit report related to how the allocation of the Downer Fund non-spendable versus restricted funds, as defined by the will for the Chester Downer fund, were inaccurately reported in one section of the audit report. All the changes have been communicated to the auditors and have been corrected. If the board accepts the report with those changes, the auditors will print the final report.

Sarah Pfeiffer a motion to accept the FY23 audit report with stated amendments. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to authorize the Selectboard Chair to sign the Approval of Financial Statements and Reports. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

13. Ashley Community Forest Timber Sales Contract Question

There was some discussion regarding the Selectboard's responsibility/authority to the ACF and the Board regarding timber contracts.

After reviewing the documentation, Kevin Gish said he would reach out to David Paganelli to request the timber sales contract and to review questions about the Forestry Management Plan Draft.

14. **Australian Ballot Articles for Town Meeting 2024**

The Selectboard members agreed that they would not pursue including articles related to Australian Ballot consideration onto the warned articles for Town Meeting 2024.

15. **FY24 Grants-in-Aid Technical Support Request**

Kevin Gish made a motion to engage TRORC technical assistance for FY24 Grants-in-Aid program. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

16. **Jack Jones Carpentry Contract Renewal**

Scott Henkels made a motion to sign the agreement for services with Jack Jones Carpentry as presented. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

17. **Downer Fund Corporate Resolution**

Deb Jones gave some background on Treasury Direct for the Treasury Notes. Currently, former Treasurer Margaret Raymond is the only authorized user for Treasury Direct. As the appointee of the Selectboard and the successor trustee for the Downer fund, Deb needs to become the Entity Manager. This has been approved by the Downer Trustees by resolution. Deb has asked for the Selectboard for a Corporate Resolution so that she might be able to manage the Downer Fund treasury notes.

Kevin Gish made a motion to sign a corporate authorization resolution naming the Town Treasurer Deb Jones as the successor trustee for the Charles Downer Trust for the benefit of the Town of Sharon DBA the Chester Downer Trust. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

18. **Municipal Cardiac Emergency Response Plan**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan as presented. Scott Henkels seconded.

19. **Contract Amendment for Exterior Painting**

Deb Jones exited the meeting.

Kevin Gish made a motion to authorize the extension of the original contract dates with Lacallaide's Professional Painting through June 30, 2024. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

20. **Old Town Hall Building Repairs**

Based on the information presented to the Board, including an update on the building conditions and the advice as reported by Nicola Shipman and the advice of the Town's carpentry consultant and the ongoing moisture issues in the building, the Selectboard concluded it would be safest to close the Old Town Hall until 1) the ADA ramp has been removed and the new ramp installed, 2) the required drainage and regrading has been completed, 3) the moisture has been sufficiently controlled and 4) the floor is permanently repaired.

Nicola Shipman will work with contractors to get the projects moving forward as soon as possible, and she will communicate directly with the Sharon Historical Society. Scott Henkels suggested that there should be consideration as to how the museum collection might be relocated, so that repairs can be expedited during the building closure.

21. **Other Business**

No other business.

18. **Adjourn**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to adjourn at 9:20PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Nicola Shipman