

**Sharon Selectboard
Meeting Minutes
December 18th, 2023 FINAL**

Attending In Person: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Frank Rogers, Road Foreman

Attending via Zoom: Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Galen Mudgett, Lister; Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk

Call to Order:

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

1. **Review/Approve Agenda**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the agenda with addition of Item 10a with Better Roads Grant funding authorization and Item 12 Deputy Health Officer review. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Scott Henkels not present.

2. **Public Comments**

No public comments

3. **Selectboard Member Reports**

No Selectboard member reports currently.

4. **Finance Manager Reports**

Lucy Pierpont explained that the General Fund and Highway Fund are both on track for this time in the year, both meeting budget with about 40% spent and 40% of the year complete. Lucy noted someone did submit a job application through Indeed for the open Town Highway position. Lucy sent the application to the candidate, so they can apply using the Town's application. An interview would be the next step, but scheduling may be challenging with the holidays coming up, so the Board will try to arrange something for this week or at the January 2nd meeting.

Lucy Pierpont also noted there is a new State Childcare Contribution tax representing a 0.44% increase which will be effective as of July 1, 2024. Lucy amended the draft budget to reflect this new tax.

5. **Road Foreman Report**

Overall, Frank Rogers said the Town has survived this round of melting and rain with minimal damage. There is a private culvert on Quimby Mountain Road that continues to cause problems, but the crew did their best to minimize the impact of the damage to the road. Additionally, there are minor repairs needed, but overall conditions are reasonable considering the amount of water the Town experienced on Sunday and Monday.

6. Selectboard Assistant Report

Nicola Shipman reported that she has reached out to ANR to initiate the permitting process for the private culvert on Quimby Mountain Road. She also reached out to legal counsel for help with drafting an easement so the Town can obtain landowner permission to access the culvert.

A recent inspection of Old Town Hall confirmed that the current conditions warranted a building closure as well as cordoning off sections of the building due to floor instability.

Nicola also reported that the Town is actively seeking funding from Better Roads Grant in FY25 for ditching and culverts project on Town Farm Road. Nicola said she will be seeking authorization from the Board to submit a Better Roads Grant Application for a Category B Grant with the total project budget allowed by the Grant of \$25,000. We would apply for \$20,000 of grant funding with a \$5,000 expected Town match. Rita Seto at TRORC is providing support with the application.

7. Minutes:

The Board decided to table the November 20th minutes and the December 4th minutes review until the January 2nd meeting.

8. Warrants

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1582 in the amount of \$11,509.68 with payments to Aubuchon Hardware \$70.51, Cargill Inc. \$8,768.52, Casella Waste \$104.94, Chase Site Services \$2,203, Consolidated Communications \$135.46, CVC Paging \$132.72, De Lage Landen \$94.53. **Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1583 in the amount of \$10,364.54 with payments to EC Fiber \$151.00, Evans Motor Fuels \$2,393.35, Eye Med \$.66, Foley Services \$56.22, Fuss & O'Neill \$5,779.67, Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste \$1,287.50, HP Fairfield \$670.58, James Armbruster \$25.56. **Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1584 in the amount of \$5,961.47 with payments to Lebanon Ford \$2,087.16, Magee Office Products \$103.4, NEMRC \$879.01, ATG Westminster \$644.17, Pete's Tire Barns \$1,608.08, Royal Auto Parts \$70.97, Sabil and Sons \$381.17, Sam Brakeley \$187.50. **Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1585 in the amount of \$21,858.45 with payments to Nicola Shipman \$499.99, South Royalton Rescue \$15,496.46, Tilden Electric \$180.00, Tarrant, Gillies, & Shems \$45.00, U.S.P.S. \$264.00, Windsor County Sheriff \$5,373.00. **Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1586 from the Old School House Fund in the amount of \$32.13 with payment to Crystal Rock \$32.13. **Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to ratify the HRA reimbursement warrant for November 1 – November 30, 2023 in the amount of \$127.74. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.

Kevin Gish made a motion to ratify the corrected payroll cash draw amount of \$14,958.74 for the period 11/19/23-12/2/23. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve payroll for the period 12/3/23-12/16/23 with a cash draw of \$14,989.39. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.

9. **Grand List Changes**

Galen Mudgett was invited to explain the changes to the FY23 Grand List presented by the Listers office. The listers presented the changes for approval by the Selectboard per statute.

Galen Mudgett noted that the changes to the Grand List are changes to the amount of land enrolled in Current Use.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the changes to the 2023 Grand List as presented by the Lister's Office. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2/0/0.

7:06PM Scott Henkels joined the meeting.

10. **Better Roads Grant**

Cathy joined the meeting at 7:10PM

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the Town's Application for the Better Roads Category B Grant Application for up to \$20,000 of grant funding with an expected \$5,000 matching contribution from the Town. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

11. **Budget Discussions**

The Selectboard reviewed the Recreation Department FY25 budget submission, and the Selectboard decided to move forward with the Recreation budget as presented.

The South Royalton Rescue Squad is asking for a 13.1% increase, and there have been concerns about the level of service currently. Kevin Gish is trying to connect with Steve Sanborn, but so far has been unsuccessful. Sarah Pfeiffer said she would do what she could to assist with connecting the Town with SRRS.

Scott Henkels asked a question about the line for funding the Hartford I-89 response as it appeared to be blank. The Board decided to add \$175 in case of an ambulance fees owed.

Kevin Gish asked a question about General Fund revenue as it relates to the Current Use payments. Kevin asked if it would be worth increasing the Current Use revenue in the FY25 budget to reflect actual revenues more accurately. The Board decided to increase Current Use revenue by \$5,000 and reduce the property tax revenue line by \$5,000.

12. **Health Officer Update**

The appointed Town Health Officer is currently on leave. Kevin Gish is the acting Health Officer until a Deputy Health Officer can be nominated and appointed by the State. In the meantime, there was an inspection conducted on a rental property and Keith Lyman Jr. provided a report to the tenant and landlord.

Elizabeth Parento from CVECO is trying to get a copy of the report, and Nicola Shipman will work to get the records from the Health Officer.

Kevin Gish is recommending that the Town nominate deputy Health Officer to step into the role as he is unable to serve in that role currently.

Frank Rogers exited the meeting at 7:51PM to respond to a call regarding highway safety.

Cathy Sartor noted that the Town Health Officer is also involved in green burials. Scott Henkels volunteered to put his name forward for the role of Deputy Health Officer. Nicola Shipman will work to submit the paperwork to the State to nominate Scott Henkels to as Deputy Health Officer

13. Other Business

Scott Henkels provided an update on the Old Town Hall building. Scott Henkels said the North end of the building does appear to have experienced a complete collapse of the major framing as it is currently resting on the ground. Additionally, the south-western corner, where the old safe is positioned, is unfortunately in an area where the original subfloor planks appear to be completely rotten. Currently, the actual floor surface is the only structure supporting objects in that corner. Scott noted the challenge is that items will need to be removed from the building to conduct repairs, but it will be important to maintain safety for those working in the building to remove the collection.

The building needs to be closed officially, and the Board will work to find solution for how to get any important Town records and/or documents out so they can be accessible to the public. Scott Henkels suggested it would be best to lay down a sheet of plywood over the southwest corner to minimize pressure on the floor and to allow temporary access to remove items at that location while also preventing injury. There will be opportunity for more planning for the building in January when the Board and the SHS will meet to discuss the issues of the building safety and a plan for future use.

18. Adjourn

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to adjourn at 8:08PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted by Nicola Shipman