



**Town of Sharon
Selectboard Organizational Meeting**

March 6th, 2024 FINAL Minutes

Attending In Person: Scott Henkels, Vice Chair; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Kevin Gish, Chair; Frank Rogers, Road Foreman; Nic Antal, White River Valley Herald

Attending via Zoom: Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Sarah Pfeiffer, Clerk; Mark Neuroth, Resident; Lee Simek, Resident

1. **Call to Order**

Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:35PM.

2. **Nominate Temporary Chair**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to nominate Kevin Gish as temporary chair. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. **Election of Officers**

Kevin Gish made a motion to nominate Sarah Pfeiffer as Selectboard Clerk and Scott Henkels as Selectboard Vice Chair. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to nominate Kevin Gish as Selectboard Chair. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

4. **Adoption of Regular Meeting schedule**

Kevin Gish made a motion to adopt the Regular Meeting schedule with the first and third Mondays of each month at 6:30PM as the regular meeting day and time for the Town of Sharon Selectboard. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. **Approve Newspaper of Record**

There was some question as to whether the paper of record could be a weekly paper or if it needed to be a daily paper. Nicola Shipman said she was not sure of the legal requirements, but administratively a weekly paper creates an added layer of challenge since it is often difficult to meet statutory deadlines even with a daily paper.

Sarah Pfeiffer said the Board didn't wish to make legal requirements more challenging. Nicola agreed that it could create challenges, but if the Board would be willing to reconsider and allow a weekly paper at a future time if the weekly paper was causing deadline problems, she would certainly give a weekly a try. Nicola said she also will research the implication of a change, as she doesn't know how this decision might affect other commissions and committees in Town. Alternatively, the Town could choose a daily newspaper of record while also noticing in a weekly paper, as there is evidence to show that there is a strong local connection to The Herald.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the White River Valley Herald as the Newspaper of Record. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

6. **Adopt Rules of Procedure**

Kevin Gish made a motion to adopt the Rules of Procedure last updated February 29th, 2024. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

7. **Review/Approve Agenda**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the agenda for March 6th, 2024 with the addition of an executive session Item 24(a) and a correction to the dollar amount listed in Item 18 to \$124,300.00. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

8. **Public Comments**

No public comments.

9. **Selectboard Member Reports**

Scott Henkels reported that someone reached out to him at Town Meeting interested in serving on the TriValley Transit Board.

Kevin Gish noted that Bob Ferguson has connected with three people interested in serving on the South Royalton Rescue Squad Advisory Board.

Nicola Shipman asked if the current members of the Board had officially resigned. Sarah Pfeiffer said she would reach out to confirm.

10. **Finance Manager Reports**

Lucy Pierpont reported that as of today, March 6th, there was \$61,000 in overdue taxes; \$20,000 is due for the first payment and \$41,000 due for the second payment. She noted that this was a reduction from last year at the same time.

11. **Road Foreman Reports**

Frank Rogers reported that it is mud season, again. He said despite the challenging conditions, the roads are in decent shape. He is hoping conditions will dry enough that the road crew can continue with routine maintenance soon.

12. **Selectboard Assistant Reports**

Nicola Shipman reported on current and ongoing building needs, particularly the preliminary findings of the MERP Level 2 Energy Assessments. Nicola noted that one side of the Town Garage is deteriorating due to rot and the roof will need to be replaced. The Town expects to see the full reports in late April, but there is considerable evidence that the Town Garage will need significant work soon.

Nicola said she will work with Lucy Pierpont and Deb Jones to create a plan for capital improvements to the buildings, noting she was working on an inventory of the buildings, their deficiencies and major mechanical systems in concert with the finance department to develop a capital improvement strategy, so the Board can have a realistic conversation about what the Town can reasonably expect to afford with the reserve funds currently available for the necessary capital improvements to our buildings, including the Town Offices, the Old Town Hall and the Town Garage.

Nicola noted that there is a possibility the Town will see a petition to reconsider the vote for the Australian Ballot articles. If a valid petition is filed within 30 days of the vote, the Town must warn a special meeting within 60 days of receiving the petition. Nicola knows there is a statutory process allowing for a reconsideration of a vote, but she is unsure of the nuances and has not had time to fully understand the implications.

Nicola also raised that she is worried she caused confusion as to the mechanism for how the voters might address the desire to explore a change of our Annual Town Meeting Date and Time.

Nicola recommends the Town, through the Selectboard Offices, engages with the community as soon as possible and frequently to ensure residents understand the process for changing the day or Town meeting. Town Officials first need to understand what it is the community would most like to see happen in 2025. In addition to a potential petition, there is a strong contingent seeking to change the day and time of Town Meeting. That said, at this time, the Selectboard is not feel confident they understand which day and time combination might be the best option for the voters.

Nicola also recommends the Town sends out a mailer to all registered voters and residents, with an explanation of the process required to change the start date for Town Meeting as well as what options are available to voters.

The Board is also interested in distributing a community survey to residents, provided in paper format and digital format, to gather input on these questions.

Nicola also recommended hosting one or two community forums to allow for discussion of the process as well as the importance of in-person voter participation which will be required if the voters are to make any changes.

Considerations include:

- the need to engage in conversation with the Town's election officials, since there would need to be a special meeting with a vote to change the date of Town Meeting
- the need to engage with the School Board since they traditionally hold their annual meeting on the Monday evening before Town Meeting
- the need to engage with the community to find a satisfactory solution from among the limited dates and times available for Town Meeting
- establishing an ideal timeline for when to hold a special vote

Nicola noted the VTrans Paving Grant is due April 15th, so she and Frank will be working to put that together.

Nicola also noted a private culvert that caused damage on Quimby Mountain Road is still in limbo as there have been no confirmed alternatives for mitigating future damage. Nicola is waiting to connect with Scott Jensen of ANR, but she and Frank feel there may be a work around to avoid having to install a culvert on the perennial stream.

Nicola noted that the State issued a subrecipient contract for the Route 132 repairs completed after the July flooding.

Finally, Nicola reminded the board that they have a site visit on Saturday March 9th at 9am and a second at 9:30 with a public hearing schedule for the 18th for Town Highway 46 and 47 discontinuances.

13. Minutes

Kevin Gish made a motion to accept the minutes from February 20th, 2024 as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

14. Warrants

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1617 in the amount of \$8,569.43 Nicole Antal \$109.14, Blue Cross Blue Shield \$7,038.67, Kofile \$557.88, Bruce McShinsky \$100.00, Chase site services \$262.00, Consolidated Communications \$137.84, Delta Dental \$363.90. **Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1618 in the amount of \$6,067.50 with payments to Evans Motor Fuels \$3,556.26, Foley Services \$115.70, Fuss & O'Neill \$1,140.32, Green Mountain Power \$1,255.20

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1619 in the amount of \$25,542.44 with payments to Lebanon Ford \$534.05, Madison National Life \$199.13, ATG Westminster \$69.69, Sabil and Sons \$1,037.40, Nicola Shipman \$174.98, South Royalton Rescue \$23,244.69, Suburban Propane \$282.50. **Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.**

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1620 in the amount of \$10,302.16 with payments to Twin State Sand & Gravel \$3,863.53, Valley News \$342, VMERS

\$5,797.27, WB Mason \$1.98, White Cap \$ 237.84, Work Safe \$59.54. **Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.**

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1621 in the amount of \$124,300 with a single payment to United Construction and Forestry \$124,300. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to ratify payroll for the period 2/11/24 - 2/24/24 with a cash draw of \$19,368.49. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1622 in the amount of \$3,305.40 with payments to HIV/HCV \$300, State of Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation \$1,350, Aubuchon Hardware \$67.06, Clara Martin \$750.00, Compucount \$260.06, De Lage Landen \$94.53, EC Fiber \$151.00, Eyemed \$32.17, Fastenal \$106.58, Haun Welding \$194.00. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1623 in the amount of \$3,055.82 with payments to The Hearld \$53.94, Jack of All Blades \$1,050.00, Joe's Equipment \$171.99, Kimball Midwest \$19.90, LaValley building supply \$717.20, United AG & Turf \$353.00, LHS \$625.00, Magee office products \$39.47, Royal Auto Parts \$25.32. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1624 in the amount of \$12,891.00 with payments to Green Mountain Economic Development corp. \$787.00, Sharon Health Initiative \$3,000.00, Safeline \$700.00, TriValley Transit \$4,054.00, VT Association for the blind \$150.00, VT fire protection task force \$100.00, Vital Communities \$100.00, Visiting nurse VNA/VNH \$3,500.00, White River Partnership \$500.00. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1625 in the amount of \$9,527.44 with payments to VLCT Property & Casualty \$9,365.44, VLCT Employment \$162.00. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1626 in the amount of \$1,150,000.00 with payment to Sharon School District \$1,150,000.00. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1627 from the Old School House fund in the amount of \$1,141.06 with payment to VLCT Property & Casualty \$1,141.06. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

15. **Petition Regarding Aldrich Farm Road**

Chair Kevin Gish recognized Lee Simek and Mark Neureth, residents of Aldrich Farm Road, and invited them to ask questions about the Town Highway acceptance process as well as to give them a change to provide information to the members with regards to their petition.

The Selectboard set a date and time for a site visit and subsequent public hearing on Saturday, May 4th and Monday, May 20th, respectively.

16. **Audit Engagement Letter**

Scott Henkels made a motion to authorize signature of the engagement letter provided by Mudgett, Jennett & Krogh-Wisner, PC for professional audit services for FY2024. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

17. **Town Meeting 2024 Results Discussion**

There was significant discussion about Town Meeting, the things that went well and things that might need adjusting in future.

Scott Henkels noted that it was difficult for him to hear at Town Meeting as there was significant activity behind him due to voting. He wonders if there might be a larger buffer zone between voter activity and the Town Meeting proceedings in future.

There was discussion regarding the best way to conduct a survey of the residents and particularly voters in Town, so there might be a viable option for voters to change the date and time of Town Meeting in 2024 for 2025 Town Meeting.

Additionally, Nic Antal reminded the Selectboard that there is childcare provided at the School Meeting, and there were sixteen children who received care during the School Meeting. The cost was reasonable, and it would be an important option to have childcare available at Town Meeting in the future.

18. **United Sales Agreement for John Deer 524 P-Tier Wheel Loader**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to execute the United Construction, Utility and Forestry Sales Agreement #10073004 with extended warranty with a balance due of \$124,300.00. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

19. **Authorization to Secure Bank Loan for a John Deer 524 P-Tier Wheel Loader**

Kevin Gish made a motion to authorize a bank loan with Community Bank NA in the amount of \$120,000.00 at a rate of 5.46% for a five-year term for the purchase of a John Deer 524 P-Tier Wheel Loader. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

20. **Bids for 10-Wheeler Truck, Body, Plow, and Wing Package**

Kevin Gish made a motion to award the contract for a 10-wheeler Truck, Body, Plow, and Wing Package to ATG Patriot LLC for the purchase of a Western Star 47X with the purchase price not to exceed \$211,900 inclusive of the trade-in and extended warranty as well as the optional wing cart. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Frank Rogers noted delivery was expected in October 2024.

21. Driveway Permit Application: Harrington

There was discussion as to the location of the driveway access requested. Frank Rogers said he requested that the owner adjust his approach angle to reflect the required 90-degree curb cut requirements as well as the culvert requirements (15" culvert) and other conditions as outlined in the Town of Sharon Highway policy. Frank said overall, he felt this had the best sight lines of the most recent permits, and he felt it was a reasonable request.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve Roger Harrington's driveway permit application for parcel #R36010.R received on January 4th, 2024. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

22. 2024 Town Officer Appointments

Tabled until Monday, March 18th, 2024.

23. 2024 Draft Personnel Policy: Second Review

Tabled until Monday, March 18th, 2024.

24. Upcoming Meeting Dates/Topics

Nicola Shipman will provide the Board with their 2023 goals, so they can evaluate the progress and further consider what they would like to identify as 2024 goals.

25. Executive Session

Kevin Gish made a motion that premature public knowledge of the Town's legal strategy would clearly place the municipality at a substantial disadvantage. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to enter executive session at 8:41PM to receive confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(1) with attendees to include the Selectboard members and Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to exit executive session at 8:53PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

No action was taken.

26. Other Business

No other business

27. **Adjourn**

Scott Henkels made a motion to adjourn at 8:55PM. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicola Shipman