



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Selectboard Meeting
June 3rd, 2024 Final Minutes

In-Person Attendees: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Michael Livingston, Sharon School Board; Nara Moore, Resident; Doug Moore, Resident

Remote Attendees: Sarah Pfeiffer, Selectboard Clerk; Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk; Scott Henkels, Selectboard Vice Chair; Frank Rogers, Road Foreman; Galen Mudgett, Head Lister

1. **Call Meeting to Order**

Kevin Gish called the meeting to order at 6:34PM.

2. **Review/Approve Agenda**

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

3. **Public Comments**

No public comments.

4. **Selectboard Member Reports**

Kevin Gish reported regarding an individual in Town who has a history of disruptive behavior, and he noted the State Police and Windsor County Police have been able to respond as needed.

5. **Finance Reports**

Deb Jones reported that another \$1,000.00 will come to the Town through the Opioid Settlement fund.

Deb said that Lucy Pierpont has set a return to office date of June 24th, 2024.

Deb said that delinquent tax payments are coming in, and the arrangements between property owners and the Collector of Delinquent Taxes have proven to be effective solutions for those property owners as well as the Town. Deb noted one property that had been delinquent was recently sold, so the taxes were paid in full.



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Deb Jones also asked a question regarding payroll for June 30th – July 13th regarding the implementation of budgeted pay increases. Deb will provide the Selectboard with an outline showing the scheduled pay changes and the impact on the budget in advance of the next meeting.

6. Road Foreman Reports

Frank Rogers said that the crew has been consistently cleaning culverts and grading is about wrapped up. The Crew will move onto mowing along the paved roads this week, and they will be looking to start the FY24 Grants-in-Aid work on White Brook Road. Frank said there are several construction projects in the pipeline, but the Town is waiting for grant agreements to come through from the State.

7. Selectboard Assistant Reports

Nicola Shipman reported that a resident stopped in and wanted to let the Town know that a local resident is currently paying for flags installed throughout the Town for Memorial Day celebrations and other holidays throughout the summer. Nicola noted the Boy Scouts had managed the flags in the past. The resident was interested to understand if the Town would be willing to reimburse for flags/installation materials purchased for this project.

There was agreement among the members that this would be something that could be supported, and Scott Henkels encouraged the resident who is currently installing the flags to bring this to the Board's attention.

Nicola also noted the same resident posed a question regarding former "agricultural roads" in town. The resident expressed concerns as to why these roads, many of which serve a single residence and are no longer agricultural roads, continue to be maintained by the Town and funded by taxpayers. Nicola communicated to the resident that the Town is reviewing these stub roads and looking to understand more about the history of how the roads came to exist and the estimated maintenance cost to taxpayers.

Nicola thanked the Board for including funding for a website redesign due to a noted lack of ADA accessibility. Nicola reported that there are mandated accessibility requirements for municipal websites and there will be new posting requirements for municipal websites due to changes in the Open Meeting Law. A more functional and accessible website will be a benefit to residents.

Nicola said the bid documents for the Baxter Library Drainage project are almost complete.



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Nicola reported that Fay Brook Road bank stabilization bids are due June 12th and those should be available for Selectboard review on June 17th. Nicola will need to make sure ANR is able to review plans, so the Town can get permits issued for the proposed scope of work. Finally, Nicola said that the DRB is holding a site visit at 2579 Howe Hill Road at 6:15PM with a public hearing to follow.

8. **Minutes**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the minutes from 5/20/2024 as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

9. **Warrants**

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve the payroll warrant for the period ending 6/1/24 warrant with a cash draw of \$15,808.37. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant #1666 in the amount of \$25,076.84. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve AP Warrant #1667 in the amount of \$8,289.58. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant #1668 in the amount of \$22,485.11. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to approve warrant #1669 in the amount of \$8,495.71. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

10. **Sharon Elementary School District**

Kevin Gish recognized Michael Livingston, a Sharon School Board member, who joined the meeting to participate in a listening session with the Selectboard.

The Selectboard shared feedback from the community.

Scott Henkels asked if the School Board is looking to propose the same bond amount at the next vote. Michael Livingston responded that there is no definitive decision.

Kevin Gish asked if the School Board is looking to coming back to the voters with a revised plan for the building.



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Michael Livingston responded that the School Board was looking at all options.

Kevin asked if there was any idea of timing for the next bond vote.

Michael Livingston said the School Board envisions a vote taking place late summer or in fall, during the November Presidential Election.

Den Jones said she has heard concerns from residents that if a large school bond goes through, they would be limited in their capacity to pay for other big-ticket items in the Town, such as repairs to the Town Garage or highway projects, for example.

Deb said she feels there is general uncertainty around the upcoming elections and people are struggling to understand the actual cost of the bond and how it will affect their tax bill.

Deb shared that some people who are eligible do not file both forms required for the education rebate, and therefore they do not receive the payment. She believes there is more the Town can do to help educate taxpayers.

Kevin Gish said the most common feedback he heard is that there are too many unknowns about property taxes in the State. Even without a bond vote, residents are already seeing their tax burden increasing.

Galen Mudgett weighed in on the bond vote. Galen noted that the common level of appraisal will affect the amount of funding either owed by the Town to the State Education Fund (or returned to the Town by the State depending on the CLA percentage), therefore there is a year-to-year variability for the taxpayers that is difficult to quantify when trying to figure the actual cost to taxpayers.

In response to a question from Michael Livingston regarding the possibility of a Selectboard endorsement of the bond, Scott Henkels stated that would try to find out more about the appropriateness of that question and whether it would be acceptable for the Selectboard to do that. Scott Henkels indicated he would act as an individual with little concern, but he does not understand the guidelines that exist for a Town or the Selectboard saying yes or no to that kind of endorsement. Kevin Gish agreed he also did not fully understand the implications.

Galen Mudgett said he felt the question of a Selectboard endorsement as a collective body was out of order.

There was discussion regarding the importance of collaborative work when looking at major capital projects in the Town, including for the Town Garage and highways for example.



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Scott Henkels said if a significant bond vote were to pass for the school project, it would potentially be too much to ask taxpayers to also pass a bond for capital improvements that may be needed for the municipality.

There was agreement that a broader conversation as to the overall capital projects needed for the community is important.

Scott Henkels said feedback he received from residents indicates they are concerned about the “millions” required for the school bond. While he understands the project will cost some amount of money, the idea of “millions” can be difficult for people to digest.

Scott Henkels also added the School Board could more clearly communicate the purpose of the capital improvement fund which he understood to have been created to offset the cost of improvements and maintenance rather than for new construction. Scott believes there is some confusion in the community about the purpose of that fund.

11. Lister’s Appointment

Kevin Gish noted that the next agenda item included the appointment for a Town Lister, due to the need to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Helen Barrett.

Nara Moore was the sole candidate.

Galen Mudgett posed a question to Nara Moore, asking her if she felt she would have capacity to assist with the Lister’s duties in addition to her obligations to her work. Nara confirmed she would have capacity, adding she had ability to conduct weekend work and Lister work after her regular office hours.

Galen also mentioned that the State of Vermont offers training courses for Listers, some of which are required and some of which are also in-person trainings. Nara responded that she would be able to be available for training.

Kevin Gish made a motion to appoint Nara Moore to fill a vacancy in the Lister’s Office, created by the resignation of Helen Barrett, effective through March of 2025 or until an election is had. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

12. Personnel Policy

Kevin Gish made a motion to adopt the May 21st, 2024 version of the Personnel Policy with an effective date of July 1st, 2024. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



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Due to a change in sick leave retention in the newly adopted personnel policy, Sarah Pfeiffer made a motion to make a one-time payment to any employee with unused sick leave time over 200 hours as of the pay period ending June 29, 2024 for those hours more than 200 hours at their regular hourly pay rate and to remove those excess hours from their sick leave balance. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

13. 1111 Permit Application for Baxter Library Drainage Project

Kevin Gish made a motion to authorize Nicola Shipman to sign and submit a 1111 Permit Application for the Baxter Memorial Library Drainage Project as well as to authorize payment of the permit application fee in the amount of \$100.00. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

14. Corporate Resolutions for Investments

Deb Jones presented a Corporate Resolution for Selectboard Review.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve a corporate resolution between Share Owner Services and the Town of Sharon, acting on behalf of the Baxter Memorial Library Trustees, and to authorize Treasurer Deborah Jones to buy, sell or transfer Vodaphone stock and its dividends. Sarah Pfeiffer seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Sarah Pfeiffer exited the meeting at 8:09PM.

15. Selectboard Goals

Scott Henkels asked which policies the Selectboard might first consider reviewing.

Nicola Shipman reported that she is working to generate a list of the policies and ordinances already on the books as well as the dates they were last revised. The Road Foreman has been requesting that the Highway policy be updated, and now that the Personnel Policy is adopted, Nicola suggested it would be a good time to revisit the and make sure there is no internal conflict with the Highway Policy and the Bridges and Roads Standards adopted in 2019.

Additionally, Nicola noted there is currently not a specific highway access permit application available for residents who wish to access the road for installation of underground power or to make improvements to a Class 4 road, for example, and this could be discussed during the policy review.



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The Selectboard asked that Nicola revise the current goals and bring the 2024 Goals to the Selectboard for review and possible approval on June 17th.

16. Fire Warden Appointments per State Recommendations

Scott Henkels made a motion to sign the Fire Warden Reappointment forms as provided by the State for the reappointment of both Dustin Potter and Andrew Brackett for terms commencing on July 1st, 2024 and terminating on June 30th, 2029. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Sarah Pfeiffer absent.

17. Hydraulic Hose Kit

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the purchase of a Hydraulic Hose making kit with Fischer Auto Parts with a price not to exceed \$6,595.12. Kevin Gish seconded the motion. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Sarah Pfeiffer absent.

18. Executive Session

Kevin Gish made a motion to enter executive session at 8:40PM for the purposes of evaluation of an employee per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) with participants to include Kevin Gish, Scott Henkels, Deb Jones, and Nicola Shipman. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Sarah Pfeiffer absent.

Kevin Gish made a motion to exit executive session at 9:01PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Sarah Pfeiffer absent.

19. Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Aldrich Farm Road Public Hearing at 6:30PM on June 10th / Site Visit 6:30PM June 11th (meet at intersection of Route 132 and Aldrich Farm Road) with Hearing Continued at the Town Offices after site visit.
- Community Survey: Town Meeting Day Alternatives
- Bids for Bank Stabilization
- Security Systems/Building Safety

20. Adjourn

Scott Henkels made a motion to adjourn at 9:05PM. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Sarah Pfeiffer absent.

Respectfully submitted,
Nicola Shipman