



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Selectboard Regular Meeting
November 4th, 2024 FINAL Minutes

In-Person Participants: Kevin Gish, Selectboard Chair; Scott Henkels, Selectboard Vice Chair; Ted Austin, Selectboard Clerk; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant; Mark Earle, Highway Department; Nic Antal, White River Valley Herald; Cheryl Foote, Resident; Fran Schmidt, Resident; Jacob Steinbeck, Resident; Jeff Demers, Resident

Remote Participants: Ryan Haac, Energy Committee Chair; Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Alan Clark, Resident; Stuart Lawrence, Resident; David Miles, Landowner

1. Call to Order

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

2. Review/Approve Agenda

Ted Austin made a motion to approve the agenda. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Warrants

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP warrant 1750 in the amount of \$10,468.55. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1751 in the amount of \$6,736.43. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1752 in the amount of \$16,196.96. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1753 in the amount of \$13,480.68. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1754 in the amount of \$3,923.14. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve Payroll for the period 10/20 -11/2/2024 in the amount of \$24,931.11. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Minutes

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/7/2024 as presented. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/16/2024 as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/18/2024 as presented. Scott Henkels Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/21/2024 as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/28/2024 with one correction. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve the minutes from 10/30/2024. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

As a clarification for action taken on October 30th, 2024:

Scott Henkels made a motion to apply the Level 1 pay increase approved on October 30th, 2024 to be applied retroactively with an effective date of August 21st, 2024. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

6. Selectboard Reports

No reports.

7. Highway Reports

Kevin Gish noted that Frank Rogers has resigned to pursue a career opportunity in Pomfret, but Mark Earle provided a report on behalf of the Highway Department.

Mark said he and Anthony are clearing ditches, and Mark will be working to rebuild a header wall for a culvert on Eastman Road. Mark noted there were a couple more ditches to clear as well as continued winter preparations. Mark will be hauling the 3/8 stone, and Anthony will be cleaning ditches.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Mark said two trucks are fully ready for winter, the 550 is 50% ready and the Freightliner needs to be prepped for winter.

Nicola Shipman reported to the Highway Department that Chase Site Services is aware of the reduced staffing in the Department and will provide support in the interim until the crew is back up to capacity.

8. Finance Reports

Lucy Pierpont reported that the Grants in Aid funding came through from the State in the amount of \$21,000.

First installment taxes still owed to the Town is \$32,500 which is an improvement over past year.

9. Selectboard Assistant Reports

Nicola Shipman reported on the Old School House minor repairs including the entrance landing, window repairs and heating system repairs.

Nicola will be meeting with Coe + Coe at the Town Highway Garage.

Nicola presented a VTrans request for winter maintenance of a proposed sidewalk at the VTrans Park and Ride. Board members were supportive of the agreement, so Nicola will secure cost estimates for that work and add to the agenda for November 18th.

Nicola said Frank had secured quotes for tree removal in the Town highway ROW, While that grant is not currently open, Nicola suggested the Town work to secure grant funding for this project as the cost is in excess of \$7,000 even with Highway Department assisting with the removal. The Selectboard expressed the desire to wait to see if grant funding could be available for these tree removal projects.

Nicola observed the need for policies in our Town, specifically updated Highway policies, including Legal Trails and Class 4 Highways.

Nicola raised a question brought forward by the Conservation Commission. The commissioners would like the Town to donate \$2,000 from the Conservation Reserve Fund toward the MyWalden Fundraising efforts conducted by the Upper Valley Land Trust for preservation of the land. Kevin Gish asked what the balance of the reserve fund was for this purpose. Lucy said she would investigate that.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Nicola reported the website is underway with help from Nic Antal.

Nicola reported the revised plans for the Baxter Library Drainage project are finalized and we are waiting for the project to move through construction. Nicola will work on an easement for the project, so the Town has official documentation to access the Seven Stars

Nicola also reported that the lack of painted lines on Route 132 is a safety concern, and she will work with the Highway Department and VTrans to bring this to the attention of District 4 and to see if we can get striping completed before winter.

Nicola provided a timeline for the countdown to Town Meeting.

10. Driveway Permit Applications

Scott Henkels provided a summary of the history of Legal Trail 3 based on information provided to the Board, including previous requests from landowners to improve the Beaver Meadow Road end of Legal Trail 3 to provide access to parcels.

This is a nuanced and complicated situation as there is a history of private landowners seeking Town approval to make improvements to legal trails to access parcels, but there is no authority under the Highway policy allowing the Selectboard to issue driveway permits to access anything other than a Highway. Legal Trails are not highways.

There was significant discussion as to the implications regarding the Town plan and subdivision bylaws as well as past decisions made by the Town also knowing that all parcels must have access and not be landlocked.

Kevin Gish made a motion to deny the driveway permit application submitted by David Miles of 253 Deer Meadow Lane because Legal Trail 3 is not a Town Highway and so the Selectboard would not be able to approve a permit in this case. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved 2-1-0 with Kevin Gish and Ted Austin in favor and Scott Henkels opposed and no abstentions.

Kevin Gish reiterated that the landowner could redo the permit application to allow access to the property via Deer Meadow Lane, which is a Town Highway.

There was initial discussion of the permit application submitted by Tamara Pinette and co-applicant Jennifer Walker of 1816 Beaver Meadow Road.

Scott Henkels presented information regarding the actual conditions. The board discussed the multiple curb cuts on Beaver Meadow Road providing access to various structures as well as the limitations of the parcel since there is a brook that separates the second building site from the preexisting home.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

The Selectboard wishes to conduct additional research into the permit application including the existing permits already issued for the parcel and sightlines, particularly in the absence of someone from the Highway Department to weigh in.

This permit application was tabled to a future meeting.

11. TAP Scoping Study: Alternatives Review

Residents were invited to provide feedback to the Selectboard regarding the proposals set forth in the Scoping Study Alternatives presentation.

There was consistent feedback that the three-way traffic stop is an unsatisfactory solution for both vehicles and pedestrians. Residents were concerned that larger trucks stopping on an uphill when traveling westbound on Route 14 would get stuck in winter; that the loss of parking at the Post Office as well as along the state highway is a challenge that is difficult for the Town given the lack of parking in general; there was some discussion as to the value of widening the lanes to create bike access as the downside could mean the traffic speeds increase as a result of the wider lanes; there was still concern about the traffic speeds on Route 14 with the truck aprons on Route 132 since those will not reduce speed of those traveling through the village on Route 14; the potential price tag is a sticking point for some; for residents with parcels along the road, the loss of land is a concern; residents still expressed concern about the speed of traffic and the need for safety; ADA accessibility is a supported goal; the crosswalk on Route 132 with a flashing beacon, the school street sidewalk and relocation of the utilities lines were perceived as positives also.

The Selectboard will incorporate feedback into their Alternative proposal selection with decision at the next meeting.

12. Cannabis Opt-In Reconsideration Vote

Scott Henkels made a motion to set the date for the Town of Sharon Cannabis Opt-In reconsideration vote to Tuesday, December 10th, 2024. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Ted Austin not present.

13. Health Insurance

Lucy Pierpont presented several versions of employee/employer cost sharing for Health Insurance.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Scott Henkels made a motion to offer full-time employees Small Group Health Coverage from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont for calendar year 2024 offering a Medicare Supplement along with Vermont Preferred Gold and Silver Plans, Vermont Select Silver CDHP Reflective and Bronze Plans, and Standard Silver CDHP Reflective and Bronze CDHP Plans.

The funding caps for these plans will be:

- Blue 65 Medicare Supplement combined with reimbursement for Part B and Part D with a total cap of an \$1,020 monthly premium cap and an annual \$2,400 HRA cap.
- Single level caps will be an \$1,020 monthly premium cap and an annual \$2,400 HRA cap.
- Two-person level caps will be a \$1,865 monthly premium cap and an annual \$3,000 HRA cap.
- Adult & Child(ren) level caps will be a \$1,792 monthly premium cap and an annual \$3,000 HRA cap.
- Family level caps will be a \$2,554 monthly premium cap and an annual \$3,270 HRA cap.

Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Ted Austin not present.

14. Audit Report

Scott Henkels made a motion to accept and sign the FY24 Auditor's Report as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Ted Austin not present.

15. Job Description Review

Nicola Shipman shared reasons why now could be good timing to review job descriptions and make updates especially that there is additional transition in staffing. Nicola will continue to work with staff members to create updated job descriptions to bring proposed changes before the board for review and approval to the next November meeting.

16. Ambulance Service Agreement, Town of Hartford

There was continued discussion regarding the SRRS and Hartford response in our Town.

Jeff Demers commented that it would be valuable to understand actual response times and to ensure response is appropriate for the needs of those requiring ambulance support. He wondered if this could be addressed in a future service contract with SRRS.



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Kevin Gish made a motion to sign the FY25 Town of Hartford Interlocal Agreement for Emergency Response as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Ted Austin not present.

17. Upcoming Meeting Dates/Topics:

- **Tuesday, November 5th GENERAL ELECTION DAY**
- **November 18th at 6:30PM-FY26 Budgeting; Carpentry Contract (11/30 expiration); Personnel; Highway Policies**

18. Adjourn

Scott Henkels made a motion to adjourn at 9:25PM. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved 2-0-0 with Ted Austin not present.