



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Selectboard Regular Meeting
December 2nd, 2024 FINAL Minutes

In-Person Participants: Scott Henkels, Vice Chair; Kevin Gish, Chair; Ted Austin, Clerk; Allen Wight, Highway Supervisor; Lara Ronan, Sharon Rep SRRS Advisory Board; Bob Stoddard, Sharon Rep SRRS Advisory Board; Holly Cathcart, Sharon Health Initiative; Nicola Shipman, Selectboard Assistant

Remote Participants: Nic Antal, White River Valley Herald; Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Deb Jones, Treasurer; Joe Ronan, Resident; Laurie Foster, Sharon Health Initiative

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 as presented. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Warrants

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1763 in the amount of \$1,823.05. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1764 in the amount of \$19,174.71. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1765 in the amount of \$5,587.51. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1766 in the amount of \$4,123.75. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1767 in the amount of \$5,966.33. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1768 in the amount of \$15,905.08. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



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Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the Payroll Warrant for the period 11/17/2024 – 11/30/2024 in the amount of \$ 20,758.54. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Minutes

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the minutes from 11/18/2024 as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

6. Selectboard Reports

Scott Henkels wished the meeting participants a happy holiday and encouraged drivers to use caution on the roads now that we are in the snowy season.

Kevin Gish presented an update from the Greater Upper Valley Solid Waste Management District including a note that revenue from income from composting has increased, there is a concern about a bridge leading to the site, as well as a Notice of Violation regarding the number of hazardous waste drop-off events hosted.

Kevin Gish reported that the Ashley Community Forest harvest is moving forward as planned.

7. Highway Reports

Allen Wight reported that he was impressed with the crew members in how well they managed the first snowstorm of the season which hit on Thanksgiving Day. Despite being short-handed, the team was able to safely clear the roads during the storm with no equipment failures.

Allen also provided an update regarding work he is doing with TRORC and discussed plans for future upgrades to culverts in the town with the hope that additional grant funding will come up through the grants-in-aid program to assist with the MRGP compliance.

Kevin Gish asked if the road crew was doing okay after the storm, and Allen said he was impressed as a new team what they were able to accomplish.

Kevin asked if there had been any feedback from residents.

Both Nicola Shipman and Allen reported neither had received any feedback from residents.



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8. Finance Reports

Lucy Pierpont deferred reporting as she would be presenting the budget proposals later in the meeting.

9. Selectboard Assistant Reports

Nicola Shipman reported that she reached out to the Scoping Study team, including Fuss and O'Neill, to raise questions that had come forward during the last discussion on the scoping study, and she shared those responses with the Board.

Nicola also said she met with a mason experienced with historic preservation projects to get estimates on the Old Town Hall repointing and repairs as well as at the library. In addition to concerns about the Old Town Hall building, Nicola shared that the mason identified an area of concern at the library, where water infiltrating the brick was causing the building to shift. The side door leading to the basement will need to be repaired to minimize building damage and prevent further shifting.

Nicola noted the website migration is now complete, and she is scheduled for training in December.

10. Cannabis Reconsideration Vote Information

No public comment or questions

Nicola provided information to the board concerning the legal requirements for a local option tax and suggested there would be additional research needed to understand if the Town is eligible to enact such a tax, and if so, what the impact would be on local business owners.

11. FY26 Budget

Holly Cathcart and Laurie Foster of the Sharon Health Initiative presented their proposed appropriations request for \$10,000 to the Sharon Selectboard for review.

Bob Stoddard and Lara Ronan presented an update from the South Royalton Rescue Advisory Board including an update showing improved shift coverage. Uncovered shifts have been significantly reduced over the past two months, with only 2 hours of uncovered shifts. The organization is functioning more effectively after leadership and personnel upheaval, and there has been no reimbursement owed to the Town of Hartford under the Interlocal Agreement signed with the Town of Sharon.

Bob and Lara reported on the building process for the new SRRS building.



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Finally, Lara and Bob provided the proposed rate changes for FY26, which is an increase from \$67.13 per capita to a \$70.43 per capita fee.

Lucy Pierpont presented six different employee wages worksheets to the Selectboard for review. The members discussed the different options and will review over the next few days in preparation for the meeting on Saturday, December 7th.

There was discussion about the wages in general and department specific wages including raising wages that were too low for the scope of work provided.

Lucy also presented the Baxter Memorial Library budget for review by the Selectboard.

Finally, Lucy and Allen presented the FY26 proposed highway budget for discussion. Scott Henkels suggested there might be room for increased training in the budget, and the Board agreed, so Lucy will update the documents with those changes.

12. Job Descriptions

Nicola Shipman presented an amended job description for the Finance Manager position because of minor changes to that role for review and approval of the Board.

Additionally, Nicola presented the Selectboard Assistant job description that outlined the work she has been doing for the Town. Nicola requested, based on the job description, if the Selectboard would consider a title change for her role from Selectboard Assistant to Town Administrator. Nicola noted she was not requesting any increase in pay associated with the change as she sees it as a correction of title rather than a change in responsibilities.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve the revised Finance Manager job description and the Town Administrator job description. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to update the Selectboard Assistant position to a Town Administrator position, and that the current Selectboard Assistant, Nicola Shipman, will move into the role of Town Administrator at the current rate of pay effective December 2nd, 2024. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



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13. Draft Warning Town Meeting 2025

Nicola Shipman presented a draft warning for Town Meeting 2025. There was discussion of the different required versus optional articles that could be included on the warning for 2025 including questions of delinquent tax penalties, treasurer compensation and whether to include articles for Australian Ballot voting or to wait for petitioners to indicate their desire to include that on the ballot.

14. Easement Seven Stars and Town of Sharon

Nicola Shipman wanted to make sure the Board was aware of what she was working on with the Town's legal counsel to present to the Seven Stars building owners to ensure the drainage project was formalized with the land records.

15. Highway Department Staffing

Kevin Gish presented a resignation letter submitted by Highway Department employee, Brad Howe. Kevin acknowledged this was a disappointment as Brad has been with the department for a long time and is an experienced operator.

Kevin Gish made a motion to accept the resignation of Brad Howe as submitted in writing dated November 22nd with effective last day of December 6th, 2024. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Given the vacancy, Allen Wight expressed the need for the Town to hire a CDL driver, as there is only one truck available to a non-CDL driver.

The Selectboard agreed it would be worthwhile posting for both a seasonal full-time and regular, full-time Level 2 employee with the understanding that any candidate must have a CDL.

16. Executive Session as needed

Kevin Gish made a motion to enter executive session at 9:02PM for the purpose of evaluating an employee per 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) with attendees to include Kevin Gish, Ted Austin, Scott Henkels, Allen Wight, and Nicola Shipman. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to exit executive session at 9:24PM. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



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17. Resume Open Meeting

Scott Henkels made a motion to recognize the exceptional service of Mark Earle during the absence of a supervisor from November 4th through November 17th, 2024, and to adjust the rate of pay during that time to that of Assistant Highway Supervisor of \$26/hour for that time, to be applied to that period. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

18. Upcoming Meeting Dates/Topics

Saturday, December 7th at 8:30AM – 11:30AM Special Budget Meeting
December 10th Special Vote for Reconsideration of Cannabis Retail Opt-In
December 16th Upcoming Meeting

19. Adjourn

Scott Henkels made a motion to adjourn at 9:30PM. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.