



TOWN OF SHARON
15 School Street
Sharon, VT 05065

Selectboard Regular Meeting
January 6th, 2025 FINAL Minutes

In-Person Participants: Scott Henkels, Vice Chair; Kevin Gish, Chair; Allen Wight, Highway Supervisor; Ted Austin, Clerk; Nicola Shipman, Town Administrator

Remote Participants: Lucy Pierpont, Finance Manager; Cathy Sartor, Town Clerk; Deb Jones, Treasurer

1. Call to Order

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

2. Review/Approve Agenda

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

3. Public Comment

No public comment

4. Warrants

At 6:43PM, the meeting took a short recess to resolve technical issues.

At 6:45PM, the meeting resumed.

Scott Henkels made a motion to transfer \$31,097.00 from the assigned fund balance from Highway Infrastructure to the Highway Operating Fund balance for the purpose of paying paving costs at the Baxter Memorial Library. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1777 in the amount of \$72,078.46. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1778 in the amount of \$5,151.97. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1779 in the amount of \$5,363.71. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.



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Scott Henkels made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1780 in the amount of \$1,491.94. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1781 in the amount of \$14,732.33. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve OSH Warrant 1782 in the amount of \$1,407.65. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve REC Warrant 1783 in the amount of \$844.50. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Ted Austin made a motion to approve AP Warrant 1784 in the amount of \$244.87. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Kevin Gish made a motion to ratify the Payroll Warrant for the period 12/15/2024 – 12/28/2024 with a cash draw of \$16,882.71. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

5. Minutes

Tabled until January 21st meeting.

6. Selectboard Reports

Scott Henkels noted the crosswalk on Route 132 from Steele Chapel to the Lighthouse building continues to be unsafe as vehicles do not routinely stop for pedestrians waiting to cross Route 132, which he experienced personally when attempting to cross at the crosswalk.

Kevin Gish reported that the Sharon Skills Swap is scheduled for February 22nd and the coordinators are seeking instructors to teach classes.

7. Highway Reports

Allen Wight reported that the weather has been keeping the crew busy over the past three weeks.

Allen is collaborating with Rita Seto at TRORC to identify the best use of the Grants-in-Aid funding for the next round of ditching work. Allen believes the work is going to be along Beaver Meadow Road in 2025.



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Allen noted he attended the build meeting for the truck that will replace Truck 2. So far, the new truck is scheduled for delivery within the next two months or so.

Allen has been researching pricing and timeline for Truck 4 which is scheduled for replacement, but due to the extended build schedule, delivery could be one year from the time the truck is ordered.

Kevin Gish asked if there could be work done to mitigate emerging potholes on the dirt roads. Allen said he is aware of the potholes, and it is on the priority list. Unfortunately, the stone pile is too frozen to move material right now, so it needs to thaw enough to allow the crew to make those repairs.

Allen is also going to talk with Norwich's Highway Department to ask if they can adjust their salting routine at the Norwich/Sharon line on Beaver Meadow Road. Salt, which is unintentionally getting applied to the dirt at that end of the road, is creating soft/muddy conditions at the transition between the dirt section in Sharon and the paved section in Norwich.

8. **Finance Reports**

Lucy Pierpont will present her reports during the budget discussion later in the meeting.

9. **Town Administrator Reports**

Nicola Shipman reported that the Windsor County Sheriff's Department received a call concerning an unauthorized camp site. Nicola and other Town officials will collaborate with the Sheriff's Department to find a resolution as soon as possible, especially given the weather and welfare concerns.

Nicola presented the 2025 Certificate of Highway Mileage for Selectboard signature.

Kevin Gish made a motion to sign the 2025 Certificate of Highway Mileage as presented. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Nicola provided an update regarding a dog who has been consistently running at large on Route 132. This has been ongoing and has become an issue due to the repeated violations of the Town's Animal Control Ordinance. The dog has been reported to the Animal Control Officer (ACO) in Sharon as well as Strafford and has been in violation of the Animal Control Ordinance multiple times in 2024 with ongoing violations. Also, the dog no longer has a valid rabies vaccination on file. The ACO has authority to impound the dog if he is found to be at large, and the ACO can also request the owner to come before the Selectboard as a repeat offender who has become a public nuisance and safety concern for the animal and for drivers on Route 132.



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Nicola also reported that due to restrictions on USDA grant funding for tree removal, the Town of Sharon is not eligible to apply until fall of 2026. The Town will need to find funding to pay for the removal of those trees that have been identified by the highway department.

Nicola is working to launch the new Town website. Nic Antal has volunteered to assist with content and fact-checking for accurate links as well as format consistency. Together, Nicola and Nic are working to finalize content, so we can go live as soon as possible to minimize managing two websites simultaneously.

Nicola noted that she received guidance from the Town's legal counsel regarding next steps for moving forward with the expanded radio communications for the Highway Department.

Nicola also noted that AT&T, owner of an existing cell tower, has applied for a "de minimus" change through the state. It is unlikely there is a basis for the Town to object, given the changes are moderate and effects the existing Baxter Mountain Tower*, but Nicola will forward the full documentation to the members for their review.

Additionally, Nicola has secured the Town's .gov domain and has coordinated with the Town's IT consultant to ensure the Town will be switched to the .gov domain when the new website goes live.

(*Please note: Baxter Mountain Tower is the correct tower not the Beaver Meadow Road tower referenced in the meeting)

10. FY26 Budget plus Appropriations Requests Received

Lucy Pierpont presented appropriations requests from both HealthHub (\$1,000) and from the Fire Department for replacement garage doors (\$23,920).

Nicola will reach out to HealthHub to provide guidance as to how they can seek appropriations as well as the deadlines outlined on the Town's website.

At the request of the Selectboard, Nicola will coordinate a meeting with the Fire Department for further discussion and to understand the timing and needs.

Lucy noted that the current Collector of Delinquent Taxes does not intend to submit a nominating petition for the role. Lucy will adjust a description of the Collector of Delinquent Taxes expense in the budget to show that the expenses are for fees earned and not a salary, since the Town has not voted to compensate the Collector of Delinquent Taxes with a salary at this time.



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Lucy highlighted areas of the draft budget that had been adjusted since the last version presented to the Selectboard.

Scott Henkels made a motion to reassign \$15,000 of the assigned general fund balance from Building Improvements and Repairs to Workforce Retention in the assigned general fund balance. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to commit \$20,000 of the grant monies paid by the State of Vermont AOT to be used to pay for work on Baxter Memorial Library's Drainage and Paving project in accordance with the parameters of the grant funding. Kevin Gish seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Scott Henkels made a motion to approve the FY26 budget totaling \$2,082,582 in expenses, including highways, of which \$1,537,000 shall be raised in property taxes. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

11. Town Meeting 2025 Draft Warning

Nicola Shipman presented the most recent 2025 Draft Warning with changes based on feedback from town officials and VLCT. It cannot be finalized as the deadline for voter-backed petition articles has not yet passed. The warning should be finalized at the next Selectboard meeting.

12. Personnel Policy

Kevin Gish made a motion to approve the personnel policy amendments as presented. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

The Selectboard will set an effective date at the next meeting if the changes are to be applied retroactively.

13. Municipal Ethics

Kevin Gish made a motion to assign the Selectboard as the Designated Complaint Recipient to receive complaints alleging violations of the Municipal Code of Ethics. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

Nicola Shipman noted an oversight as she had intended to bring forward a proposal from Coe+Coe regarding the Town Garage. If the firm is willing to conduct a portion of the work they quoted, Nicola would like to move forward with documenting existing conditions of the Town Highway Garage. Otherwise, she will work to get an RFQ out for pre-planning phase of the work needed to move forward with the Town Highway Garage project.



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Scott Henkels made a motion to authorize Nicola Shipman to engage Coe+Coe to document existing conditions with a not to exceed amount of \$4,999. Ted Austin seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

14. Upcoming Meeting Dates/Topics

- **Tuesday, January 21st 2025** – Special Meeting (Town Meeting Prep; Job Description Updates)
- **Monday, January 27th, 2025** – Special Meeting (Tentative; Warning Approval)
- **Monday, February 3rd, 2025** – Regular Meeting (Town Meeting Prep)
- **Town Meeting 2025 - Tuesday, March 4th**

15. Adjourn

Ted Austin made a motion to adjourn at 8:31PM. Scott Henkels seconded. Motion approved unanimously.