



MINUTES  
TOWN OF SHARON  
ANNUAL MEETING, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>, 2025

Moderator Steven Basham called the meeting or order at 9:00 AM  
A moment of silence was held for long time community member, Moderator, Lister and friend, Galen E. Mudgett Jr., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Moderator referenced procedural reminders and common motions.

The Moderator introduced Representatives Jim Masland and Rebecca Holcomb. With no objection, the voters yielded to the floor.

Representative Rebecca Holcombe gave gratitude to all leaders including the Selectboard during challenging times and unknowns. She discussed the increased cost of healthcare, and she offered gratitude to Dena Wilkie, Sharons healthcare coordinator and discussed housing in an aging state.

Representative Jim Masland discussed tax and program cuts, thanked State Treasurer Mike Pieciak and talked about Federal funding.  
The voters were given the opportunity to ask questions. With no questions asked the business of the Town of Sharon Annual Meeting proceeded.

**The Moderator read Article 1. To elect the following Town Officers:**

Trustee of Public Funds for a 3-year term  
Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term  
Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term  
Trustee of Chester Downer Fund for a 3-year term

**The Moderator moved to adopt the article, asked for objections, and called for nominations.**

**Trustee of Public Funds 3-year term:**

Martha Fisk nominated Mary Ayer. With no other nominations, Mary Ayer was elected as Trustee of Public funds for a 3-year term.

**Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term:**

Emma Basham nominated Rebekah Bakos-Kallgren. With no other nomination, Rebekah Bakos-Kallgren was elected as Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term.

**Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term:**

Emma Basham nominated Maureen Bissailon. With no other nominations, Maureen Bissailon was elected as Trustee of Baxter Library for a 3-year term.

**Trustee of Chester Downer Fund for a 3-year term:**

Jim Kearns nominated Justin Shipman. With no other nominations, Justin Shipman was elected as Trustee of the Chester Downer Fund for a 3-year term.

**The Moderator read Article 2. To hear the reports of the Town Officers.**

As common business, this article was adopted, and the floor was opened for discussion.

Selectboard Chair Kevin Gish remembered Galen Mudgett for his inspiration, motivation, and fairness. Kevin introduced and thanked Town Officers, staff, boards, and commissions, and the fire department as well as all volunteers. He discussed vacancies and talked about volunteer needs. Kevin highlighted projects in town to include the Historical Society building, the transportation alternative program (TAP) which is grant funded, as well as the Baxter Library drainage project. He discussed the poor condition of the Town Garage and the needs of the green bridge across from the Midway Station.

Debbie St. Peter noted the traffic danger at the intersection of 132 and Route 14. Kevin Gish stated this was being evaluated by TAPS.

Jim Kearns asked if the green bridge was structurally sound. Nicola Shipman, Town Administrator answered that the bridge is safe, but needed preventative maintenance.

**The Moderator read Article 3. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$2,082,582, including highways, of which \$1,537,000 shall be raised by property taxes?**

Motioned by Bob Ferguson and seconded by Michael Barsanti, the floor was opened for discussion.

Scott Henkels, Selectboard Assistant Chair, highlighted employee retention through salaries and benefits as part of the 3.85% budget increase over fiscal year 2025. Scott Henkels proposed an amendment to the budget for an additional \$13,000. This is to accommodate a Lister salary after the loss of long time Lister Galen Mudgett, who volunteered much of his time.

**The Moderator requested a motion to amend the budget in Article 3.**

Scott Henkels made the motion and Jim Kearns seconded.

**The Moderator explained that the voters needed to vote on whether or not to make the amendment.**

The amendment passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 3 as amended. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$2,095,582 as amended, including highways, of which \$1,550,000 shall be raised by property taxes?**

The floor was again opened for questions or discussions.

Will Davis questioned the reserve fund amount of \$330,000 and asked if part of these funds could be used for town garage. Scott Henkels noted that a portion of those funds would go to the town garage. Treasurer Deb Jones explained how the funds worked and what amounts could be used for what items.

**Once again, the Moderator read Article 3 as amended.**

Article 3 as amended was passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 4. Shall the voters establish a reserve fund to be called the Fire Station Building Improvement Reserve Fund to be used for the Fire Station buildings in accordance with 24 VSA §2804?**

With a motion by David Karon, seconded by Nicole Antal, the floor was opened for discussion. Scott Henkels, Selectboard Assistant Chair, explained the needs of the Fire Department building. Tom Lober of Sharon Fire Department discussed the need for doors, siding and internal functions.

John Roe asked why not have one capital fund in place for all town structures vs. each individually. Deb Jones Treasurer explained how these funds work in a "siloe mentality" so that funds are used appropriately.

With no further discussion, the Moderator restated the article and called the question. Article 4 passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read article 5. Shall the voters raise and appropriate the sum of \$10,000 to the Fire Station Building Improvement Reserve Fund?**

Pam Bracket made a motion, seconded by David Karon. The floor was opened for discussion.

Bob Ferguson asked if this amount was enough? Kevin Gish stated they hoped to add to the fund annually. Tom Lober noted that it gives the Fire Department planning ability for necessary needs.

Sue Sellow noted that the Fire Department building is in a flood plain, stating the fund may be of importance in the future.

David Karon made a motion to amend the \$10,000 amount to \$14,000 as the appropriation to the Sharon Fire Department. Sylvia Moore seconded.

Article 5 passed by voice vote to amend the amount to \$14,000.

**The Moderator read Article 6. Shall the voters compensate the Town Treasurer with salary instead of any statutory fees allowed under 32 VSA §1672?**

Jim Kearns made a motion, seconded by Ann Mapplebeck and the floor was opened for discussion.

Nicola Shipman, Town Administrator provided context via state statute explaining a course correction in this matter. A discussion took place around the Treasurers low salary, Kevin Gish explained the additional role of Finance Manager, held by Lucy Pierpont, and the dedication and commitment of volunteer hours given by the Treasurer Deb Jones.

Article 6 passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 7.**

**Shall the voters authorize payment of real and personal property taxes in two (2) installments with the due dates being Wednesday, September 17, 2025, and Wednesday, February 11, 2026, to be delivered in-person or by electronic transfer to the tax collector by 6PM EST on or before the due dates, or, if mailed, postmarked by the USPS on or before the due dates pursuant to 32 VSA §4773.**

Jim Kearns made the motion, seconded by Dee Gish.

Debbie St. Peter asked if different dates had been considered as the current dates line up with times other bills come due. Deb Jones and Margaret Raymond explained that dates were originally established 6 months apart enabling the town to pay its obligations.

Article 7 passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 8. Shall the voters rescind the graduated penalty charged by the collector of delinquent taxes of two percent (2%) of the tax collected for payments made in the first seven days after the second of two due dates, and then an additional six percent (6%) of the tax for the eighth (8) day and thereafter pursuant to 32 VSA §1674(3)(B)?**

Ann Mapplebeck made the motion seconded by Jason Flint. The floor was opened for discussion.

Bob Stoddard asked for clarification on why the town wanted to rescind. Kevin Gish explained the difference from the year prior. Deb Jones spoke about savings to the taxpayer as well as salary loss to the Collector of Delinquent Taxes (CODT). Voters asked about the CODT duties, Deb Jones and Nicola Shipman explained CODT duties and explained that the CODT didn't not receive reimbursement for expenses. Catherine Sartor, Town Clerk noted that a large part of what the CODT does is to develop payment plans to help property owners stay in their homes.

Helen Barrett stated that no one was running this year for the role.

The Moderator called for a voice vote. As it was not unanimous, an additional vote was called with a show of voter cards. The Article passed with 62 yes votes over 20 no votes.

**The Moderator read Article 9. Shall the voters set the amount of the penalty charged by The Collector of Delinquent Taxes for all payments made after the final due date to eight percent (8%) of the tax owed pursuant to 32 VSA §1674(3)(A)?**

A motion was made by Kevin Gish and seconded by Michael Barsanti and the floor was opened for discussion.

Jim Ruben asked a question around tax final due date fees. Kevin Gish explained interest vs. penalty.

Article 9 passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 10. Shall the voters increase the number of Justices of the Peace from five to seven pursuant to the Vermont Constitution, Chapter II §52?**

Dee Gish made the motion, seconded by Chelsea Gray.  
Article 10 was passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 11. Shall the voters change the date of their annual town meeting to the third day (Saturday) preceding the first Tuesday in March pursuant to 17 VSA §2640(B)?**

Bob Stoddard made the motion, seconded by Michael Barsanti.

Joyce Dion asked about the survey results around this question. Kevin Gish explained that out of 157 returned surveys, 62 were in favor of a Saturday town meeting. Bob Ferguson did not feel this was enough of a response. Questions were asked around impact on the school meeting, especially during a national election year, and if participation was increased in towns that moved town meeting to a Saturday. Both Bob Ferguson and Town Clerk Catherine Sartor commented that according to reports, moving the dates typically did not change the participation numbers.

Article 11 was voted down with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 12. Shall the voters set the start time of town meeting as nine o'clock in the morning pursuant to 17 VSA §2655?**

Will Davis made the motion, seconded by Michael Barsanti. The floor was opened for discussion. Carol Langstaff said she would organize childcare.

Article 12 passed with a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 13. Shall the voters authorize providing notice of the availability of the annual report by postcard, mailed to all registered voters at least 30 days before the annual meeting instead of mailing or otherwise distributing the report to the voters of the town pursuant to 24 VSA §1682(A)?**

David Karon made the motion, Mary Stoddard seconded. The floor was opened for discussion. David Karon asked what the savings projection was. The exact number was not available.

Article 13 passed by a unanimous voice vote.

**The Moderator read Article 14. Shall the voters conduct any non-binding business relevant to this meeting?**

Laurie Foster made the motion, David Karon seconded.  
Ryan Haac talked about Sharon Connects, urging voters to get involved.  
Jim Kearns talked about Downer Fund and gave appreciated for years of service from Bob Ferguson and Martha Fisk.  
Elaine Kearns talked about the Homestead declaration.  
Helen Barrett thanked the Barsanti's for great sound during the meetings.  
David Karon discussed ECFiber being a municipal entity.  
Laurie Foster gave gratitude to the Sharon Healthcare Initiative to include Dena Wilkie  
Dee Gish talked about the substance use disorders committee and its meeting times at Steel Chapel.

With no further business, the Moderator adjourned the meeting at 11:09AM

Respectfully submitted by Catherine Sartor, Town Clerk  
March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Signed: Signed by: Stephen Basham 3/8/2025  
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Moderator  
Signed: Signed by: Chelsea Gray 3/8/2025  
908E1AE7C113432...

Justice of the Peace

Attest: Catherine Sartor Town Clerk

Town Clerk, Sharon Vermont