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# Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices at Cole Hall

## Meeting Minutes

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### Town of Shaftsbury Select Board Meeting

**Date of Meeting:** Monday, April 6, 2026, at 6:00 PM, in person at Cole Hall and remotely via Zoom.

#### 1. Call to Order

The meeting came to order at 6:00 PM. Present were selectpersons Zoe Kearl (Chair), Naomi Miller (Vice Chair), Mike Cichanowski, Marlene Hall, and Eamon Mulligan. Also present were Town Administrator Paula Iken, and Treasurer Melanie Dexter. Ms. Kearl noted that there were 19 items to discuss at the meeting. She said that the Select Board was putting a new policy into place on lengthy agendas: keeping public comments to about 2 minutes. This is the State guidance for a situation when there are a lot of items to move through.

#### 2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were no conflicts of interest with any item on the agenda.

#### 3. Minutes

Minutes from the March 2, 2026, Town Meeting and the March 16, 2026, Select Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Meeting minutes. Ms. Miller moved; Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The Town Meeting minutes were approved 3-0-0. Ms. Hall and Mr. Mulligan abstained. Mr. Mulligan pointed out 2 corrections needed to the March 16<sup>th</sup> Select Board meeting minutes. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the amended March 16<sup>th</sup> minutes. Ms. Miller moved; Ms. Hall seconded. The minutes were approved 5-0-0.

#### 4. Change of Warrant Review Process

Ms. Kearl noted that the Select Board had been discussing a change to the threshold of the warrant review process, raising the amount from the current threshold of \$1000.00. Because expenses have risen there are many items over \$1000.00 that must be read aloud, which takes a considerable amount of time every meeting. After discussion, a new threshold of \$2,500 was agreed upon. The practice of picking out random smaller amounts will continue, because most fraud usually takes place in small amounts over time. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to change the warrant review process threshold limit from \$1,000 to \$2,500, to be read aloud at select board meetings.

Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

#### 5. Warrants

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to consider CWR 26024 for \$112,708.47. Mr. Cichanowski moved; Ms. Hall seconded.

Items over \$2,500:

A & K Agriservices LLC \$3,081.68 Gravel

Agra-Services LLC \$11,277.05 Gravel

AT Hoosick LLC \$91.22. DPW- seal, wheel bearing, and oil for truck 4  
Bennington County Sheriff's Department, \$9,020 March fee  
Home Depot credit services, \$190.68 DPW Shop supplies  
Hulett Electric & Father \$3,259.22 and \$3,175.01 New building electric work (Monies from ARPA)  
NEMRC \$7,750.00 Reappraisal monthly fee  
R. Hulett Trucking Inc. \$2,750.90 Gravel  
Sycamore Landscaping, \$3,208. Mowing town office and Cole Hall contract payment  
Vermont Bond Bank, \$12,140. Bond payment for the DPW garage  
Vermont State Treasurer \$65.00 marriage license,  
Wallingford Crushed Stone \$18,016.37 Gravel

Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, CWR 26024 was approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve PR20 for \$20,801.06. Mr. Mulligan moved; Ms. Miller seconded.

Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, PRW 20 was approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve PRW 09 for \$20,722.37. Ms. Kearl noted the Town's employer expense is only \$10,614. The rest of the amount came out of the checks of town employees. Mr. Cichanowski moved; Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, PRW 09 was approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve CWR 26022 for \$4,418.05 to Adam's Lock- the deposit for the relocking of the new building. Ms. Miller moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, CWR 26022 was approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to amend CWR 26015, from December 2025. The original amount was \$332,723.02. The amended amount is \$333,145.39. Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Ms. Hall asked if the new board members should vote and sign since they were not at the December meeting. It was decided that, since the amended amount was being voted on, they should vote and sign. The amended CWR 26015 was approved 5-0-0.

6. Announcements: Village Cemetery Fence Replacement; Rte. 7A Culvert Project Update; other

Ms. Iken announced that there were new safety protocols for Zoom attendees to prevent meeting interruptions. When attendees log in, their audio and video will be off. If an attendee wants to make a comment during the public comment section, use the hand raise on Zoom. The chair will recognize attendees, and they will be unmuted when it's their turn to speak.

Ms. Iken then provided information on the cemetery fence replacements on Cleveland Ave. and Main Street. She said that in Autumn 2025 the Cemetery Committee got two quotes: one was for \$46,700.00 from AFSCO Fence, the other for \$35,552 from Legacy Fence. There was a delay in getting these approved by the Select Board, because public safety was a concern, and a professional lead test was needed. The results show that it's safe to take down. Meanwhile, prices have gone up. A few weeks ago, Legacy Fence came back with a quote of \$38,461.00. The Cemetery Capital Fund balance is \$56,159.33. She noted that the difference of \$2,000 wasn't an issue, but the Select Board's approval on behalf of the Cemetery Committee was needed to make the purchase. Ms. Kearl called for a motion for the Select Board to consider the quote from Legacy Fence in the amount of \$38,461.00, which would be paid for from the Cemetery Capital Fund. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, the motion to consider the quote was passed 5-0-0. Ms. Iken then brought up the Route 7 Culvert Project. The project was scheduled for 2030, but funding became available, so it's now scheduled for either August or September 2026. Ms. Iken said that, rather than being closed for a week on each side of the project, they're going to close that section of Route 7 for 2 weeks diverting traffic onto 7A, through Shaftsbury. Th Town is working with the State regarding increased traffic and safety. There will be updates on timing provided.

Ms. Kearl gave an update on the vicious dog hearing. It has moved to the Vermont civil court system and the next date is April 16<sup>th</sup>. It will be a fact-finding hearing which Ms. Kearl, Ms. Iken, and Animal Control Officer Bob Perry will be attending.

Ms. Hall reminded residents that, since the elementary school budget did not pass, there is an election on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup> at the Town Garage from 10 AM to 7 PM.

Ms. Hall announced a Memorial Day Parade in Shaftsbury on May 25<sup>th</sup>, assembling at Cole Hall at 8:00 AM. All veterans are invited, as are “fun cars or a tractor”. If you have questions, call the Town Clerk’s office.

## 7. Public Comments

Andrea Bacchi said that few weeks ago she messaged the Select Board to ask if the volunteer waiver regarding intellectual property would be reconsidered. she wanted an update. Ms. Kearl answered that there have not been any updates and that there are no current plans to change the intellectual property agreement, the volunteer waiver. Ms. Kearl explained the waiver noting that the majority of volunteer work product is not collateral, but it might be. A volunteer waiver was created for people who are joining committees or boards, stating that any product that they create, for example a flyer, would be the intellectual property of the town. Ms. Bacchi said that she left Energy Committee and the Economic Development Committee because of that waiver, because as a business owner, it became a conflict of interest. Ms. Bacchi then asked if the board had started discussing Act 181 and how it can impact Shaftsbury businesses and homeowners, how residents would be, informed or involved as this moves forward, and how the Select Board inform residents. Ms. Kearl replied that Act 181 would not go into effect until 2030 due to concerns that are being taken seriously by the State legislature. She continued that the Select Board has not started to inform anybody yet because implementation of Act 181 is about 4 years out, but the Planning Commission is aware of it and aware of the effects that it will have on the town. There was further discussion of Act 181 and possible effects. Ms. Kearl suggested Ms. Bacchi contact Tim Scoggins, the Planning Commission chair, or BCRC for more information.

Amy Smith asked if Act 181 driveway lengths would apply to existing properties or just to new builds in 2030. Ms. Kearl said that people are concerned about legislators putting parts of the state in tiers without considering everything, but she didn’t know enough to comment further. There was some continued discussion of the topic.

Marie Watson asked if the culvert project timing had been discussed with the State, about having it done when the kids are not in school. Ms. Miller answered that when the Town met with the State originally, that was the Number 1 ask. She believed that the State was trying schedule in July- it’s happening in a big rush, because the State got an unexpected grant that will expire if they don’t use it. Ms. Kearl said that she spoke with a “different house rep” about this and was told August or September. The Town will reach out again to remind them scheduling before school opens would be best.

Paul Talley said he would like to make a point of order, referring to the Select Board meeting of March 16, 2026. He said that when Ms. Hall made the motion to rescind the Apartheid Free Community Pledge vote, there was no second. He continued “So if we could just have that done, so you can at least vote on it correctly, that’d be great.” Ms. Kearl explained that someone must second a motion for the motion to exist. So, if nobody seconds the motion, there is no motion, so there's nothing to vote upon. Mr. Talley asked what that meant for the vote. Ms. Kearl said the board did not vote on it because the motion did not get a second, so there was no motion. Mr. Talley asked if the board was still agreeing to what it had voted on earlier (the AFC Pledge). Ms. Kearl confirmed that the vote still stands.

Art Whitman brought to the board’s attention a carved wooden eagle seen at the Eagle Square demolition site. The Town will request the eagle, try to preserve it, and display it in a Town building. Mr. Whitman said that he would remove the stamping machine if there is a home for it. Ms. Iken will contact

the builders and the Historical Society about various artifacts and building materials from Eagle Square. Fire Dept. Chief Joe Vadakin noted that the Shaftsbury fire used used to be located by Eagle Square and many volunteers worked there. He has data on the fire brigade and fire company going back to its beginning and suggested building a memorial to those volunteers with stone from Eagle Square. It would be located outside the Buck Hill fire station. Mr. Vadakin said that a mason would be hired to do build the monument and suggested a small bronze dedication plaque be included. Ms. Kearl said that the board would update Mr. Vadakin on the stones and Mr. Whitman on the stamping machine and eagle. She also noted that Eagle Square was the heart of Shaftsbury's for a long time.

#### 8. DPW Report

DPW Foreman Mike Yannotti was unable to attend the meeting, so Ms. Iken gave the report. The DPW is beginning to grade roads. Mr. Yannotti left 3 annual items for the Select Board to sign: the Town and Bridge Standard, which confirms that the DPW adheres to the Town and Bridge standards; the Certification of Compliance for Town, Road, and Bridge standards and network inventory; and the State's annual financial plan for the town's highways. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the Town Road and Bridge Standards, dated January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2026, for the municipality of Shaftsbury, Vermont. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Mr. Cichanowski noted that there are some spots where the roads don't quite hit the Class 3 standard of two cars being able to pass without somebody getting off the road- they've been like that forever. When the board certifies this, it understands that there are a few small exceptions. The board voted to approve 5-0-0. Ms. Kearl next called for a motion to consider the Certification of Compliance for Town, Road, and Bridge Standards and Network Inventory. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was discussion. Hearing none, the board voted to approve 5-0-0. There was some discussion of the annual financial plan for the town highways for the town of Shaftsbury, Vermont, for the fiscal year 2027, which begins on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026, and ends on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2027. The amount is \$1,501,960.17. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve certification that funds raised by municipal taxes are equivalent to or greater than the sum of at least \$300 per mile for each mile of Class 1, 2, and 3 town highways in the municipality. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was further discussion. Hearing none, the board voted to approve 5-0-0.

#### 9. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter said that very little had changed since the last time report and that the items on this report have been discussed. She pointed out the significant amount of delinquent tax that Holly Bahan is collecting, the sewer feasibility grant, and that the interest is still very high. Water receipts continue to dribble in. Regarding the cash balance, the revenues and expenditures are in for the year. For reasons already discussed, the Town is spending more money than budgeted this year. The actual cash in the general fund is \$188,000, before check warrants signed at this meeting. Ms. Dexter also reminded residents that taxes are due very soon. If you need an extension for State taxes, be aware that does not give you an extension on your Homestead Declaration. Taxpayers will be penalized if they do not file the Homestead Declaration, Form HS122, by April 15th. The final date for filing the Homestead Declaration is October 15<sup>th</sup>, after which filing it will not be to your advantage. She reiterated that It's really important to file on time. Every year, there are a few residents of Shaftsbury who pay literally thousands of dollars more in education taxes than they should because they didn't file their Homestead Declaration by April 15<sup>th</sup>. Carrie Crawford asked if taxpayers needed to be full-year residents before they can file the Homestead Declaration. Ms. Dexter said she wasn't sure but there is information available online and on the HS122 itself. She said in the past there was a year lag, but she thought that the legislature had removed that requirement.

10. Proposal from Shaftsbury Fire Company: Joe Vadakin

Shaftsbury Fire Chief Joe Vadakin said that his reason for coming to the meeting was to look at a short-term goal of replacing all the large diameter hose that the fire department (FD) carries on the fire trucks, referred to as 4-inch hose. It's the hose that the FD uses to transfer water from one truck to the other, not the actual firefighting hose. The hose was bought between 25 and 30 years ago, and now it's starting to dry rot and leak. The FD has almost, 3,000 feet of it, but don't want to replace all 3,000 feet at one time, rather over a 4-year period. Mr. Vadakin said that hose comes in 100' lengths and 12 lengths, (1,200'), would be \$12,218. This could be taken out of the FD budget for the next fiscal year since, if hose was ordered this month, it wouldn't be delivered until after July 1st. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to consider the quote submitted by Bill Schrader to the Shaftsbury Fire Department for \$12,218 to replace 12 lengths of 4" hose. Mr. Cichanowski moved. M. Mulligan seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was further discussion. Ms. Hall asked if the money was coming from the FD budget. Mr. Vadakin said yes, that was why he would hold delivery until after July 1<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Cichanowski asked if this type of hose was used to draw water from a pond. Mr. Vadakin said a different type of hose was used for that; this type of hose was for transfer between trucks. Hearing no further discussion, the board voted to approve the quote 5-0-0. Mr. Vadakin gave an update on the new tanker truck arriving at the end of July. It went into production that week after engineering plans were reviewed and signed. He is now contacting vendors to sell the old truck. Once he negotiates a fair price, he will let Ms. Iken know the price of the truck. Mr. Vadakin then said that he was taking a course on solar fields and asked who he would talk to in the Town about solar fields. Ms. Kearl said she was also taking the course and had some knowledge of solar fields. Mr. Vadakin said there was a storm that caused damage at a solar field on Waite Cemetery Rd. which resulted in some sparking. The FD had no idea that the field was there, there was no access for the FD and no owner could be contacted. He said if it had happened the week before it would have gone up Glastenbury Mountain. After further discussion it was the consensus that there should be some way for the FD to know who to contact if there was a fire at a solar array. It was suggested that Mr. Vadakin contact Tim Scoggins, Chair of the Planning Commission, to discuss how to have information and access in case of a fire. There was a brief discussion of the Shaftsbury Solar project which is in appeal.

11. Refurbishing of Town Sign: Carrie Crawford

Carrie Crawford, a new North Road resident, said she noticed that the Shaftsbury sign on 7A coming into (near Town Line Road) was chipped and paint was peeling. She offered to repaint it, without any redesign. The sign would remain the same size, same location, same appearance, that the Town has already approved in the past. After discussion it was decided that the DPW should remove a limb that was leaning on the sign and take the sign down to be painted. Ms. Kearl said that the Cole Hall design could probably be replicated by Jen Holley.

12. Candidates for Planning Commission: Sarah Costin & Kenneth Crawford

Sarah Costin introduced herself as a resident of Shaftsbury for 10 years and noted that she has been active on several committees. She asked if it was possible to remain on the Development Review Board and be part of the Planning Commission. Ms. Kearl said that it was allowed. Ms. Costin said she felt that her work experience and familiarity with Town ordinances would be helpful. She commented on her interest in the Town Plan. Ms. Kearl asked if anyone had questions for Ms. Costin. There were none, and Mr. Cichanowski moved that Ms. Costin be appointed to the Planning Commission. Ms. Hall seconded. The appointment was approved 5-0-0.

Kenneth Crawford introduced himself as a Shaftsbury resident since October 2025. He said that he had a lot of experience in the wastewater field, including new construction, and would like to use his experience in his new hometown. Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions. Mr. Mulligan asked if Mr. Crawford was primarily involved in designing or installing wastewater systems. Mr. Crawford said both of those but primarily operating wastewater systems, both large and small. Mr. Cichanowski moved that Mr. Crawford be appointed to the Planning Commission. Ms. Hall seconded. The appointment was approved 5-0-0.

13. Candidate for Development Review Board: Russell Sleigh

Michael Day, Chair of the Development Review Board (DRB), spoke about meeting Mr. Sleigh at a DRB hearing and discussed the DRB with him over some time. Mr. Day thought that Mr. Sleigh had areas of expertise that make him an excellent addition to the board. Mr. Sleigh introduced himself, noting that he was British by birth, and a naturalized US citizen. He was a lawyer in the UK, moved with his wife to the US and they have lived in Shaftsbury since 2007. He said, "perhaps it's time to make a contribution to the town we enjoy living in" and that he felt his legal experience could be useful to the DRB. Ms. Kearl noted that there were 2 alternate positions remaining on the DRB then asked for a motion to appoint Mr. Sleigh to the DRB. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Hearing no further discussion the appointment was approved 5-0-0.

14. Select Board Proposals for Inclusive Human Rights Declaration – Discussion 1 of 2

Ms. Kearl Ms. Kearl said that at the end of the last Select Board meeting, the board discussed putting in place Shaftsbury's own Human Rights Declaration to replace the Apartheid Free Community Pledge (AFC Pledge), and to have inclusive language so everybody feels as though they're a part of that human rights statement. The Select Board is putting together that statement as a group. Each board member brought a draft statement, to replace the one previously adopted. She noted that there would be no action taken during the meeting except for review of statements and starting a discussion, and that this was Discussion 1 of 2. Board members read their statements aloud before commenting.

Mike Cichanowski said that he didn't have a written statement but offered some thoughts: First, the Town has a Statement of Inclusion that covers a lot, but at the time was only voted on by 4 of the 5 Select Board members. This might be an opportunity to possibly get the entire select board to sign on to this statement. Second, the concept of statelessness has become important here and across the globe, recently more important in America as the 14th Amendment is being looked at by the Supreme Court. Changes could cause some people to be suddenly stateless.

Ms. Kearl said she did a lot of reading, ended up on the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and came up with the following statement:

*"Town of Shaftsbury Declaration on Human Rights.*

*Whereas the Town of Shaftsbury officially commits to centering policies, governance, and services around the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from that text.*

*Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in this world.*

*Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts, which have outraged the conscious of mankind in the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.*

*Whereas it is essential if man is not to be compelled to have recourse as a last resort to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.*

*Whereas the Town of Shaftsbury, proclaims this universal declaration of human rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms, and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the members, people of the member states themselves. and among the people of territories under their jurisdiction.*

*We, the Select Board of the Town of Shaftsbury, are committed to policies and actions that foster a kinder and more just world in which human rights are seen as universal, indivisible, and inalienable. All levels of governments, national, regional, and local, have an obligation to protect, respect, and fulfill all human rights to the best of their abilities, hence the penning of this human rights declaration.*

*Whereas... (then signed and dated by the Select Board)."*

Mr. Mulligan said his statement was more of a draft than Ms. Kearl's:

*"The Town of Shaftsbury recognizes and appreciates that our community is made up of a diverse group of citizens with individual backgrounds, perspectives, and life experiences. The Town is determined to create an environment where every resident feels safe, respected, and included regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, or religion. And that no person shall be discriminated against or unfairly treated because of their individuality.*

*The town will aspire to ensure that all residents of Shaftsbury are provided with the right and opportunity to be welcomed into the community and its organizations, as well as access to town services, public spaces, and other offices."*

Ms. Hall was next to read:

*"Resolution statement of the Town of Shaftsbury, Vermont regarding human rights.*

*Whereas the Town of Shaftsbury believes that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights, as affirmed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*

*Whereas we recognize that human rights are inherent to all individuals and not granted by governments.*

*Whereas the Town of Shaftsbury strives to be an inclusive, safe, and sustainable community that promotes equality and combats discrimination in all forms.*

*Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Town of Shaftsbury does hereby adopt this statement of commitment to human rights.*

*Commitment of equality. We condemn all forms of discrimination, including racism, sexism, and intolerance, and pledge to foster a community where all individuals are treated with respect, dignity, and equality.*

*Rights-based approach. The Town commits to embedding human rights principles, including participation, accountability, and non-discrimination into our local policy, services, and decision-making processes.*

*Fundamental rights. We recognize the importance of fundamental rights, including the right to safe and affordable housing, access to healthcare.*

*Quality education and environmental safety. Community safety. We ensure that all residents, regardless of their background or status, have the right to live*

*and safety and have equal protection under the law. Be it further resolved that this statement encourages all members of the community to treat one another with respect and to work together to uphold these rights in our daily lives."*

Ms. Miller read her draft:

*"Declaration of Support and Protection of Human Rights.*

*Whereas the Select Board of the Town of Shaftsbury adopted on February 6, 2023, a Declaration of Inclusion, which asserted in part, 'as a town, we formally condemn all discrimination in all of its forms,*

*commit to fair and equal treatment of everyone in our community, and will strive to ensure all of our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commitment.'*

*And whereas the assembled 102 voters of the Town of Shaftsbury adopted by unanimous voice vote at the town meeting on March 3rd, 2025, a resolution stating in part, 'It is the sense of the gathered citizens of Shaftsbury, Vermont that all supply and or funding by the U.S. government of weapons and military and logistical assistance to the regime of Israel must cease as long as Israel is engaged in the genocide of the Palestinian people.'*

*And whereas the Select Board of the Town of Shaftsbury adopted on May 19th, 2025, a resolution condemning attacks on due process which asserted, in part, the town's 'commitment to protecting the constitutional rights of all persons in our town*

*regardless of citizenship status, national origin, political belief, race, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, or socioeconomic status' and further stated, that 'the Select Board pledges to oppose any policy or action, local, state, or federal, which targets and or denies due process to its residents based on any of the aforementioned identities or positions'.*

*And whereas citizens of the Town of Shaftsbury have continued to voice to the Select Board deep concern about the use of their federal tax money to support genocidal programs and apartheid policies around the world, including in the United States of America.*

*Therefore, the Select Board of the Town of Shaftsbury hereby affirms its previous commitments and responds to its citizens' concerns by pledging the following:*

*Our town government will, to the best of its ability, and all other considerations of relevance to our citizens' fiduciary interests being equal, strive to ensure that our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect a commitment to resisting and to denying assistance to the military and or police of any government that A: engages in genocide as defined by the United Nations, or B: denies basic human rights, including rights of residence, to any people within its borders based on those people's cultural, religious, national, gender, sexual, disability, socioeconomic, or political identification or orientation."*

Ms. Kearl recapped the drafts, then there was further discussion of how to move forward, mindful that this will replace the AFC Pledge, keeping the idea of standing against atrocities, but without singling out any nation-state or any specific group.

Mr. Cichanowski asked the board to specifically include the word stateless, because once you're stateless, you have no rights, no due process, no recourse. A stateless person can't go to a local or state government, or the federal government, because a stateless person has none of these.

The floor was opened for public comments:

Naomi Bindman thanked the board for their statements and said that she thought that referencing each of the previously adopted statements is important, rather than trying to "mush it all into one". She thought there was a lot of "beautiful overlap" in the board's statements and that they could be easily merged.

Carl Corman said he appreciated everybody taking time to put drafts together and personally appreciated all of them, except for the one that included issues specific to Israel, which is the basis of the objections of, and has created anxiety for, many people. Ms. Miller noted that her draft was tracking different resolutions etc. that have addressed these issues and that the reference could be removed. After further discussion Ms. Kearl asked Mr. Corman how he would feel about this statement if the paragraph mentioning Israel was removed entirely. Mr. Corman said he would like to study it, that paragraph is the most offensive part to him, and the rest may or may not be offensive.

Stella Brownstein said Ms. Miller mentioned that a resolution was unanimously adopted at a town meeting, but then didn't mention that the next town meeting had a counted vote to ask that the AFC

Pledge be rescinded. Ms. Kearl said that could be added as part of the narrative. Ms. Brownstein said she wouldn't put one in without the other.

Linda Marcia said that she was offended that some of our tax money is going towards genocide and killing when the Town is trying to balance its budget. She does not agree with any form of violence against anyone. Mr. Corman disagreed directly with Ms. Marcia regarding Town tax money being used. Ms. Kearl stopped the cross talk and asked everyone to agree that they will not raise their hand to speak a second time until everybody who wants to speak has spoken once. She continued that every person's opinion was relevant to the work being done and opinions might differ. She suggested discussing opinions with one another outside of the meeting. Mr. Corman asked to speak again; Ms. Kearl noted that this would be his 4<sup>th</sup> time and there were others who wanted to speak.

Karen Mellinger noted that Shaftsbury is a small town, and this issue was becoming divisive again. She commented on parts of the board members' statements and said she thought the board could come together with a statement that somehow includes the sentiments: "We're talking about the human race. And I don't feel like we need to pick this country, or that country... there's places where my taxpayer dollars and yours are going all over the world. There're just horrendous things that are happening." At Ms. Mellinger's request, Ms. Kearl read a revised version of the last part of her draft:

"We, the Select Board of the Town of Shaftsbury, are committed to policies and actions that foster a kinder and more just world, in which human rights are seen as universal, indivisible, and inalienable. All levels of government, national, regional, and local have an obligation to protect, respect, and fulfill all human rights to the best of their abilities." Ms. Mellinger said she believed that reflected both sides of the issue.

Another gentleman said to keep it simple. He continued that when a statement gets more detailed, it starts to get "very loosey-goosey". He thought keeping a general statement like "when you agree that we're a good nation here, we're going to allow people to do what they must do, and we trust, and so on". He felt that keeping it simple would be best.

Amy? seconded keeping it simple. She said when she heard Ms. Kearl's initial statement she thought it was, excluding the UN quotes, to the point. She thought the important thing was that everyone knew that people of all races, colors, genders, are welcome in Shaftsbury, that it is an open, affirming town, but leave the politics out of it. Ms. Miller replied that the board was trying to reflect the voices of all concerned residents in the writing of a replacement for the AFC Pledge. Amy said she didn't want Shaftsbury to take the focus off town government and the Town's needs. She did not want the Town to get into the federal and world politics.

Andrea Bacchi said she agreed with "the last speaker (Amy) and Karen". She also said by not affirming something doesn't mean that she is for it. She spoke about an issue she felt was more important: supporting and trying to get people who have disabilities that can't attend town meetings the right to vote in Vermont at town meetings on Zoom. She continued that when we zero in on one topic we end up excluding others. She said she felt excluded, and thought others in the state did too. Ms. Kearl agreed that this divisive issue led to other matters getting less attention. However, this is the issue that came before the board, and everyone was working towards a place where the divisiveness softens. She said that everyone in the town had more in common than not, exclusion was never the interest of the Select Board, and she thought exclusion was never the intention of the group that brought forward the AFC Pledge.

It was suggested that the Select Board have a working session, where they concentrate on the Human Rights statement.

Mr. Fuller said that either the board needs to write something up that says "have a nice day" or it must call out what's going on everywhere. He didn't think this issue was dividing the town, most people were unaware of it.

Mr. Corman then asked why the apartheid resolution could not immediately be repealed, since the board is committed to replacing it with something. Ms. Kearl said the board thought it felt procedurally correct for the AFC Pledge to be removed and replaced simultaneously, so that it was clear what was happening.

Mr. Corman said he personally did not understand the threat to anyone in saying “we're just going to drop it all now”, since the board was committed to doing that.

Ms. Costin asked what the people who supported the AFC Pledge would feel like if the board did just replace it immediately. Ms. Kearl said that they would feel as though they were excluded, as though they were being targeted, because they had brought something before the board that's very meaningful to them. She continued that this was the reason for doing everything at once, “so that it's respectful of all of the parties who have differing views...”. There was further discussion of a respectful transition to a more inclusive statement.

Andrea Bacchi brought up the Shaftsbury Declaration of Inclusion again, saying she was confused by some earlier comments. There was further discussion, but no action taken.

Ms. Hall suggested an open working session discussing only the replacement statement. The board agreed to meet at 4:00 PM on Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>. Draft statements will be included in the minutes. These will be likely be revised before the working session.

#### 15. Selectboard Liaison Assignments

The board discussed who would be the liaison for what in the Town. Ms. Iken will have a final list available. Ms. Kearl said that it would be helpful every half year the liaison submits a brief written report saying they checked in. She said that would be good, because the reports would be in the public record and more transparent.

#### 16. Discussion of Ongoing Tax Abatement Question

There was a discussion about a letter to be written to a couple who paid their taxes half an hour after the final deadline and, are contesting whether the Town had properly warned that final deadline. Ms. Hall said she had written, letting them know that, after the abatement board had their say, the only place they can go now is to the State. The only thing a select board can abate is interest. Ms. Hall said that the deadline was warned in multiple places, but the couple was under the impression that 5:00 PM was new, which it isn't. They originally said that they had put it in the box before 5:00 PM. This proved to not be accurate. They are angry that they must pay a fine. He'd like to pursue further action, but that will be with the State. Ms. Kearl requested that Ms. Hall keep the board updated.

#### 17. Other Business

Ms. Iken said that Tim Scoggins was appointed to the Governing Board of Southern Vermont Communications Union District. The Select Board needs to appoint him. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to appoint Tim Scoggins as a representative to the Governing Board of the Southern Vermont Communications Union District. Ms. Miller moved. Ms. Hall seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Hall said she'd received an email from the State regarding free sunscreen dispensers. They would need to be refilled by the Town. The application needs to be completed by April 17<sup>th</sup>. The board agreed that sunscreen was a good thing.

Grace Winslow joined on Zoom to thank the board for the thought they are putting into the replacement of the AFC Pledge. She said that having the inclusion statement is not the same as having a values statement, a humanitarian statement. The inclusion statement says “everybody that already lives here is welcome to be here, but the value statement says how we're going to use our power and our money and

our decision-making to move forward to include those people that we want to include. To include... people with disabilities, to include people who don't already get included.”

#### 18. Review of Action Items

Ms. Kearl said that the Select Board needed to have a working group. Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM was decided on. This will be warned and will be on Zoom. There was some discussion of the wording in the new declaration.

#### 19. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Motion to adjourn passed 5-0-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 PM.