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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Minutes

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Select Board

Meeting Date May, 4th 2026

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM at the Town Offices at 677 VT Rte. 7A. Zoom was not available because internet was not set up. The meeting was recorded on CAT-TV. Present were Select Board members Zoe Kearl (Chair), Naomi Miller (Vice-Chair), Mike Cichanowski, and Marlene Hall. Also present were Town Administrator Paula Iken and Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were no conflicts with items on the agenda.

3. Minutes

Minutes for the 4-16-26 meeting were amended to correct an autocorrect. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Minutes were approved 4-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the minutes for the 4-20-26 meeting. Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. There was some discussion of various names and corrections to grammar. Minutes were approved 3-0-1. Ms. Hall abstained.

4. Warrants

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve CWR26026 for \$112,321.69 Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Invoices were read out and Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, CWR26026 was approved 4-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve PR10 for \$26,195.07. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, PR10 was approved 4-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve PR22 for \$22,621.33. Ms. Miller moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, PR22 was approved 4-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Kearl announced that the new office building did not have Wi-Fi yet. Ms. Iken expanded on that saying that despite contacting Fidium months before the move, they fell through. Comcast has been contacted for emergency service and they will install internet service very soon. Town Office staff are setting up their offices and doing online business from home. Appointments can be set up. Ms. Hall noted that email is the best way to contact Town Office staff.

Ms. Iken thanked everyone who participated in Green Up Day.

Ms. Iken said that the transfer station was closed on Saturday due to staffing shortages. Shelly had a family emergency, and Greg was attending his father's funeral. The transfer station will be open on Tuesday at normal hours. She apologized to anyone who was inconvenienced.

Ms. Kearl announced that there will be a grand opening of the Town Office building once everything is in place. Information will be announced on the Town website and other public places.

6. Public Comments

Community member Bill Sergeant raised concerns regarding state Act 181 concerning land use and forestry, prompting a discussion about the evolving nature of the legislation. Ms. Kearl noted that the Shaftsbury Planning Commission had discussed Act 181 with BCRC and LUR in regard to density planning, but not relating to the potential effects on rural landowners. Rep. David Durfee will be at the Select Board meeting on May 18th, giving an opportunity for more public engagement. This meeting will be accessible on Zoom.

Martina Barnes, District Ranger from the US Forestry Service Manchester Ranger District, Stacy Stratton, USFS Timber Manager, and Melly Napper, Public Lands Forester for the Ruffled Grouse Society, provided updates. Ms. Barnes spoke a bit about reorganization at the Forestry Service saying there had been staff cuts but no major changes at the ranger district level. She provided maps and a link to the website with a current project list. She brought up the purchase of land, North of the Grass Mountain timber sale area on the border of Arlington and Shaftsbury, called the Taconic Gateway. The sale will probably take a couple more years to complete.

Mr. Stratton discussed the 5 year timber plan. He said the only nearby sale is called Catamount Cobble, on the South Road, near the East side of Rt. 7. This is several years out, in 2029. He noted that timber sales have increased aggressively in the past few years from 6 million board feet to 11 million board feet per year, mostly in the Stanford/Pownal area. The USFS is trying to improve the forest- most of this wood was in bad shape and sold for pulp.

Ms. Napper spoke about the Grass Mountain timber sale which went through in October 2025. The parcel was logged from November 2025 until January 2026; 20 acres remain to be logged. The opened land is being replanted with Red Oak this Spring. Ms. Napper invited the community to a volunteer day on June 13th. This will be posted on the Town website.

7. DPW Report

Ms. Iken said that the DPW is continuing road grading and clearing a portion of Howard Park for the dog park.

8. Treasurer's Report

Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter gave a brief report, stating that the Town had taken in 100% of its receipts and spent 100% of its expenses, and more. She said that none of this was unexpected and had been discussed many times. She mentioned that the Town should get something back from the State for the final cash flow for education spending. She will have more information on this at the next meeting. She then said that, with warrants just signed, the Town had no more cash in its checking account from the general fund. She had warned of this happening, but there is money in the reserve funds. The Lister's Fund has plenty to pay for the reappraisal. Water is a little better because some delinquent water bills were collected. Water bills have been sent so there should be additions to the Water Fund soon. Ms. Hall asked if money would be returned to the reserve funds. Ms. Dexter said that would need to, at some time, be addressed in the tax rate. Ms. Dexter also mentioned that "through penny pinching", Shaftsbury came

through COVID a lot better and is in better shape than many towns. Regarding unusual expenses, Ms. Miller reminded that in the recent past there had been disasters at Cole Hall including mold in the basement and electrical fires, and long discussions on what to do about it that resulted in the new offices. Ms. Kearl then mentioned the huge expense of keeping roads safe to travel during the past Winter, paying premiums for sand, salt, and gravel. She praised the DPW for the great work they did in extreme conditions.

9. Discussion & Decision on Spur Rd. Proposed Name Change

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the name change of Spur Rd. Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl opened a discussion by saying that a name change would be a significant hardship for the 11 other people who live on the road, most of them senior citizens. The reason that Mr. Paul, who believes he owns the road, but does not- all road residents have an easement, wants the name change is “with regards to it being a pleasant namesake”. She asked for others’ opinions. Ms. Hall said that unless it was an emergency location issue, it was a lot to ask the 11 families to go through a change of address. Ms. Miller agreed that a change of address is very difficult. Ms. Kearl agreed that it was a hardship, particularly for a family that fosters children that would need to relicense. Mr. Cichanowski said that he was not in favor of changing the road name. Ms. Kearl asked if there was any further discussion. Hearing none, she asked for a vote to change the name of Spur Road to Windgate Way. The change was rejected 0-4-0 with 1 member absent.

10. Select Board Signing of Revised Inclusive Human Rights Proclamation

Ms. Kearl noted that it took several months of discussion and community participation to arrive at the current document. There were 2 changes, at the advice of the Town attorney, since the last meeting: First, this is a non-binding resolution affirming human rights inclusion and community commitment. Second, the section regarding annual review of implementation was removed. The attorney said that the Select Board does not have the jurisdiction to make a decision regarding implementation. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the Town of Shaftsbury, Vermont’s non-binding resolution affirming human rights inclusion and community commitment. Ms. Hall asked if the old pledge needed to be rescinded. Ms. Kearl thanked her and changed the call for a motion to replace the Apartheid-Free Community Pledge with the non-binding resolution affirming human rights inclusion and community commitment. Ms. Hill moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl asked if there was further discussion. A member of the public asked if this resolution would replace an earlier resolution specific to the invasion of Ukraine. Ms. Kearl said it would not. Hearing no further discussion, the board voted to approve the resolution 4-0-0.

11. Other Business

Ms. Iken had a question regarding placement of the Town Clerk’s and Treasurer’s boxes being moved from Cole Hall to the new offices. Ms. Hall said that they had been placed outside at Cole Hall for 24/7 access, which was important. She suggested placing them to the right of the outside door at the new offices so they would be easy to find. All agreed that there needed to be an announcement where to find the boxes once they are moved.

12. Review of Action Items

Ask Jen Holley to post US Forest Service 6/13 volunteer information

Ask Jen Holley to post a live link to ongoing Act 181 legislation

Ask Jen Holley to post signed resolution

13. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Meeting adjourned 4-0-0.