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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Minutes

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Select Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order on Monday, July 20, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Town Offices at 677 VT Rte. 7A and on Zoom. Present were Select Board members Zoe Kearl (Chair), Naomi Miller (Vice-Chair), Mike Cichanowski, Marlene Hall, and Eamon Mulligan. Also present were Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter and DPW Foreman Mike Yannotti.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

There were no conflicts of interest with items on the agenda.

3. Minutes

The minutes for the July 6, 2026, Select Board meeting were reviewed. There was not a quorum to approve the minutes. They were accepted without amendment.

4. Warrants

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve CW27001 for \$97,759.53. Mr. Mulligan moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl read some random smaller items and all items over \$2,500.00. She noted that about \$14,000, \$12,989.40, and \$7,807.20 of the total would be reimbursed by highway grants and that the Sheriff Department's monthly fee had increased due to an increase in patrol hours requested by the Town. CW27001 was approved 5-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Kearl announced that there is a Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Wednesday, July 22, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Town Offices to discuss the Town Plan. The BCRC will make a presentation at that meeting.

She then announced that the tennis courts were closed for resurfacing and line painting. There will be 1 tennis court and several pickle ball courts. The cost is being covered by a matching grant from the State with the rest coming from the Town Recreation fund.

On Friday, July 24, 2026, the Select Board will be meeting with the judge presiding over the case Melissa Brown vs. Town of Shaftsbury regarding the vicious dog attack that took place in Fall 2025. This is a status hearing; no decisions will be made.

Ms. Kearl continued that the primary elections occur on August 11, 2026. The Town Clerk's office will be closed on August 10, 11, and 12. Absentee ballots are available.

Ms. Miller announced that a possible member of the Cole family had been located and this person was gathering documentation for proof of relationship. This person is interested in participating in redefining the covenants of the deed so that the Town has more legal options for Cole Hall.

6. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

7. DPW Report

Ms. Kearl said that there were 2 sealed bids for paving that would be opened and asked DPW Foreman Mike Yannotti to join the board at the table. Mr. Yannotti reported that the mower had been repaired, it should be under warranty, and the crew is catching up with roadside mowing. They are also finishing up culverts and other repairs on East Rd. ahead of the paving project. He continued that some of the grants mentioned in the warrant report were covering work currently being done on culverts and funds should be received in September. The \$12,000 grant is for work on Cider Mill Rd. which starts next week and will continue for a couple of weeks. The next job is on Murphy Hill.

Ms. Kearl then opened the paving bids for the East Rd. project from 2106 East Rd. to the gravel section. The first bid was from Springfield Paving in Claremont, NH. Mr. Yannotti said this company has done all the paving during the last 10 years and it has been done well. The bid was for \$222,491.70 with a completion date by November 5, 2026. The next bid was from Peckham Road Corporation for \$247,250.00. Ms. Hall asked the amount of the grant. Mr. Yannotti said it was \$225,000.00 with \$20,000 coming from the Town. He explained that Peckham Industries is a New York state company that is required to pay New York state wages, so the bid reflected that. He recommended accepting the Springfield Paving bid. Peckham Industries sells the asphalt to Springfield Paving so they will also benefit. Mr. Yannotti noted that Springfield Paving paved Buck Hill Rd., White Creek Rd. Hidden Valley etc. and they show up with the same crew every time.

Mr. Cichanowski raised the question of timing the paving of East Rd. since traffic is being diverted from Rt. 7 to Rt. 7A and possibly East Rd. during the State's Rt. 7 culvert project in late August/early September. Mr. Yannotti said he expected that the East Rd. paving won't happen until October. The State project should be completed before then.

Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to accept the Springfield Paving bid for \$222,491.70. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. The motion was approved 5-0-0. Ms. Kearl gave the bids to Mr. Yannotti who said he would update the board when paving is scheduled. He thought the project would take 2 days. Mr. Yannotti continued by saying that Class 2 roads can get paving grants, but there are Class 3 Town roads that do not qualify for grants and the Town needs to put money away in a paving fund for these roads.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter opened by saying this was the day that the tax rate will be set, but first she wanted to "tie a bow" on Fiscal Year 2026. She brought up cash flow with actual cash on hand being \$587,050.00, so delivery of the new fire truck was delayed. She emphasized that this is a temporary situation that will be remedied when the tax rate is set, and tax bills are sent. The cash flow should be improved within weeks. Ms. Kearl said that the fire truck is not quite ready for delivery and the Town Administrator is trying to work out a possible partial payment on delivery. She noted that the Fire Chief is understandably frustrated.

Ms. Kearl asked where the bond for water system repairs would be placed. Ms. Dexter said that she wasn't sure and that the Town Administrator would know. Ms. Hall asked when it would be possible to pay for the fire truck. Ms. Dexter said she hoped to have tax bills out by the end of the week and the norm was that around \$100,000 would be received quickly. Ms. Dexter said that, as predicted, expenditures exceeded revenues by \$328,000 in FY 2026.

Ms. Dexter then brought up some discrepancies in the appropriations: Turning Point was not in the Town Report but was on the ballot, VNA Hospice was in the Town Report but not on the ballot. Ms. Dexter asked the Select Board to determine if payment could be made to VNA Hospice if the townspeople had not voted on it. Ms. Miller confirmed with Ms. Dexter that the VNA Hospice appropriation was always approved by a significant amount in previous years when it was on the ballot. Ms. Kearl said she was comfortable asking for a motion to approve the \$5000.00 appropriation. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. The motion passed 5-0-0.

Ms. Dexter then addressed the tax rate. She said the rate has changed because of the reappraisal. The grand list value is \$7,212,928.00. It was \$4,179,000.00. With local agreements the tax rate this year is 0.3986. Last year it was 0.6002. Ms. Dexter explained that the amount needed to be raised by taxes was more than last year, but the reappraisal made the total value a lot more, so the municipal tax rate dropped significantly. She then asked the Select Board to adopt a municipal tax rate of 0.3960 and a local agreement rate of 0.0026. for a total of 0.3986. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Ms. Kearl reread the numbers to be voted on and the tax rate was adopted 5-0-0.

9. SFD's request for budgeted equipment

Ms. Kearl went over 2 equipment requests from the Shaftsbury Fire Dept. The first was a quote from HSE for hose in the amount of \$10,236.00. She asked if there were any questions. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the quote. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The quote was approved 5-0-0. The second quote was from BearCom for communications equipment in the amount of \$3,610.42. Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions about this quote. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. The quote was approved 5-0-0.

10. Approval and Explanation of Updated Job Descriptions

Ms. Kearl said that since the Town Administrator was not present this item will be pushed to the next meeting. Ms. Kearl did note that the Town Administrator completes performance reviews for Town employees, and the Select Board completes a performance review of the Town Administrator. She suggested that the Select Board form a 2 person committee to create a plan for performance assessment of the Town Administrator. It was agreed that Ms. Kearl and Mr. Cichanowski would create the plan.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

12. Review of Action Items

Mr. Yannotti will follow up on the paving project

Ms. Kearl will find out if status hearing can be attended in person and will attend, either in person or online

13. Executive Session: Personnel

Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to enter executive session. Mr. Mulligan moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 5-0-0 and the board and Mr. Yannotti entered executive session at 6:58 PM

14. Adjournment

Not recorded.