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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Special Meeting

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Select Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order on Thursday, September 10, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Town Offices at 677 VT Rte. 7A and on Zoom. Present were Select Board members Naomi Miller (Vice-Chair), Mike Cichanowski, and Eamon Mulligan. Also present were Town Administrator Carlyn Mickle, Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter, and Interim DPW Foreman Tim Gulley.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

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

Ms. Miller proposed changes of order to the agenda, moving warrants to after item 13. She also noted that the Executive Session topics were listed incorrectly. It should read “legal and real estate issues.”

3. Minutes

The minutes for the August 17, 2026, Select Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Minutes were approved without amendment 3-0-0.

4. Warrants (during meeting moved to after item 13)

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve CWR 27007 in the amount of \$502,697.00 for the new fire truck. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. CWR 27007 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve CWR 27005 in the amount of \$11,965.42 for county taxes. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. CWR 27005 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve CWR 27006 in the amount of \$30,864.05 for general expenses. Mr. Mulligan moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Miller read out items over \$2,500.00 and some random lower items. Some items were covered by grants. CWR 27006 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve PR 05 in the amount of \$2,808.50 for election employee pay. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. PR 05 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve PR 06 in the amount of \$22,594.38 for payroll. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. PR 06 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve PR 02 for health insurance, HRA cards and other expenses in the amount of \$32,622.36. Mr. Mulligan moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. PR 02 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve CWR 27004 in the amount of \$150,288.24 for expenses. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Ms. Miller read out items over \$2,500.00 and some random lower items. Again some items were covered by grants. CWR 27004 was approved 3-0-0.

5. Announcements

Ms. Miller announced that it was the new Town Administrator, Carlyn Mickle's, first Select Board meeting.

Ms. Miller then introduced new protocols for public comments during Select Board meetings. There is a microphone by the board table. Commenters will come up to the microphone, state their names and where they live. Comments will be limited to 2 minutes. She later added that all members of the public will be given an opportunity to comment before second comments are heard. Cross talk would be called out and stopped.

Ms. Mickle announced that there were several positions being filled in town: Zoning Administrator, which had 1 applicant at the time of the meeting. This position is still open, so others are welcome to apply. There will be an interview of ZA applicants before the next Planning Commission meeting on Wednesday, September 23rd. Ms. Mickle asked that 1 or 2 Select Board members also be present at that interview. The DPW Foreman position is now closed. Interviews will take place for that position on Monday, September 21st during the Select Board's executive session. Budget Committee member applications are also closed. Those will be discussed in open session at the September 21st Select Board meeting.

6. Public Comments

Ms. Miller asked if there were public comments other than on the road closure. There were none.

7. DPW Report

Mr. Gulley said that the DPW had finished ditching on the Murphy Hill grant project on the week of August 31st. They are finalizing that grant and the Cider Mill Rd. grant work. Mowing was done on Daniels and Erich roads and will continue to Myers Rd. next week. Culvert work was completed on Daniels Rd. Next week grading will be done in the Shaftsbury Hollow area.

Mr. Mulligan asked for an update on the East Rd. paving schedule. Mr. Gulley said work would be started at the end of September.

8. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter displayed the August 1, 2026, report which showed property tax receipts of \$506,562.35. She noted that the amount dispersed was almost equal to the amount received and that she will keep a close eye on cash flow. The cash flow for September takes into account the new fire truck so the \$243,361.25 cash balance is a realistic amount.

Ms. Dexter said she is still discussing the new property taxes with residents.

9. Lighted Holiday Parade: Charlie Jenks

Mr. Jenks asked the Select Board for approval of November 28, 2026, as the date for the Lighted Holiday Parade. He said anyone who wants to be in the parade can put lights on anything- a tractor, car, truck, riding mower etc. More information will be coming.

10. Buck Hill Lot Sale

Ms. Miller noted that this item should be moved to executive session to discuss pricing of the lot.

11. Trumbull Hill Update

Ms. Mickle briefly discussed the neighbor dispute brought to the Select Board's attention at a previous meeting. Information has been gathered from all parties involved to begin the process of coming to an amicable agreement. She will provide updates. Ms. Miller noted that it was a complicated legal situation.

12. Discussion of Public Safety during VTrans Rte. 7 Closure: Sheriff James Gulley and Lieutenant Seth Loomis

Ms. Miller invited Bennington County Sheriff James Gulley and station commander for the Vermont State Police's Shaftsbury barracks Lieutenant Seth Loomis to begin their discussion of the road closure on Rt. 7. Sheriff Gulley provided details of increased traffic enforcement on Rt. 7A and Rt. 313 designed for public safety. He said it was estimated that traffic in Shaftsbury will be triple the norm during the closure (9/19 – 10/3) and said the department was taking the situation very seriously then asked for questions/comments from the public.

Corinne Levin, Rt. 7A, Shaftsbury, said she had noticed an increase in traffic and speed in South Shaftsbury, particularly large trucks. She has concerns about coverage when students are going to and from school and for the safety of pedestrians and turning traffic. Lt. Loomis said he would contact resources about coverage.

Betsy Habberfield, Rt. 7A & 67, Shaftsbury, wanted to know what additional support the sheriff's department would have. Lt. Loomis answered that there was an MOU between VTrans and the State Police, where funding would enable troopers from other barracks in southern Vermont to provide additional support to local troopers. This is being actively discussed but plans aren't finalized.

Sheriff Gulley introduced Lt. Scott Legacy, the sheriff's department member who patrols Shaftsbury and is responsible for managing the schedule in the sheriff's office. Lt. Legacy is concentrating high frequency patrols in Shaftsbury during the closure. The sheriff's department and state police are working as a team to provide safety.

Penny Abernathy, 6344 7A, Shaftsbury, reminded that there was more than South Shaftsbury affected by the closure and that there are 68 driveways between the start of the 50 MPH zone and Old Depot Rd. in Center Shaftsbury. There are also 6 businesses and tractors from Clear Brook Farm. She was concerned about not enough resources to provide traffic enforcement. Sheriff Gulley said he has been working with Rep. Durfee, compiling names of residents on 7A who have offered space for the sheriff's department to park on their property, to run radar and encourage traffic to slow. He asked that residents report violations and safety issues to the sheriff's department. Ms. Abernathy asked if there were flashing speed signs that could be placed. Lt. Loomis said that he is looking into the use of a speed cart to be placed near the Governor's Rock Motel. He is trying to get a second one so both North and South lanes can be monitored. Ms. Miller asked Tim Gulley (DPW) if the town could move one of its speed signs, Mr. Gulley said possibly from White Creek Rd. or Twitchell Hill Rd. He will investigate it.

Lt. Legacy said he and Ms. Mickle had been discussing slowing down trucks in town and watching use of side roads, like Buck Hill Rd. which passes the elementary school, and East Rd. which passes the MAU Middle School.

Gail Morin, Church St., Shaftsbury, asked that Church St. not be forgotten. There are big farm trucks "flying" down the road. She offered use of a driveway for the sheriff to park in. She and other neighbors would like a speed sign.

Sue Balutis, 5055 7A, Shaftsbury, asked if Shaftsbury has considered borrowing additional speed signs from neighboring towns. She felt that the more signs there were, the more effective they would be. Tim Gulley said he would investigate this and coordinate with Sheriff Gulley.

Karen Mellinger, East Rd., Shaftsbury, asked if there were any retired police cars that could be parked as deterrents. Sheriff Gulley said that had been discussed.

Rep. Durfee, 7A, Shaftsbury, said he had received an email from a concerned parent wondering what the plan was for the intersection of 7A and Buck Hill Rd. He asked Sheriff Gulley or Lt. Loomis to speak to staffing at that intersection when students are coming to or leaving from the elementary school. Lt. Loomis said that the state police could park near the intersection in the afternoon more easily than the morning, but the MOU won't cover this. Sheriff Gulley said there could be a conversation with the superintendent to see if a campus safety officer could be present at those times instead of taking a deputy away from traffic enforcement. He and Ms. Mickle will discuss the logistics.

Sheriff Gulley then brought up a concern that he and Lt. Loomis had discussed with the State engineer: rerouting off 7A on to a dirt road if there is a critical incident that closes 7A. The engineer said that couldn't be done. The sheriff's department and state police have discussed this and will allocate resources needed to speed up the process of completing an investigation. They will communicate with the town and on social media. They may have to divert traffic but there will be information provided. They have three main goals: maintaining the safety of everyone driving on the roadway, going after dangerous and aggressive drivers, and ensuring that the roadway stays open by preventing crashes.

Bud Krawczyk, East Rd., Shaftsbury, asked if it would be possible to put school zone signs on 7A in South Shaftsbury. Lt. Loomis said he would investigate this.

Jim Carney spoke about the closure of Rt. 2 in Massachusetts at the French King Bridge. Ms. Miller said that the town had proposed to VTrans a lane closure on Rt 7 instead of rerouting traffic, but the state said it would be much more expensive.

Carl Korman asked if fines would be doubled on the 7A detour. Lt. Loomis said no, it was not the construction site.

Sue Balutis said she had been to every meeting about the closure and the sheriff's department and state police had never been invited to those meetings. She complimented them on their efforts on short notice. Lt. Loomis said they are problem solvers, and they will find a way to get this done and figure it out so that it is safe for everyone. Ms. Balutis said she respected his professionalism, but didn't feel that the state had been fair to him, or the sheriff's department or the town. Sheriff Gulley called out Rep. Durfee as an advocate for the town and said parties involved will all meet after the closure and discuss what could have been done better.

Corinne Levin said the community needs to handle the situation together. Mr. Cichanowski noted that our friends and neighbors are also speeding down the back roads every day. Lt. Loomis said you never know when something is going to happen due to human nature, so use defensive driving. He continued by describing some of the difficulties that the state police or sheriff's department might have with risk vs reward while enforcing.

Ms. Morin reiterated that the sheriff's department/state police were welcome to use her driveway.

Ms. Mickle asked that people willing to let the sheriff's department/state police use driveways for speed enforcement to contact her so she can compile a list.

Mr. Korman asked if photographing incidents would be helpful. Lt. Loomis said it could help with identification, particularly with repeat incidents, but don't do it while driving, and don't be confrontational. It could also identify an area to set up to stop speeding.

Sheriff Gulley said that reporting law enforcement on Ways is another way to slow down traffic consistently.

Ms. Miller thanked Sheriff Gulley and Lt. Loomis for their assistance and efforts.

13. Presentation of Estimate for Further Well Testing near Landfill

Ms. Miller introduced an estimate from KAS Engineering for further testing of wells in the area of the landfill. Ms. Mickle said there were 9 locations that needed to be tested. 2 locations may have additional wells for drinking water and an owner could not be contacted for 1 location. Total estimated cost is \$7,815.00. Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve entering a contract with KAS Engineering with the proposed cost understanding that final costs would be based on actual work. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Ms. Miller asked for discussion. Hearing none, the board voted to pass the motion 3-0-0.

14. Other Business

Ms. Mickle said that the Cub Scouts have presented a drawing of a shed they would like to build and give to the transfer station. She brought it to the Select Board for further review. Ms. Miller suggested that the board review it and bring it up for discussion at the September 21st board meeting. The DPW will weigh in on placement.

Ms. Mickle said that Casella Waste Services has brought a proposal to the town to replace the current recycling system with a single stream compacter. They will present the proposal at the September 21st board meeting. The current pad is acceptable but improved electrical access would need to be added. Ms. Mickle said that compost issues also need to be addressed.

Ms. Mickle said town staff has some ideas for improvements for storage in the town offices.

Mr. Mulligan said he had attended a BCRC meeting and learned that there will be a medications drop off between noon and 4:00 PM on October 17th at the Bennington transfer station. He noted that the Bennington transfer station is considering expanding the types of hazardous materials they accept.

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to approve the errors and omissions form. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. The board voted to pass the motion 3-0-0.

15. Review of Action Items

Mr. Gulley will check on mobile speed signs and reach out to other towns about borrowing theirs during the closure

Ms. Mickle will finalize which Select Board members will attend the Zoning Administrator interviews before the Planning Commission meeting on September 23rd

She will also compile a list of driveways that the sheriff department/state police can use

Ms. Mickle will talk to Jen Holley about posting closure details on social media

She will also talk to Sheriff Gulley about a campus safety officer helping at the 7A-Buck Hill Rd.- Church St. crosswalk

16. Executive Session: ~~Personnel~~ Legal and Real Estate Issues

Ms. Miller called for a motion to enter executive session to discuss legal and real estate issues. Mr. moved. Mr. seconded. Motion passed 3-0-0 and board entered executive session. The board left executive session at 9:04 PM.

17. Adjournment

Ms. Miller asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Mulligan moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion to adjourn approved 3-0-0.