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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, October 5, 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), Mike Cichanowski, and Marlene Hall. Also present were Town Administrator Carlyn Mickle, Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter, and DPW Interim Foreman Tim Gulley.

Conflict of Interest Statement

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

Minutes

The minutes for the September 10, 2026, Select Board meeting were tabled due to lack of quorum to approve. They will be reviewed at the October 19th meeting. The minutes for the September 16, 2026, Special Select Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Minutes were approved without amendment 3-0-0. The minutes for the September 21, 2026, Select Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Minutes were approved without amendment 3-0-0.

2. Warrants

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to consider CW27009 in the amount of \$84,186.90. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearl read some random smaller items and all items over \$2,500.00. CW27009 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to consider PRW03 in the amount of \$32,550.91 for benefits. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. Ms. Kearl noted that the Town portion of this was \$14,727.76. The rest came out of employee paychecks. PRW03 was approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to consider PR07 in the amount of \$24,973.02. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. PR07 was approved 3-0-0.

3. Announcements

Ms. Kearl announced that there will be quarterly meetings of committee chairs to better coordinate. The first meeting will be on November 2, 2026. Select Board liaisons will work on building rapport with committee chairs.

Ms. Kearl announced that the Shaftsbury bylaw revisions meeting will be during the Select Board meeting on October 19, 2026. Members of the Planning Commission will be present.

She then announced that the 7A detour was done, ahead of schedule. She thanked the Vermont State Police and Bennington County Sheriff Department for their great work protecting Shaftsbury residents, particularly schoolchildren.

Ms. Kearl announced that the 90% report of the Sewer Feasibility Study completed by the Dufresne Group has been received. She noted that this is grant funded. The next step is to schedule a Planning Commission meeting with the Sewer Feasibility Study Committee to share knowledge.

Ms. Kearl followed up on the last meeting by saying that the Town of Shaftsbury will be filing a class action suit regarding PFAS. The fact finding process is underway.

Ms. Hall announced that ballots may be delayed due to a delay by the State's printer. If you do not receive a ballot by mail within 1.5 weeks, see her for a ballot. She has a limited number.

Ms. Mickle announced that Town Fair with the Vermont League of Cities and Towns is coming up. She, Town Clerk Marlene Hall, and Town Assessor Gina Jenks will be out of office on Wednesday, October 7th and Thursday, October 8th.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

5. DPW Report

Mr. Gulley reported that mowing and grading continues. The DPW is still 1 grader down. Next week they will start putting snowplows on trucks. Ms. Hall said an Avondale Meadows resident had asked her about timing of mowing/grading(?) and reported that their road sign was down. Mr. Gulley said the DPW would take care of it.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter went over the cash flow from September 30th, noting that almost \$500,000.00 had been received from taxes, but the balance, about \$279,000.00, is lower than the norm because the new fire truck was paid for in September.

She emphasized that October 15th was the last day to file a Homestead Declaration and have any benefit from it.

Ms. Dexter also reminded that taxes are due by 5:00 PM on November 10, 2026. Ms. Kearl asked if partial payment was made by the deadline, was the penalty only on the remainder. Ms. Dexter said this was correct and noted that there is no delinquency allowed by the State on the education tax. The Town must pay the entire tax owed no matter how many delinquent resident taxes there are.

7. Opening bids for Emerald Ash Borer work on Maple Hill Rd.

Ms. Kearl opened 8 bids for work on Maple Hill Rd. removing hazards caused by Emerald Ash borer. Bids ranged from \$13,000 to \$41,000. Bids will be forwarded to the Emerald Ash Borer Committee for discussion.

8. Donation Request- Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade

Art Whitman, Co-chair of the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade Committee, provided the board with information on the parade, which is scheduled for November 28, 2026, starting at 6:00 PM. He said that there are now rules, posted on the Town website. Participants should register on the Town website, at the Town Office, or call him or Co-chair Charlie Jenks. Mr. Whitman said that there has been discussion of food trucks and porta-potties may be needed. He gave the board a letter regarding donations. There was

discussion with the board on the legalities of the Town accepting money and the possibility of setting up a fund for the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade. Ms. Kearl said she or Ms. Mickle would research using MuniPay for donations and be in contact with Mr. Whitman by the end of the week.

Ms. Kearl then called for a motion to consider approving the community partner outreach donation letter on behalf of the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade Committee, including an amendment that there shall be a specific memo line on any donation and that any cash taken will have a stated purpose. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

9. Delinquent Tax Penalty Rates

Delinquent Tax Collector Holly Bahan shared information on the delinquent tax rate for 2026. The State allows an 8% penalty rate, which is what the Town has charged. Ms. Bahan has, for the period from the deadline on November 10th at 5:00 PM through December 31, 2026, adjusted the penalty rate to 4% on the principal balance of 2026 taxes. On January 1, 2027, any remaining balance will be charged the additional 4%. She encouraged residents to pay as much as possible by the due date because they will only be charged a penalty on the remaining balance. Her statement will be posted on the Town website and other Town media pages.

Ms. Hall brought up the possibility of the Town postponing interest on delinquent taxes until January 1, 2027. Ms. Kearl said that research on what the Town could do legally would be used to create a presentation for the October 19th Select Board meeting.

10. SESFT Proposal

Ms. Kearl gave a brief history of SESFT meetings regarding the EMS situation. Nick Zaiac, Regional Planner with BCRC, discussed the 5 different proposals that came out of the SESFT meetings and the preferred solution: a union municipal district. Mr. Zaiac said “This is a government body serving at the pleasure of the district members”. Details can be accessed in the Southshire EMS Stabilization Analysis Summary Memo and Report on the Town website’s News listings. Mr. Zaiac noted that any viable solution requires more money. He laid out the next steps: Create a study committee; Draft a Town Meeting article; Warn the draft; Article is voted on at Town Meeting. If the Town votes yes, it will join with other towns that voted yes to discuss how to create a viable district.

There was more discussion of details that would be worked out in the future. The select board will appoint study committee members but there was no action taken at this meeting.

11. Voting on hiring a Zoning Administrator

Ms. Kearl called for motion to consider hiring Lydia Avery as the Town of Shaftsbury Zoning Administrator. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Avery was interviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission. Motion to hire Ms. Avery passed 3-0-0.

12. DPW Open Positions and Job Description

Ms. Kearl said that there was a DPW resignation that day so there are now 2 road crew positions open on the DPW. These positions were already in the budget. Ms. Mickle provided an updated job description for approval. The positions are posted on the Town website. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to approve the updated job description. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

13. Opioid Settlement Funds

Ms. Kearl said that the State provides a small amount of funds to be used on services related to opioid issues. The Town has accrued about \$2000.00. Ms. Kearl suggested that the money be donated to Turning Point in Bennington. The board agreed. She then called for a motion to approve allocating the opioid settlement funds to Turning Point LLC. (Note: The correct name is Turning Point Recovery Center of Bennington, VT. It is a non-profit.) Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

14. Casella quote

Ms. Kearl presented the formal service agreement from Casella Waste Systems to switch from 2 separated recycling containers to 1 single stream recycling compactor. The Town should save approximately \$28,000.00 annually after costs for upgrading electric. Ms. Kearl asked if there were any questions or comments. Hearing none, she called for a motion to approve the agreement with Casella Waste Systems. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

15. KAS Environmental Science and Engineering Quote

Ms. Kearl gave a brief history of contamination of wells with PFAS near the Town landfill and noted that it is the Town's responsibility to remediate through providing clean water, primarily through POET systems. There are 6 affected parties as of the June 2026 sampling. Ms. Kearl read out the scope of work covered by the quote. The board discussed the quote briefly and decided to table the matter pending further information.

16. Proposed location for the Cub Scout shed and compost expansion at the transfer station

Ms. Mickle said that Mr. Gulley had created plans for the board. A new shed would cost about \$720.00. The Cub Scout shed would be used for them to collect returnable cans and bottles. There was discussion on the size of the shed, who is responsible for maintenance and where the Cub Scouts were from. The board tabled action on the Cub Scout shed until the October 19th meeting. Ms. Kearl then called for a motion to approve construction of an additional compost shed. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

17. Other Business

Ms. Kearl discussed the Watson real estate conveyance of .18 acre of municipal land. This will be warned. In 30 days, on November 5th, the conveyance will proceed.

Ms. Mickle noted that they had already voted on the Eastern Salt quote.

Ms. Kearl discussed the Fire Department's request to replace an air pack. Replacement makes better financial sense than repair. This would be covered by the department's budget. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to approve the purchase. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0.

Ms. Kearl announced that there was a request on behalf of an elderly woman in Shaftsbury to use \$2000.00 from the Julia Madison Fund for repairs beyond her means. The select board may designate up to a certain amount annually. The principal may not be used. This was already voted on and the signed disbursement will now be sent to the Trustees of Public Funds.

18. Review of Action Items

Ms. Bahan will send Ms. Holley her delinquent tax rate statement to post on the Town website.

Ms. Mickle will send Ms. Holley the DPW job description to post on the Town website.

Ms. Jenks will make an edit to the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade donations letter, and it will then be posted on the Town website.

Ms. Kearl will investigate the financial logistics of the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade donations, including MuniPay.

Ms. Kearl will investigate suspending interest on taxes.

Ms. Mickle will finalize the donation to Turning Point Recovery Center of Bennington.

Ms. Mickle will finalize the agreement with Casella Waste Systems.

Ms. Mickle will finalize the quote with Eastern Salt.

Ms. Mickle will finalize the air pack quote from Reynolds Service

Ms. Mickle will follow up with KAS re: questions about the quote.

Ms. Kearl will put together the letter offering Lydia Avery the job of Zoning Administrator.

19. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion approved 3-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 7:39 PM.