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Town of Shaftsbury

Municipal Offices

Meeting Minutes

PO Box 409
677 Vermont RTE 7A
Shaftsbury, VT
05262-0409
(802) 442-4038

Select Board

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order on Monday, October 19, 2026, at 6:00 PM at the Town Offices at 677 VT Rte. 7A and on Zoom. Present were Select Board members Zoe Kearn (Chair), Naomi Miller (Vice-Chair), Mike Cichanowski, Marlene Hall, and Eamon Mulligan. Also present were Town Administrator Carlyn Mickle, Town Treasurer Melanie Dexter, and DPW Foreman Tim Gulley.

2. Administrative Matters

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 reviewed. Ms. Kearn called for a motion to approve. Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Minutes were approved with 1 amendment, correction of the spelling of a resident's surname, 3-0-2. Ms. Kearn and Ms. Hall abstained. The minutes for the October 5, 2026, Select Board meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kearn called for a motion to approve. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Minutes were approved without amendment 3-0-2. Ms. Miller and Mr. Mulligan abstained.

Warrants:

Ms. Kearn called for a motion to consider CW27010 in the amount of \$141,399.64. Ms. Miller moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Ms. Kearn read some random smaller items and all items over \$2,500.00. CW27010 was approved 5-0-0.

Ms. Kearn called for a motion to consider PR08 in the amount of \$23,233.92. Ms. Miller moved. Ms. Hall seconded. PR08 was approved 5-0-0.

3. Announcements

Ms. Mickle announced that the East Road paving project would be completed by October 20th as planned. She then announced that AxisGIS notified the Town that it is increasing costs by 15% next year (FY 2028).

Ms. Mickle discussed the Town's hazard mitigation plan. There are 4 pieces to the plan, 1 is out of date. Updating the plan will cost between \$12,000.00 - \$15,000.00. Up to 75% could be funded by grants. If the plan is updated the State will cover 12% of disaster costs as opposed to 7.5% without an updated plan. This also affects FEMA funding.

Ms. Mickle also announced that the Sheriff's Dept. will be closing Cleveland Ave. and the surrounding area to vehicle traffic on Halloween from around 4:00 PM – 8:30 PM depending on foot traffic.

She noted that there was a Dog Park work party earlier that afternoon.

Ms. Mickle announced that there is a water billing schedule available on the Town website and encouraged people to look at it and ask questions.

She then announced that the Vermont Homestead declaration filing date had passed on October 15th. There is no advantage to filing after that date.

She reminded that the Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade was on November 28th and registration is available at the Town office, on the Town website or by contacting Art Whitman or Charlie Jenks. They are accepting donations.

Ms. Kearl announced that the next hearing, at the Supreme Court level, for the Shaftsbury solar array was on Wednesday, October 21st at 10:45 AM.

Ms. Kearl then provided an update on the situation with the North Bennington Water Board. There is a meeting of the North Bennington Board of Trustees on Wednesday, October 21st at 6:00 PM. She is planning to attend.

4. Public Comments

Corrine Levin said that she still cannot drink her water due to excessive chlorine. She also said that traffic is still speeding past her house. Ms. Kearl responded that she hoped a better relationship between Shaftsbury and the North Bennington water board might help with the chlorine situation since North Bennington adds it in. Regarding speeding, Ms. Kearl said they could approach the sheriff. Ms. Miller noted that although the amount of sheriff patrol time was limited, the way the time was used was flexible and they could be asked to increase monitoring in the area from Cleveland Ave. to Church St. on 7A. Mr. Mulligan asked if a speed change a little further up the hill could be discussed with VTrans as a safety issue.

Andrea Bacchi commented that a speed sign on south 7A was covered by branches and asked if VTrans should be contacted. Ms. Kearl responded that she thought the DPW could clear it. Ms. Bacchi continued that speeding is also occurring on 7A and Old Depot Rd., noting that she is afraid to walk on either road. Ms. Kearl said that one remedy might be to lower the speed limit to 25 on the entirety of Old Depot Rd. Ms. Mickle said that she and DPW Foreman Tim Gulley had investigated that and found that Old Depot Rd. should all be posted at 25 MPH. This will be fixed with new signs. There was discussion of again petitioning the State to lower the speed limit on 7A on the hill south of Hidden Vally Rd. There have been multiple accidents at that intersection with 7A. Requesting a new speed study was suggested and it was noted that the BCRC might be able to help. Ms. Bacchi agreed that a speed study was a good idea. She then asked if anyone had asked the State about keeping Rt. 7 open during the culvert work instead of detouring on to Rt. 7A. Ms. Kearl responded that yes, the Select Board and other citizens had requested that, but the State refused. She said that Ms. Mickle can help Ms. Bacchi, or any citizen, get in touch with the Vermont AOT and submit comments because citizen requests may be more effective.

5. DPW Report

DPW Foreman Tim Gulley reported that the trucks were ready for winter, plow frames and winter tires on, and the yard cleaned up to make space for snow. The additional compost shed for the transfer station was built and placed. The crew was working on East Rd. with the paving company to complete that project. They are replacing some road signs and continuing grading this week and next. The crew will also help Jen Holley fix and replace flagpoles in the cemeteries on Thursday 10/22. Mowing will continue after grading. Mr. Gulley noted that the crew is down 2 people and 1 grader and asked for patience.

6. Treasurer's Report

Ms. Dexter went over the mid-month cash flow, noting just over \$604,000.00 was received from taxes and a further \$300,00.00 was to be deposited. She said almost \$2,000,000.00 had been received in taxes.

Ms. Dexter also said that there is definitely no benefit to filing the Homestead Declaration after the October 15th deadline.

Ms. Dexter also reminded that taxes are due by 5:00 PM on November 10, 2026. Payments can be made online or by hand up until that time. The box at the Town offices will be checked, with a witness, at exactly 5:00 PM on November 10, 2026. Any payments made after that time and date will be considered delinquent.

Ms. Dexter then compared the old and new methods of accounting for reserve funds. The new method was recommended by the accountant. Mr. Whitman asked if there was still a capital fund. Ms. Dexter explained that there was, but it was spread across different funds and was a part of the budgeting process. Ms. Kearl noted that a budget committee had been formed to take a hard look at the budget and make recommendations. Capital planning is on the list. Ms. Dexter said that the people on the committee had a lot of knowledge in many areas. She wants to ask the accountant if the Town's enterprise fund, water, should be commingled with the other money. It's the only fund that doesn't affect the whole town. She and Ms. Kearl felt that water should be separate. This cannot be done right away due to its financial situation.

7. Review Emerald Ash Borer Bid Recommendation

Ms. Kearl said the Emerald Ash Borer Committee had reviewed bids for removal of hazardous trees on Maple Hill Rd. After discussion they recommended Hawley's Grading and Land Clearing of Arlington, VT. It was the lowest bid and the company's qualifications and insurance meet the Town requirements. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to approve the selection. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Ms. Hall seconded. The motion was approved 5-0-0.

Mr. Whitman provided some data about the survey completed by the committee and noted that this bid costs about \$100.00/tree. There is enough money budgeted to complete this section, but there is a lot more to do that will need to be in future budgets. Ms. Kearl noted that it is much less expensive to remove the trees than to wait for them to fall and clean them up.

8. Bylaw Revision Review

Ms. Kearl asked Tim Scoggins, Chair of the Planning Commission, to present the first of 2 bylaw revision reviews that will be brought before the Select Board. The next will be at the November 2, 2026, Select Board meeting. Ms. Kearl opened the hearing and Mr. Scoggins presented some history of the revisions. He then proceeded to the 4 proposed bylaw revisions: 1. Change the maximum building height from 30' to 35'; 2. Home Occupations; 3. Poultry Ordinance; 4. Short-Term Rentals (STRs). The report with bylaw details is posted on the Town website along with details on proposed fees for registering home occupations and STRs. Fees, as set by the Select Board, will reside in the application, not in the bylaws. After some discussion of details, Ms. Kearl closed the hearing.

9. Appoint Southshire EMS Stabilization Task Force Liaison

Ms. Kearl reviewed the history of the SESTF and noted that of the 5 proposals for plans, 1 had been selected, a union municipal district that could include Bennington, Pownal, Shaftsbury, and Woodford. The board needs to appoint a study group to report back to the Town on costs and other details prior to a vote to join or not to be held at the town meeting. Ms. Kearl noted that this is the only option available and if the Town declined to join, there would be no emergency services in parts of Shaftsbury. A motion to appoint Zoe Kearl and Carlyn Mickle as the study group was moved by Ms. Miller. Ms. Hall seconded. Motion approved 4-0-1 with Ms. Kearl abstaining.

10. Review and Approve Grader Repair Costs

Ms. Kearl said that the 2011 John Deere grader needs a new transmission. The current DPW plan would have replaced it in 2031. The cost of replacing a grader in March 2025 was \$500,000.00, estimated to be close to \$600,000.00 now. The Town received quotes from United Construction and Forestry to replace the transmission for \$45,427.57 and turbo for \$7,871.62 totaling about \$53,299. Repairing the grader would extend the planned replacement date.

Mr. Mulligan noted that the quote for the turbo appeared to include a quote for a remanufactured turbo as well, so the total might be \$2,400.00 less. Ms. Mickle will investigate this. There was further discussion, and the board decided it could approve the repair not to exceed the quote, even with questions remaining. Any differences will be discussed at the next select board meeting. Ms. Kearl asked for a motion to approve the 2 quotes to replace the John Deere grader with cost not to exceed \$53,299.00. (Note: the quotes do not replace the grader, just the transmission and turbo.) Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0.

11. KAS Quote (POET) For Non-Recurring Costs

After a brief recap of the issue of contamination in wells near the landfill, Ms. Kearl read the quote from KAS Environmental Science & Engineering for POET systems. The quote of \$48,865.00 includes work, plan preparation, project coordination, and system design for POET systems for 6 contaminated wells. It also includes initial and 3 month testing and laboratory analysis for those tests. This is non-reoccurring. Ms. Kearl noted that the approximately \$21,960.00 annual recurring cost for maintaining POET systems will need to be added to the Town budget. The motion is to approve only the non-recurring cost. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0.

12. Tax Penalty Relief

Ms. Kearl said that the Town charges 1% interest on late taxes. She asked the board to approve waiving interest until after December 31, 2026. Ms. Hall moved. Ms. Miller seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0. Ms. Kearl reminded that interest is only paid on remaining tax, so it benefits residents to pay as much of the principal as possible by the deadline of 5:00 PM November 10, 2026.

13. Other Business

Ms. Miller suggested that the agenda order be changed. Ms. Kearl asked for the motion. Mr. Cichanowski moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0. Other Business was moved ahead of the Executive Session.

The shed for returnable cans & bottles proposed by the Cub Scouts was discussed. Ms. Mickle presented the answers to the board's questions: The shed size can be determined by the Town. The Cub Scouts have been in Shaftsbury for 26 years. Pick up will be on Saturday afternoons, with some flexibility as determined by the Town. Tammy Endres is the contact for maintenance of the shed and area around it. Russ Goodrich is the backup. The Cub Scout troop will pay for shed materials and build it. They will need Town help to unload it at the Transfer Station. The troop would be responsible for removing the shed if needed. Bud Krawczyk questioned how the Town could place limits on other group requests if they let the Cub Scouts in. Mr. Cichanowski said he trusted future select boards to make those decisions. After further discussion about shed size and potential issues, it was decided that a designated space would be measured by the DPW, and a finding would be issued at the November 2nd meeting.

Ms. Miller said that the PFOA test results from wells on Buck Hill and Rod and Gun Club Rd., including Mighty Food Farm, came back under 4 parts per trillion.

Ms. Mickle reminded that there was a meeting of the heads of all the boards and committees at 5:00 PM on November 2, 2026.

Daryl Wetherell voiced his concerns regarding the closure of Cleveland Ave. on Halloween. His wife, who has mobility issues, will be working and needs accessibility to their home. Ms. Kearl said that because this was an accessibility request, an exception could be made. She asked Mr. Wetherell to provide information that could be passed on to the sheriff's department.

14. Executive Session- Legal: Trumbull Hill; Personnel

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to enter executive session at 7:52 PM. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. The board exited executive session at 8:18 PM. Ms. Kearl said the board had come up with solutions for the DPW hiring for 2 open positions. Ms. Mickle will move forward with these.

The board also discussed the issue on Trumbull Hill Trail, abutted by the Cerreta and Lomax properties. The Town has discretion on how the trail is maintained. Ms. Kearl called for a motion to sanction the work being done by John Cerreta, noting that the Town of Shaftsbury is not undertaking any obligation to maintain or improve the trail on its own. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Cichanowski seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0.

15. Review of Action Items

Ms. Mickle will contact the Sheriff re: speeding on 7A

Ms. Mickle will contact VTrans re: moving 25 MPH sign further up the hill on 7A south of town and doing a speed study on 7A near Hidden Valley Rd., asking about clearing branches blocking speed signs
DPW will clear branches blocking the 25 MPH speed sign on 7A

DPW will replace 35 MPH signs with 25 MPH signs on Old Depot Rd.

Ms. Mickle will research a few items related to the bylaws and warn a vote on them that will take place at the 11/2/26 Select Board meeting

Ms. Mickle will ask for clarification on the grader quote

Ms. Mickle will respond to KAS re: POET systems

Ms. Mickle will post information on the 1% interest waiver on Town taxes

Ms. Mickle will follow up re: Cleveland Ave. closure and accessibility for Mrs. Wetherell

Ms. Mickle will follow up with the Town attorney re: written agreement with John Cerreta

16. Adjournment

Ms. Kearl called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Hall moved. Mr. Mulligan seconded. Motion passed 5-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 8:24 PM.