

**August 12, 2026 Minutes
Sheffield Select Board Meeting
Municipal Building
6:00 pm
In-person Meeting**

Present: Erik Lavallee (Chair/Recorder), Benjamin (Ben) Robinson (Select Board), Kate Berry-Buonanno (Select Board), Erika Lavallee (Town Clerk), Max Aldrich, Carolyn Crankshaw, Susan Pomeroy

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm by Erik Lavallee as Select Board Chair with the following business being transacted:

Any additions, deletions or amendments to agenda -

- Proposed Ordinance for unlanded properties
- Vermont Springs LLC update

Moved to later in the meeting

Correspondence – None

Delinquent Taxes – Per Erika, the current delinquent taxes owed are \$14,395.41

Employee Policy – Erika provided the finalized policy as written, for signatures from the Board incorporating previously approved changes to the employee policy.

Sign FEMA Payment Agreement – FEMA payment as a result of the 2024 flooding and is the final FEMA payout for this flood. This payout covers the administrative costs at 100% for work done in relation to the floods. Ben asked about the pay rate and was advised that it covered the standard hourly rate plus the percentage of benefits associated with the time spent by those employees in administrative work.

Sign Cemetery Warranty Deeds – Three cemetery plots had been sold at the Dexter Mountain Cemetery and the Board needed to sign and date the deeds which was done.

Review and Select Town Farm Road bid – Max presented the bid packet to the Board. There were two bidders who attended the required in-person meeting at the Town Farm Road site. They were Gravel Construction who bid \$152,113.00 and Simpson Dirtworx who bid \$113,975.00. The bids did not include the cost of the new culvert which would be procured by the town at a cost of approximately \$30,000.00 to \$35,000.00. In reviewing the bids, Max stated that he has worked with and was comfortable with both companies, but the Simpson bid was significantly lower and the time frame for completion was two weeks earlier.

Several line items on both bids were discussed as they varied significantly (stump grubbing and mobilization/demobilization). A question arose about a difference in the bid price and actual cost, and Max advised that the bidder would submit a change order and the Board would have to vote on whether or not to approve it. During discussion, Max advised that Sheffield is responsible for 10% of the project cost and the State of Vermont was covering the other 90%. Erika stated that there was a town budget line item which would cover the Town's costs of the project.

Ben motioned that the Town hire Simpson Dirtworx for the Sheffield Town Farm Road project, Kate seconded, the vote was unanimous.

ADDITION Dunn Mountain Road/Gilman Field Road discussion – As Max was still present, Resident of Sheffield Susan Pomeroy spoke to the safety of Dunn Mountain Road near Gilman Road. Susan believed that logging operations utilizing the road last year along with ATV use may have caused some deterioration of the road. Max explained the history of the road as well as the complicated ownership of that region as the roads travel between Sheffield and Wheelock. Max stated that the section of road in question is located in the Wheelock portion of Dunn Mountain Road and may be on private property. Max advised that the owner of the property had intended to deed a right of way to the Town of Wheelock so that the road could connect through the property. He was not aware if the Right of Way was ever finalized.

Susan was advised that as the portion of road she was concerned about was in Wheelock that the Sheffield Select Board was unable to assist her in her complaint about the safety of the structure. Erik further advised that as the road was registered as a Class IV that the care and upkeep was the responsibility of the road owner, not of the town. Susan stated that she would attempt to contact the Wheelock Select Board to see if they had any information about the road. Max mentioned that there were 14 miles of Class IV roads in Sheffield and without exception, the town does not maintain those roads.

Employee Policy Discussion/Amendment Request – Max had two requests for additions to the employee policy, specifically surrounding the Highway Department. The first was in regards to use of the Town pickup truck and the second was regarding the callout policy.

In the past, the Highway Department would be approved for a three hour minimum callout during winter months. He stated that during the summer months, he wouldn't typically charge three hours as most of those callouts resulted in shorter duration. During discussion, Ben advised that the callout minimum was in place because of issues regarding travel to and from work and leaving families or events. He further supported the three hours in both summer and winter as the hardships are the same. Erik agreed and stated that it made more sense to keep the callout minimum uniform in the policy. Ben motioned to have all callouts during non-work times a minimum of three hours, Erik seconded with a vote of 2-0 with Kate requesting to recuse herself.

Regarding the pickup, Max mentioned that the Road Foreman should be able to use the Town Pickup as a Home-to-Work vehicle during winter months from November 1 to May 1 so that the Foreman could be able to get into the garage to begin plowing or to inspect road conditions. Erika mentioned that the liability would be eased on the employee if they were to get into an accident while performing roadwork duties (such as road inspection).

Ben motioned that the Road Foreman or their designee be authorized to utilize the Town Pickup as a Home-to-Work vehicle from November 1 to May with Erik seconding. The vote was 2-0 with Kate requesting to recuse herself.

Following the vote, discussion about the truck's condition was held, Max stated that it was in good shape but probably had a couple years left as a viable vehicle. Erika suggested adding a line item to the next few budgets to start saving for a "new" pickup.

New Attorney Discussion – Erik reported upon his work in locating a new attorney for the Town. He presented a fee schedule from McNeill, Leddy & Sheahan and spoke about the conversation that he had with Joe Farnham. The Board was in agreement that this would work and Erik advised that he would be in contact with the new attorney that we accepted the offer and he would contact our current attorney and advise them that we were no longer in need of their services.

Vermont Springs LLC Update – Erik brought in information about the Vermont Springs LLC project located on Route 122. He advised that he had submitted a public comment to the Act 250 permit review regarding the location of the spring as it is in the vicinity of the Sheffield Fire District #1 water source. Per the Act 250 Board, this had been reviewed and the permit for Vermont Springs is for collection of surface water only and that the company would not be permitted for pump installation or use. As the Vermont Springs LLC spring is located downgrade from the Fire District Spring, the review board believed that there would be no impact to the Fire District's water supply.

Proposed Unlanded Property Ordinance – Erik brought up a draft ordinance in early stages for review by the board regarding unlanded properties. During discussion, the draft contains language that does not grandfather properties but brings every parcel under this ordinance. The ordinance includes mobile homes as well as stick-built homes and any other improvements made to a parcel. Kate proposed two additions to the ordinance to include: reference to State statutes (provision of authority for ordinances) and a timeline for compliance. Kate is currently taking the ordinance drafting class offered by VLCT and stated she would share the slide deck with the other board members. Erik will continue to work on the ordinance.

Planning Commission Updates – Carolyn stated that the sidewalk scoping project is continuing and the next steps include meeting with the Select Board to present the proposed alternative options so the Board can endorse one of the proposals. This will be tentatively scheduled for the October 7, 2026 regularly scheduled meeting. Kate advised she may have a conflict with the scheduled meeting date, following discussion, the Board will attempt to have a minimal agenda for the October meeting but due to the timeline of the scoping project, a quorum may have to make a decision on the sidewalk. Even with an endorsed project option, the sidewalk project could still be ten years or more in the making as no budget exists for construction.

Erik asked about the regional planning process and some of the issues that have come up in other regional plans. Carolyn advised that there have been some voiced concerns over the mapping process. She further stated that all of Sheffield would fall under Tier 2 mapping as the Town does not have zoning.

Derelict Property Update – Kate and Carolyn presented the Board with updates about the Derelict Properties proposed ordinance and planning. The sub-committee has produced a draft letter which would be sent to home owners whose property has been identified as falling under the definition of a derelict property. The intent of the letter is to initiate conversations with the property owner and to hopefully identify areas of concern/need that community members could assist with. Erika mentioned that anyone with concerns over receiving such a letter would respond not to the Board but directly to the Town Clerk's Office.

Erik raised several points of concern regarding the possible response by property owners to the reception of this letter. He stated that it would be best to have a framework in place (such as an ordinance) which would include the letter as a starting point as opposed to solely using the letter without any other steps in a process. He further stated that by tying the letter to the ordinance process, more residents would be educated about the intent behind the letter and the process via public hearings, legal postings, discussions and an ultimate vote.

The Board likes the idea of the letter but following the discussion, the sub-committee will take the ideas and discussion points under advisement for future implementation.

Public Comments – None

Adjournment – With no further business to discuss, Ben Robinson made the motion to adjourn, Kate seconded and the motion passed. Erik adjourned the meeting at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Erika Lavalley – Town Clerk

Erik Lavalley – Chairman

Kate Berry-Buonanno – Selectwoman

Benjamin Robinson - Selectman