The Historical Commission is watching the Hearse House preservation project taking place at the front of the West Cemetery with great interest. On the very first day of work, Contractor Jesse Brown pointed out that the siding boards, which had been covered with white clapboards, showed the lines of the up and down blade of a water-powered sawmill. The lines vary in frequency across the boards due to the ease of cutting through clear wood as opposed to where the blade had cut through a knot. Jesse further pointed out that the boards were likely hand-planed due to tear damage seen on the clear wood near the knots. There were no other nail holes on the plates under those siding boards suggesting to Jesse that the boards uncovered when the clapboards were removed, were the original siding boards from when the building was built in 1840. We now have a good sense of what was meant by “red” in 1840. Many square cut nails were saved when the siding was removed. The report of the 1840 Committee that planned this building is safely stored in our town’s vault and will be available to be seen at the 1829 Town Hall during this September’s Celebrate Shutesbury. This preservation project is directed by the Town Buildings Committee. It is funded mainly with Community Preservation Funds, with additional public, and privately donated funds.