

March 25, 2021 Minutes
Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

Present: Daniel Lewenberg, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, William Brack, Arnold Cohen, Brian Collins, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Ann Keitner, Ira Miller, Jada Wang.

Also present: Krishan Gupta, Aziz Aghayev, Dr. Meg Dussault, Tony Kopacz, Adam Shain, Corey Snow.

1. Dan Lewenberg, Chair, Gave Opening Remarks

- a. This meeting is being held through the Zoom online platform due to the State of Emergency based on the COVID-19 outbreak.

2. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Budget Presentation – Corey Snow, Community Preservation Committee Chair

- a. Athletic Fields Sandmaster Infusion Project: \$35,000 of undesignated funds to improve soil structure and drainage at East and middle school fields:
 - a. CPC voted in favor of approval: 5-0-0.
- b. Heights Playground Resurfacing Project – Schools Department: \$169,050 from undesignated funds to install rubber playground ground cover to reduce injury and risk, including removal and disposal of current engineered mulch chips installed in 2017 at schools:
 - a. CPC voted in favor of approval: 5-0-0.
- c. New Pickle Ball Courts at Deborah Sampson Park – Recreation Department: \$200,000 total for 4 dedicated pickle ball courts enclosed with 10' fencing:
 - a. Of which \$100,000 were matching donations contributed from sponsors and players and appropriated from CPP funds
 - b. \$29,538 from undesignated funds
 - c. \$70,262 from Open Space and Recreation Fund
 - d. CPC voted in favor of approval: 5-0-0.
- d. Add Tennis Rally Wall at Deborah Sampson Park – Recreation Department: \$15,283 from undesignated funds to purchase and install a tennis rally wall as an enhancement to the existing tennis courts:
 - a. CPC voted in favor of approval: 5-0-0.
- e. Recreation Facilities Feasibility Plan – Recreation Department: \$24,550 from Open Space and Recreation Fund to help determine the best field layouts, surface types, lighting viability, ADA improvements, etc.
- f. Debt service – Rattlesnake Hill:
 - a. \$5 million bond issued March 2021.
 - b. FY22 debt payment for Rattlesnake Hill land acquisition: \$368,693.75 from undesignated funds, of which \$229,000 is principal and \$139,693.75 is interest
 - c. Very favorable interest rate of 1.363%.
- g. Annual CPC Budget: CPC voted 5-0-0 in favor to appropriate \$15,000 for the committee's operating budget. Unspent budget automatically reverts to CPA fund at the end of the fiscal year.
- h. The CPC welcomes input from Town residents for projects. CPC can fund projects in Town that are historical, although there were not any of that type this year. \$76,000 reserved for historic projects and for community housing. By law need to reserve 10% for historical and affordable housing, but don't necessarily have to spend that each year. Sharon doesn't have many historic buildings, although there are historic assets like dams, a fire truck, a fountain, cemeteries, etc.
 - a. These monies cannot be spent on anything else without a special dispensation from the legislature.
- i. FY20 Ending Balance:
 - a. Available funds total: \$2,163,192 for Open Space and Recreation, Historic, Community Housing, and Undesignated funds
 - b. CPC FY22 budget total: \$727,576.75.
- j. Primary source of recurring CPA revenue is from state fees from the Registry of Deeds, which increased significantly in FY20. CPA Revenues for FY22:

- a. State match projection: \$120,000
- b. Local collections: \$600,000
- c. Miscellaneous / Interest: \$40,000
- d. Total: \$760,000.

3. School Budget / Capital Follow Up Items – Dr. Meg Dussault – Interim Superintendent of Schools, Aziz Aghayev – Financial Consultant, Adam Shain – School Committee Chair:

- a. Heights Elementary School Project:
 - a. The previously approved \$1.186 million is not adequate to complete this project. It did not include some design and construction costs for run-off and site mitigation. State requirements for RFP and RFQ were followed. Reviewed items to reduce costs such as concrete curving. A traffic study was completed, which was delivered today.
 - b. Main goal of project is to improve safety and the traffic circulation pattern by introducing a one-directional queuing lane across the western side of the property down the south side which eventually ends up at the main doors before exiting out the main driveway.
 - 1. Queuing lane can fit 78 vehicles on site. Proposing a dedicated exclusive right turn lane on South Main Street heading east.
 - 2. Currently 92 total vehicles can queue from the right turn lane, down South Main Street, to Wolomolopoag Street.
 - 3. Queuing lane will enable many more children to enter their vehicles at one time. Currently only approximately 20 children can enter their vehicles at one time because only that amount of vehicles can line up in the existing lane on school property off of South Main Street.
 - c. Buses will utilize the existing lane, separate from the parent queuing lane.
 - d. Main driveway will be used for faculty, handicapped accessible vans and buses exiting.
 - e. Have looked at tweaking the traffic signal at this intersection for the morning and afternoon peak times to try and improve traffic delays on Main Street, but it may not be able to be improved.
 - f. Working within a very contained parcel of land that is constrained on all sides.
 - g. Traffic engineer has been in discussions with the busing company. The busing contract is up this year and so that company may change.
 - h. This project is still in the concept phase. This project went dormant due to the COVID pandemic. There are 8 tasks in the 2019 contract that must be completed by a certain date, of which tasks 1-4 have been completed, including the Geotech report to design the pavement, surveys, and compiling the traffic report.
 - 1. Task 5 is to complete preliminary drawings which is being worked on currently. Designs need to be at 30% before going in front of the Conservation Commission in late spring. Will use their comments to then continue to improve the drawings. Designs need to be at 60% before pulling permits.
 - 2. Timeline is to do the bulk of construction during the summer although it is unlikely the project will be completed before school starts up again in the fall.
 - 3. Complete project cost: \$2,119,661.41, which includes a 25% contingency rate.
- b. School Budget – FY22 Executive Summary:
 - a. Dr. Dussault discussed that an enrollment survey was completed and schools are in line with a projected decline for the next three years. Enrollment is expected to spike again after that time, as it overall climbs up. Will have 5 fewer elementary school teachers this year.
 - b. The pandemic has played a large part in SPED spending. Have had the highest referrals for students with potential learning disabilities and emotional issues than ever before. Project that SPED costs will continue to rise. It is typical for

these costs to fluctuate, and they aren't necessarily on a per student basis as different students have varying levels of need.

- c. Numbers show a drastic change this year because offset wasn't historically separated. This year the Committee wanted to see actual costs with offset separately for Circuit Breaker and IDEA
- d. Total SPED:
 - 1. FY20 - \$11,677,103
 - 2. FY21 - \$13,012,127
 - 3. FY22 - \$12,876,872

4. Vote Town Meeting Article Recommendations

- a. Article 4 – Personnel Bylaw:

Motioned: by William Brack, **Seconded:** Ann Keitner to recommend amendment of the Town's personnel bylaw to implement the listed increases in values and wages for executive employees. **Voted:** 11-0-0.

- b. Article 5 – Budget article:

Motioned: by Patricia-Lee Achorn, **Seconded:** William Brack to recommend appropriation under Article 5 for \$88,294,735 allocated among the budget sectors as follows - Select Board: \$14,830,304, School Department budget: \$47,559,430, Finance Committee: \$1,320,963, and Fixed and Uncontrollables: \$24,584,038. **Voted:** 11-0-0.

- c. Article 6 – Capital Outlay:

Motioned: by Arnold Cohen to exclude the \$25,000 snowmobile from the list and vote separately on it to limit spending. **Voted:** 4-7-0. Anja Bernier, William Brack, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Ann Keitner, Daniel Lewenberg and Ira Miller voted no, to not vote the snowmobile separately.

Motioned: by Anja Bernier, **Seconded:** Gordon Gladstone to recommend approval of the list of capital projects under Article 6. **Voted:** 10-1-0. Arnold Cohen voted against the article.

Committee discussed that the Chief has stated they regularly have snow rescues and project that a snowmobile would be used regularly.

- d. Article 7 - Community Preservation Act Article:

Motioned: by Ira Miller, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to recommend approval of the project list and budget as presented by the chair, Corey Snow. **Voted:** 11-0-0.

- e. Article 17 – Authorize Participation in the Community Septic Management Program:

Motioned: by Patricia-Lee Achorn, **Seconded:** Ira Miller to recommend the Town be able to offer financial support to homeowners to repair or replace their failed septic systems who meet certain eligibility requirements through the proposed Community Septic Management Program. **Voted:** 11-0-0.

- f. Article 20 – Grant of Gas Utility Easement for High School:

Motioned: by Gordon Gladstone, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to recommend authorization of the Select Board or School Department to grant a gas utility easement to Eversource of Massachusetts for an existing gas main that is located on the high school parcel. **Voted:** 11-0-0.

5. Liaison updates:

- a. Schools - Ann Keitner
 - a. No update.
- b. Library – Charles Goodman
 - a. No update.
- c. Planning Board – Arnold Cohen
 - a. No update.
- d. Standing Building Committee - Gordon Gladstone
 - a. Steel is going up at the high school, recommend everyone go by to see it.
 - b. Advertisement up for meeting for April 14 regarding the library for ZBA, pending a peer review report and if new information is to be considered. Letters are going out to abutters.
- e. Community Preservation Committee - Patricia-Lee Achorn
 - a. No update.

6. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours:

- a. None.

7. Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned through unanimous consent at 10:25 pm.