

May 17, 2021 Minutes
Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

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

Not Present: William Brack, Charles Goodman.

Also Present: Krishan Gupta, Fred Turkington, Elizabeth Ellis.

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. Finance Committee reorganization - Vote to elect Finance Committee Chair, Vice Chairs, and Clerk for new cycle:

- a. Mr. Lewenberg thanked the Finance Committee for their hard work, saying that Town Meeting went very well thanks to the efforts of many people. He discussed that this last cycle was short due to the pandemic delaying ATM last year.

Motioned: by Patricia-Lee Achorn, **Seconded:** Ann Keitner to propose that the current slate of Finance Committee seats remain in place with Daniel Lewenberg as Chair, Ann Keitner and Ira Miller as Vice Chairs and Anja Bernier as Clerk. **Voted:** 9-0-0.

3. Announce plan to vote representatives (2) and alternate (1) to Priorities Committee and Capital Outlay Committee at next meeting

- a. Will vote for alternates at next meeting. Committee members should reach out to Mr. Lewenberg if they are interested in any of those positions.

4. Appoint Finance Committee representative to the Sharon Standing Building Committee Selection Committee:

Motioned: by Ann Keitner, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to appoint Finance Committee member Patricia-Lee Achorn to the Selection Committee to the Standing Building Committee Selection Committee. **Voted:** 9-0-0.

5. Introduce Elizabeth Ellis, consultant retained to assist in implementation of Master Plan and economic development initiatives:

- a. The Committee welcomed Ms. Ellis, who is a Land Use Planning and Economic Development Specialist. She graduated from Boston College with a degree in law and has a master's in urban planning and environmental policy from Tufts. Worked recently with the Town of Norton in the early stages of their master planning process related to planning the transition of a blighted lot to better meet housing and commercial needs.
- b. She has started reviewing the Town of Sharon's master plan and seeing who is responsible for aspects of the plan, including short-, mid- and long-term goals.
- c. Would like a point of contact on the Finance Committee.
- d. Will work 15 – 20 hours per week, keeping a close eye on the budget to see if need to expand the position next year. Will look at grant funding opportunities.

6. Review Q3 Financials – Krishan Gupta, Finance Director:

- a. Total general fund budget and transfers:
 - a. Total budgeted for the full year: \$90,264,826
 - b. Total spent / transferred through March 2021: \$63,266,770, or 70%.
- b. Board of Appeals:
 - a. Spent / transferred through March 2021: \$44,134, or 194%.

- c. Last fiscal year auto insurance was off and needed to be adjusted, which is why it is now at 151%.
- d. Insurance subtotal:
 - a. Budgeted: \$10,035,605
 - b. Spent / transferred through March 2021: \$5,729,054, or 57%.
- e. COVID expenditures for the School Department is being tracked separately, and are hoping these will be covered by FEMA, etc. over the next four years. Believes should be able to cover those expenses without having long-term deficits.
- f. The healthcare trust account is below budget. Salaries will be paid out for the School Department between now and June 30. Also, for retirees there is no automatic withdrawal from this account to the healthcare trust account. Won't see overages in this account at the end of the year.
- g. No surplus or deficits in debt service accounts.
- h. Total assets are cash, receivables, property taxes, allowance (overlay), motor vehicle excise, etc.: \$37,208,255.
- i. Total liabilities / deferred reserves: \$21,975,346.
- j. Total fund balances: \$15,232,909.
- k. Mr. Gupta is tracking various items for overages:
 - a. Lake management, for cleaning bills that came in higher than expected: \$312
 - b. Treasurer: \$5,000
 - c. ZBA: \$50,000
 - d. Council on Aging: \$8,000
 - e. DPW – snow and ice: \$75,000
 - f. Law, which does not include the ZBA case for the library: \$50,000
 - g. TC / ER: \$6,500
 - h. Fire, including some expenses for personnel injured on duty: \$50,000
 - i. Schools: TBA
 - j. Potential reserve transfers of \$244,812.
- l. Talked to an advisor and as of now won't need to make any additional transfers to unemployment in 2021.
- m. The only way to return tax money to taxpayers is to reduce taxes in the next year.

7. Review & Vote time-sensitive Reserve Fund transfers:

Motioned: Anja Bernier, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to approve \$312 reserve transfer to the Lake Management account. **Voted:** 9-0-0.

- a. \$5,000 reserve fund request to tax title account.
- b. Treasurer is working on cleaning up old accounts in tax-title. The next step is to pursue land court and foreclose on those properties. Treasurer is currently sending out demand notices. If regular tax notices go out and are not collected in a reasonable amount of time, she makes a second attempt to collect and see if an agreement can be reached. If not paid and can't make an agreement, they go to Tax Title. If cannot be collected in a few years they go to court where they can potentially go into foreclosure, and the Town can could take control of those properties. The Town has not yet taken the step of going to court, and there has been no action in the last 10-12 years.
 - a. Total of deferred taxes can be liens on property: \$894,884
 - b. Tax title: \$360,497
 - c. Tax foreclosures: \$554,537
 - d. Amount due as of 5/13: \$470,021
 - e. Amount of assessed value as of 5/21: \$726,000.

Motioned: Patricia-Lee Achorn, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to transfer \$5,000 from the reserve fund to the tax title account. **Voted:** 9-0-0.

8. Upcoming meeting schedule and agenda items:

- a. June 28 is the date for the next transfer requests, draft policies, appoint persons, etc.
- b. July 12 is a potential date for the following meeting.
- c. Vote on financial policies on August 16 or 23.

- d. It's possible the Committee may meet in person because the emergency order should be lifted by then. There may be a hybrid in-person / online option available.

9. Liaison updates:

- a. Schools – Ann Keitner:
 - a. Town election is tomorrow, with 5 out of 7 school committee seats open.
 - b. New superintendent is starting this summer.
- b. Standing Building Committee, Gordon Gladstone:
 - a. Library winding its way through court proceedings.
 - b. High school is going up quickly.
 - c. Building Committee authorized August 1st for 100% construction documents for the new library.
- c. CPC, Patricia-Lee Achorn:
 - a. Their next meeting is not until winter, so no updates for a while.

10. Minutes to be Voted:

Motioned: by Ira Miller, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to approve the April 26, 2021 Finance Committee meeting minutes with the slight adjustments of amending the spelling error, changing 3(q) to interest rate instead of fee, and changing 3(r) to read “A motion for summary judgement.” **Voted:** 9-0-0.

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

- a. None.

12. Adjournment:

In favor of adjournment, Committee voted:

Ira Miller – Aye
Ann Keitner – Aye
Anja Bernier – Aye
Patricia-Lee Achorn – Aye
Gordon Gladstone – Aye
Arnold Cohen – Aye
Jada Wang – Aye
Brian Collins – Aye
Daniel Lewenberg - Aye

Committee voted 9-0-0 to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:06pm.