

March 7, 2022 Minutes
Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

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

Also Present: Krishan Gupta - Finance Director; Lisa Freeley – Business Manager; Tanya Lewis – School Committee Chair; Corey Snow – Community Preservation Committee Chair

1. Dan Lewenberg, Chair, gave opening remarks:

This meeting is being held via remote means through the Zoom online platform pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

2. Community Preservation Committee FY'23 Budget Presentation: Corey Snow, Chair

Mr. Snow discussed that Sharon sets aside 1% of tax revenue (matched with some amount of state funds) and places it with the Community Preservation Committee to fund projects related to open space, historic preservation, and community housing. Each of those 3 areas are required to receive 10% of the budget per year, with the remaining 70% used for any of these areas as needed. FY23 proposed project budgets are:

#	Description	Category	Amount	Status
1	New Playground Equipment at Ames St Playground: Replaces existing end of life/unsafe playground feature (Train) with new play structure (Fire Station) and accessible fall protection matting. \$25,000 to be funded by a State grant (\$116,786.45 total project cost) Applicant: Recreation Department	Open Space	\$91,786.45	Voted on (3/2) by a vote of 6-0-0
2	Schematic design/cost estimate Deborah Sampson/Morse Street		\$45,000	Postponed by advocates
3	Lake Massapoag weed & bacteria hazard mitigation: Project includes a comprehensive water testing initiative and educational beach kiosks for Lake Massapoag Applicant: Lake Management & Advocates	Open Space	\$24,500	Voted on (2/16) by a vote of 7-0-0
4	Historic Water Station - building assessment: Project will provide a thorough assessment of the historic well station to assess current state of building and renovation needs Applicant: Sharon DPW	Historic	\$70,000	Voted on (2/16) by a vote of 7-0-0
5	Restoration & preservation of monuments: Project includes the restoration and preservation of approximately 12 monuments (e.g. plaques, markers, statues) at 5 locations across Town Applicant: Sharon Veteran's Services	Historic	\$9,900	Voted on (2/16) by a vote of 7-0-0
6	Historic Cemetery signage and fencing Project will fund signage for the Town's 9 historic cemeteries and provide detailed information about the sites on the Sharon Historical Commission website. In addition, a protective fence will be installed to protect the vulnerable Lothrop Cemetery at the intersection of Walpole St and Moose Hill St. Applicant: Historical Commission	Historic	\$60,000	Voted on(2/16) by a vote of 7-0-0

7	Automatic Handicap Doors for Sharon Housing Authority Project will add automatic handicap door mechanisms for 12 doorways at the Sharon Housing Authority complex located at Hixson Farm Road Applicant: Sharon Housing Authority	Housing	\$51,000	Voted on (3/7) by a vote of 6-0-0
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1. Regular annual appropriations:
 - a. Community Preservation FY23 annual budget: \$15,000
 - i. FY23 estimated revenues for budget – expenses: \$10,000
 - ii. FY23 estimated revenues for budget – salaries: \$5,000
 - b. FY 23 debt service - open space (Rattlesnake Hill acquisition): \$5 million long term debt:
 - i. Principle: \$225,000
 - ii. Interest \$148,200
 - iii. Total to appropriate: \$373,200
 - c. FY23 Reserves:
 - i. Historic preservation: \$83,000 – FY23 estimated revenues
 - ii. Community housing: \$83,000 – FY23 estimated revenues
 - d. Financial overview of FY21 end balances:
 - i. Open space / recreation: \$70,462
 - ii. Historic: \$733,683
 - iii. Community housing: \$491,994
 - iv. Undesignated: \$647,575
 - v. Total: \$1,943,714
 - e. FY23 recommended appropriations:
 - i. Debt service: \$373,200
 - ii. Playground equipment: \$91,786.45
 - iii. Lake weed and bacteria: \$24,500
 - iv. Water station plan: \$70,000
 - v. Monument preservation: \$9,900
 - vi. Cemetery preservation: \$60,000
 - vii. Housing handicap doors: \$51,000
 - viii. Total: \$695,386.45
 - f. CPA Revenues:
 - i. Local collections:
 - a. Actual FY21: \$611,470
 - b. FY22 through 1/5/22: \$306,786
 - c. Projection for FY23: \$620,000
 - ii. State match:
 - a. Actual FY21: \$161,229
 - b. FY22 through 1/5/22: \$238,234
 - c. Projection for FY23: \$200,000
 - iii. Misc. / Int:
 - a. Actual FY21: \$611,470
 - b. FY22 through 1/5/22: \$306,786
 - c. Projection for FY23: \$10,000
 - g. Projects must be recommended by the Historical Commission to be considered. Representatives from the Housing Committee and other groups attend meetings, but little attendance from community members.

3. School Department proposed budget for FY23: Dr. Peter Botelho – Superintendent; Lisa Freeley – Business Manager

The Finance Committee reviews all Town budgets prior to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) but does not have discretion to direct which specific school programs are funded.

Budget drivers for the schools include impact on students, salaries and contractual obligations, mandated needs for IEPs, operational costs, etc.

1. FY23 budget additions – mandated, with recommended appropriation, include:
 - a. 1 moderate special needs teacher grade 11 LEAP: \$69,033
 - b. 1 instructional assistant, grade 11 LEAP: \$25,000
 - c. 3 moderate special needs teachers: \$207,099
 - d. 1 instructional assistant: \$25,000
 - e. FY23 mandated needs total: \$351,132.
2. FY23 budget additions – highest priority needs include:
 - a. 1 FTE library media teacher at SHS: \$75,000
 - b. 1 FTE library specialist at SMS: \$75,000
 - c. 1 FTE assistant principal at SHS: \$110,000
 - d. 1 elementary math coordinator: \$10,000
 - e. FY23 highest priority needs total: \$399,400.
3. Transition to fully funded Kindergarten: \$150,000
 - a. Phasing enrollment fees down to \$0 would be a 4-year process. Discussion that structural changes enacted incrementally need to happen to reach this goal. Important to manage expectations as it will be difficult for the Town to fund at \$600,000 or more per year.
4. FY23 expense adjustments – reductions / savings:
 - a. Legal and advertising: \$88,000
 - b. Textbooks: \$300,000. Large purchase last year for replacement of math textbooks that did not have to fund this year
 - c. Retirement savings: \$153,746. As more experienced teachers leave, they are replaced by new hires who are less experienced
 - d. Facilities: \$116,499. Savings is from retiring personnel and projected to remain lower due to efficiencies of new high school once it opens this fall.
5. FY23 proposed budget allocations - with percentage of overall budget:
 - a. Maintenance and operations: \$880,231 - 1.78%
 - b. Professional development: \$365,828 - .74%
 - c. Salaries: \$41,983,509 - 84.80%
 - d. SPED tuition: \$1,932,727 - 3.90%
 - e. Supplies / materials: \$2,356,026 - 4.76%
 - f. Transportation: \$1,165,130 - 2.35%
 - g. Utilities: \$827,600 - 1.67%
 - h. Total: \$49,511,050, representing an increase of 4.1035%.
6. District FTEs:

Type:	FY22:	FY23:
Teachers	349.2	357.2
Support staff	204.45	206.45
Administrative	24	25
Total:	577.65	588.65

- a. Discussed that there has been in an increase over the last year of students with disabilities and students who are low income, who may require increased services
- b. The Committee asked that presentations be in the previous format that is comprehensive with special education costs, Circuit Breaker numbers, salaries of

- FTEs, etc. Also recommended creating a narrative to illustrate what is needed, which Dr. Botelho stated he would provide
- c. The Town is bound by Proposition 2 1/2 which places limits on the amount of property tax revenue can be raised through real and personal property taxes. Other Town budgets are also largely made up of salaries. Inflation can increase at a rate higher than 2.5%, but the Town is bound by increasing only up to 2 1/2%
 - d. This coming year Schools will have labor negotiations
 - e. Will hold an executive session for the Finance Committee and the School Committee.

3. Vote Annual Town Meeting warrant articles –

1. Historic District on East St:
The Committee needs more information before voting on this article
2. Outdoor Water Use Bylaw:
The Committee needs more information before voting on this article
3. Renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day in Bylaw:

Motioned: by Gordon Gladstone, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to recommend approval of renaming Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day in the Town's bylaws. **Voted:** 10-0-0.

4. Acquire 94 South Main Street:
Discussed that the property is adjacent to Town Hall, and that the appraisal came in around \$350,000. There would also be demolition costs associated with the purchase. Committee will vote at a later date on this article.
5. The warrant deadline is March 31.

4. Liaison updates:

Schools - Ann Keitner:
No update.

Standing Building Committee - Gordon Gladstone:
No update.

Library - Charles Goodman:
No update.

Planning Board – Brian Collins:
Possibility that they will come forward with a zoning recodification article for the warrant. There is a joint Planning Board and ZBA meeting this Thursday.

Community Preservation - Patricia-Lee Achorn
No update.

5. Minutes to be Voted:

Motioned: by Anja Bernier, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to approve the February 9, 2022 joint meeting minutes. **Voted:** 9-0-1. William Brack abstained.

Motioned: by Gordon Gladstone, **Seconded:** Ira Miller to approve the January 24, 2022 Finance Committee meeting minutes with approved edits. **Voted:** 9-0-1. William Brack abstained.

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

A Town resident let the Committee know that Finance Committee agendas and minutes were not listed on the Town's website for news subscriptions. These have now been added.

7. Adjournment:

Motioned: by Anja Bernier, **Seconded:** Ann Keitner to adjourn. **Voted:** 10-0-0.
Meeting adjourned at 10:32 pm.