

Present: Ann Keitner, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Lajos Kamocsay, Daniel Lewenberg, Ira Miller, Olga Volfson, Jada Wang.

Not Present: Brian Collins.

Also Present: Krishan Gupta - Finance Director, Fred Turkington – Town Administrator.

1. Ann Keitner, 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. Fraud Risk Policy Draft Discussion – Ann Keitner, Chair

- a. The policy is looking good so far. Will review with Mr. Gupta and Mr. Turkington to add any last comments.

3. Priorities Finance Committee ByLaw Updates – Ira Miller

- a. Governance Study Committee (GSC) submitted their report to the Select Board.
- b. In the Finance Committee section they did not recommend any changes to fiscal oversight, name, etc.
- c. Comment from the public that the specific duties of the Committee aren't totally understood. Writing this up to describe more clearly to the public. There has historically been confusion around what the Finance Committee does – reviewing budgets versus telling departments how they can spend their budgets. The Finance Committee has a fiscal responsibility to the Town to review any and all budgets.
- d. Minor changes to the bylaw to clarify the Finance Committee's responsibilities. Will send out to Committee members for review and to the Select Board to be included in the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting (ATM).
 1. The Select Board is putting all the GSC's recommendations into one spreadsheet for the warrant.

4. Priorities Meeting Summary – Ira Miller and Dan Lewenberg

- a. \$500,000 one-time use of free cash added to revenue and sent to Schools to fund the first year of fully funded Kindergarten. Funding coming from Chapter 70 after next year.
- b. State Aid will be coming out a little late, and the final Priorities Committee meeting for the budget year will be after that on either March 2 or March 9. Then towns will be able to complete their budgets.
- c. This meeting demonstrated that the three committees are working well together, as they came together to fund full-day Kindergarten.
- d. Departments prepare their budgets and year-to-year different sectors need different amounts of funding. For example, one year the Fire Department needed to replace all

their gear, and that was done through the Priorities process. The three sectors come together to address a particular need from one of the sectors.

- e. \$2,811,906, or 4.42% growth, over FY23 (allocation with no free cash: 3.489% growth)
 - 1. Select Board: \$15,961,304
 - 2. Finance Committee: \$1,454,636
 - 3. School Committee: \$51,160,817 + \$500,00 one-time adjustment from free cash for fully funded Kindergarten
- f. Reminder that these numbers reflect how much can be spent, but there is no mandate to spend it all. Sectors and departments should make their budgets fit within these parameters. If they can't, it is up to the Finance Committee to recommend or not recommend allocating additional funds to them.
- g. Reminder that the Town is also responsible for debt exclusion amounts.

5. Nominate/Vote Pat Achorn to be the Finance Committee Rep. on Standing Building Nominating Committee – Ann Keitner, Chair

Motioned: by Gordon Gladstone, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to nominate Patricia-Lee Achorn as the Finance Committee Representative on the Standing Building Nominating Committee. **Voted:** 10-0-0.

6. Liaison Updates:

- a. Schools - Ann Keitner, Ira Miller:
 - 1. Sharon Teacher's Association is still negotiating
 - 2. Meeting with administration and School Committee Chair. Vote was on full-day Kindergarten to agree on best approach. It was a good step forward, continuing to build a strong "bridge" forward with them.
- b. Library – Charles Goodman:
 - 1. No update.
- c. Planning Board – Brian Collins:
 - 1. No update.
- d. Standing Building Committee - Gordon Gladstone:
 - 1. The "punch list" for the high school is coming along as items are being completed
 - 2. Working on debugging some of the technical features in the high school. It has some sophisticated features and some of the parts were delayed due to the pandemic
 - 3. Site work is being done. The baseball field will be built where the corner of the old school was. The old building is now completely down – nothing unexpected happened in the demolition of the old building
 - 4. August 2023 most items will be completed
 - 5. No update for the Library.
- e. Community Preservation - Patricia-Lee Achorn:
 - 1. No scheduled meetings, and no folder on their website yet for projects being considered. Mr. Turkington discussed that he was shown a document from the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee regarding funding and he will share it with her, as well as a proposal for playground equipment for the Unitarian Church.
- f. Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee – Dan Lewenberg:

1. Recreation Advisory committee, with LMAC support, recommends a test run closing Community Center Beach for one year. There is less use of this beach, high frequency of e. coli related closures there, and it would help with the budget.
2. Important initiatives for next year include weed control catch-up work, lake testing (continued and new), including assessing need for alum treatment that may be useful because of the high nutrient levels that cause blooms like we saw the summer before last.
2. Important initiatives for next year include weed control catch-up work, testing old and new, including a treatment of alum that may be useful because of the high nutrient levels that cause blooms like we saw a few years ago.

7. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours

- a. Discussed the status of litigation at the Sharon Gallery – trial is scheduled for January 10. Plaintiffs filed requests seemingly unrelated but are trying hard to comply so that the trial stays on schedule. No knowledge of any changes to proposed tenants.
- b. Melanson has merged with a larger firm called Marcum. No changes that we know of so far, but could have changes in their accountant or advisor partners.
- c. Moody's sent out press releases on changing and updating bond ratings for all towns, including Sharon. They have reaffirmed our rating from 2018. S&P has Sharon stable at AA, and is due again in January.
- d. Balance sheets have been submitted to the Department of Revenue. We are expecting to hear back from them soon on the balance sheets as well as certification of free cash. Expect retained earnings to go up by approximately \$2.2 million this year over last year.
- e. January will kick off the budget season. Mr. Turkington believes he'll have the articles for the warrant in good shape. The Finance Committee will have many meetings throughout the budget cycle. Once the warrant list is completed we will choose who writes up each item. Preliminary dates:
 1. 1/23 – List of articles out, including recommendations from GSC
 2. 2/06 – Citizen petitions due by this date, as well as Capital Outlay and CPC recommendations
 3. 2/27 – Review Finance Committee sector budget and vote Capital Outlay and CPC
 4. 3/6 – Schools will present their budget
 5. 3/20 – Select Board and Personnel Board will present their budgets and recommendations
 6. 3/27 – vote final budget and articles
- f. One of the proposed items will be updating bylaws that may eliminate the calendar of Federal holidays.
- g. Have met with the Historical Society and there are discussions regarding expanding the historical zone. Will see if they submit a related article.

8. Adjournment:

Absent any objection, the Chair assumed unanimous consent to adjourn for the evening.

Adjourned at 8:19 pm.