

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
March 31, 2015

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Selectmen's Meeting Room at Sharon Town Hall at 7:00pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk John J. McGrath, Selectman Walter B. Roach and Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

Southeastern Regional School District – FY16 Budget Presentation

Dr. Luis Lopes, Superintendent for the Southeastern Regional School District, was present. Sharon's representative on the School Committee, Mindy Kempner, was also present.

Dr. Lopes noted that the 250th Anniversary sign on the front of Town Hall and in two other locations were made by Southeastern students.

The Sharon enrollment is up from 17-21 students and consequently the assessment is up \$59,908 from last year to \$288,502. Sharon's Municipal Revenue Growth Factor is 3.83%, and that is based on the relative wealth of the community. He noted that the waiting list will be longer at the high school than the number of spots available. Over 97% of the students graduate and meet the requirements to go to college; 65% go into college, a small number enter the military and the remainder enter the workforce. The district's budget was influenced by several factors, including a 4.4% increase in overall student enrollment and a 14% increase in low income population. Regional transportation costs are down 17%, based on some efficiency measures they instituted. Their increase for health insurance costs is only 1% for next year.

Mr. Turkington asked Dr. Lopes if they are part of a regional health care consortium and Dr. Lopes said that they are part of Gateway. He asked Dr. Lopes about the employer contribution to employees in the state retirement system. Dr. Lopes replied that regional school districts should have been paying an contribution to employees in the state retirement system. The state voted to forgive the past 38 years but they want FY14 and FY15. He noted that he can't pay a prior year bill without the approval of the towns and not all would approve. There is legislation pending to forgive all previous years. Currently the contribution is absorbed in the operating budget and the remainder in the Excess and Deficiency Budget (E&D).

The Board thanked Dr. Lopes for his time.

One Day Liquor License Request – Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging

Jim Carney, President of the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging, was present.

Mr. Carney explained that the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging are requesting a one-day liquor license for an LGBT Tea & Dance scheduled for April 25 from 1-5pm in the ballroom at the Community Center. They are also requesting a waiver for the license fee

MOTION: To grant the one-day liquor license for the Friends of the Sharon Council on Aging and waive the license fee
(McGrath – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Signage at Public Safety Complex/DPW Facility

David McKinley from Kaestle Boos Associates was present. Mr. McKinley noted that as part of the public safety building project, they would like to install a sign, including a two-sided LED sign. The materials for the sign itself will be similar to the materials from the new building. The overall sign is about 53.6 feet. The LED portion of the sign will be shut off during the overnight hours. Selectman McGrath expressed the need for a lighted sign

throughout the evening, during all weather conditions. He believes the illumination of the lettering would be better than a spotlight. Mr. McKinley noted that the lettering could easily be illuminated.

A resident suggested installing a small solar panel on the top of the sign.

Selectman McGrath asked how far the sign will be back from the road and Mr. McKinley replied that it will be 15 feet from the road. Mr. McKinley added that there will be signage in front of the police station.

MOTION: To approve the concept, the size and the utilization with LED and the modification for illuminated lettering
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

NSTAR Switching Station Discussion

Mr. Turkington noted that he has been working with the abutters to the switching station and met with them several times to hear their concerns about the site, construction activity and mitigation options. They remain concerned about the potential for defects in the notice of the project, consideration of alternate sites, and mitigation for the 63 Canton Street site if it is approved by the Energy Facilities Siting Board.

He went on to say that the Town may want to explore the viability of alternate sites – including a potential site on/near Bullard Street. It is on a spur of property on the power line right of way. The Conservation Commission could engage in a land swap with NSTAR/Eversource and existing conservation land, but there are some time constraints. He noted that the other potential site would impact a different group of neighbors. He is also seeking mitigation measures – screening, camouflaging of towers, pushing the equipment further back on the Canton Street property.

Selectman Roach said there was a piece of land further down Canton Street, near a bridge, and asked if this area has been looked at as an alternate site. The neighbors believe that that property is in Canton and Mr. Turkington believes that this site is too far removed from the high tension wires to be an adequate location for a switching station.

John Hansen, 25 Apple Valley Drive, is speaking on behalf of the condo owners. They believe that the abutters were not properly notified of the public hearing notice. They noted that their roadway is directly across the street from the proposed switching station. They feel that NSTAR/Eversource has not spent adequate time looking at alternate sites. He feels that the draft letter Mr. Turkington prepared to the Energy Facilities Siting Board focuses more on mitigation measures.

Another MacIntosh Farms condo board member touted the proposed potential alternative location on town land. Selectman McGrath noted there are several obstacles to the proposed alternate location:

- Getting the Conservation Commission to agree to the land swap
- Getting NSTAR to agree
- Abutters, while fewer, will likely object

Mr. Turkington noted that the town will receive NSTAR's responses to the Siting Board questions before the town's letter is due to the Siting Board, so we could wait to read their responses and then adjust the letter, if necessary.

Lawrence Sandberg, 2 Sawmill Pond Road, informed the Board that he is an intervenor. One of his issues is that he does not trust NSTAR, as they have never done what they say they are going to do.

The condo board also expressed concern that the abutters list includes the address for the condo association management company and not the individual condo owners.

David Green, 26 Baldwin Drive, endorses Mr. Hansen's comments. He noted that the bridge closure on Maskwonicut Street is increasing traffic in his area. His other concern is the height of the railroad bridge and how that it will affect the traffic going to and from the switching station. Mr. Turkington will incorporate the bridge height into his letter. Mr. Green wonders if other communities along the line will be having siting issues. In response to a question from Mr. Sandberg, Mr. Turkington replied that it is unlikely that another well will be drilled at the 63 Canton Street site.

Selectman Roach commented that the Town has not heard from our elected officials on this matter. Selectman Roach noted that Ted Philips from Representative Lou Kafka's office attended the meeting at the library and expressed interest in the project. He added that Senator Joyce is interested in the project too and thinks it's a good idea to reach out to our elected officials. Chairman Heitin wants them to be added as cc's to the letter.

Mr. Sandberg asked if NSTAR/Eversource can post a bond should any homeowners sustain property damage from the construction of the switching station. Mr. Turkington said that the Town can ask that in the letter.

Chairman Heitin said that the Board will review NSTAR/Eversource's written responses to the questions the Siting Board asked and will finalize the letter for their next meeting.

Annual Town Meeting Discussion – Take positions on articles

The Board took action on the following articles they had not yet taken positions on:

- Article 1 – Support 3-0
- Article 5 – Support 3-0
- Article 6 – Support 3-0
- Article 7 – Support 3-0 of the annual administrative funding

Consent Calendar

- Vote to accept regular and executive session minutes of March 17, 2015
- Vote to approve amended job descriptions for the Assistant to the Town Administrator and the Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

MOTION: To approve the March 31, 2015 consent calendar
(Roach - McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Town Administrator's Report

The Town Administrator reported the following:

- The warrant articles are complete and we are awaiting the written recommendations of the Finance Committee for inclusion in the warrant book. The warrant will go to the printer next week.
- The snow and ice deficit currently stands at approximately \$485,000. Approximately \$80K can be transferred from the town budget and \$40K from the school budget to assist with the deficit.
- The advertisement for the Police Chief position has been posted and the Police Chief Screening Committee is meeting on Tuesday, April 14 at 6:30pm. That same evening, the consultant will provide the Selectmen with an update as to the process. Mr. Turkington provided a timeline of the screening process.

Chairman Heitin believes that we should move board/committee meetings out of Town Hall and relocate them to the Community Center. Mr. Turkington noted that we are working to get live feed at the Community Center in all meeting rooms. He needs to work on the transition. Selectman McGrath noted that Town Hall is not ADA

compliant and the Board is committed to ensuring that all board/committee meetings are moved to buildings that are ADA compliant.

Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting

None

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:16pm
(McGrath - Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**