

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
October 28, 2014

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 Fred Turkington.

Water Rates Public Hearing

MOTION: To open the public hearing at 7:00pm
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

DPW Superintendent Eric Hooper noted that what he is proposing is a modest rate increase that should result in an increase in revenues of about 3.5%, and should generate up to roughly \$3.25 million. This proposed increase was presented to the Water Management Advisory Committee on August 21 and approved by the Committee for presentation to the Board of Selectmen. This will allow the Department of Public Works to bank some money for some major projects coming up.

The proposed changes include the following highlights:

- 1) The most subsidized quantity allowed and rates are unchanged.
- 2) The mid-range span range has been expanded slightly to more closely correspond to the "flat" section of the use curve.
- 3) The top block summer rate has been increased to target the top irrigation users.

Approximately 250 households, regardless of season, will likely never get out of the most subsidized block. Approximately 750 households, regardless of season, will likely never get out of the second rate block. These two blocks represent approximately 20% of accounts and are primarily 1 and 2 person households.

Approximately 4,000 households in summer and 5,000 households in winter will stay under the top block rate which means that about 1,500 households in summer and about 500 households in winter will reach the top block rate.

Proposed rates and block break points:

Fixed Fee (per quarter)	Break Point (gallons)	Spring/Summer Rate (\$/1000 gal.)	Fall/Winter Rate (\$/1000 gal.)
\$20.00	0 - 4500	\$4.00	\$3.00
	4500 - 7500	\$7.00	\$6.00
	7500 - 24000	\$10.00	\$8.00
	>24000	\$15.00	\$12.00

Existing rates and block break points:

Rates January 1, 2013 - December 31, 2014			
Fixed Fee (per quarter)	Break Point (gallons)	Spring/Summer Rate (\$/1000 gal.)	Fall/Winter Rate (\$/1000 gal.)
\$20.00	0 - 4500	\$4.00	\$3.00
	4500 - 9000	\$7.00	\$6.00
	9000 - 22500	\$10.00	\$8.00
	>22500	\$13.50	\$12.00

Chairman Heitin noted that the Board increased the quarterly rate last year from \$15.00 to \$20.00 and it generated a lot of conversation and asked Mr. Hooper if he was proposing an increase in the fixed fee. Mr. Hooper replied that he is recommending that the fixed fee be kept at \$20.00 for 2015.

Selectman McGrath asked how we compare with other communities. Mr. Hooper replied that we invest in our infrastructure and many communities are not but that are rates are higher than some communities. Mr. Hooper added that one-third of his water budget is infrastructure maintenance. Fifty percent is fixed costs, such as salary, chemicals, electricity; and the other twenty percent is variable costs.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. Hooper where the Town is looking to hook up with the MWRA. Mr. Hooper replied that we are looking to go through Norwood, but had previously been looking to go through Stoughton. There is an engineering design and they have been talking with Norwood officials about how it would impact their system. This would be a hook-up in case of an emergency, such as if a well went down. Selectman Roach asked who is talking with Norwood and Mr. Hooper replied that the DPW Superintendents are speaking and will go to the Town Administrator level.

Robert Parrish, 343 Bay Road, wondered why we can't go to a 2½ percent increase instead of 3½ percent. He questioned why the income from the cell tower leases does not go to the Water Department. Mr. Hooper said that he bases his proposal on past water use history, and he hopes that he will not have to come before the Board for a rate increase next year. Chairman Heitin commented that the Board is looking at allocating a portion of the revenue generated from selling the cell tower leases to the Water Department.

Paul Lauenstein, 4 Gavins Pond Road, believes that the higher the base rate fee translates into lower usage. Water use efficiency is high in Sharon.

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 7:20pm
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Chairman Heitin proposes that we increase the base fixed fee by \$2.00 and change the break points but leave the rates the same. Selectman Roach believes that we should only increase the base fixed fee by \$1.00. Selectman McGrath wants to know from Mr. Hooper how Chairman Heitin's proposal would affect the budget, particularly if it would impact the connection to the MWRA. Mr. Hooper said that if you left the current fees the same and increased the fixed fee by \$2.00, it would likely be a 3% increase; with a \$1.00 increase, it would be a 2.5% increase. If the sale from the cell tower leases came through, the Water Department would not have to borrow for the connection to the MWRA.

Selectman Roach asked Mr. Turkington how close we are to getting an agreement. Mr. Turkington noted that we want to pick the best deal for the town and he is having Town Counsel review the proposals.

MOTION: To approve the 2015 rate structure of a fixed fee of \$21.00, the break points as discussed but the rates to remain the same and unchanged

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Fixed Fee (per quarter)	Break Point (gallons)	Spring/Summer Rate (\$/1000 gal.)	Fall/Winter Rate (\$/1000 gal.)
\$21.00	0 - 4500	\$4.00	\$3.00
	4500 - 7500	\$7.00	\$6.00
	7500 - 24000	\$10.00	\$8.00
	>24000	\$13.50	\$12.00

Joseph Garber Interview – Candidate, Zoning Board of Appeals

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. Garber to tell the Board a little bit about himself. Mr. Garber has about thirty years of building experience and believes the Zoning Board of Appeals hasn't had a builder on the ZBA for a number of years.

The Board believes that he would be a welcome addition to the Board.

MOTION: To appoint Joseph Garber as an alternate to the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a term to expire December 31, 2017

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To appoint Abe Brahmachari as a full member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a term to expire December 31, 2017

(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

James Grasfield Interview – Candidate, Historical Commission Alternate

Chairman Heitin asked Mr. Grasfield to tell the Board a little bit about himself. Mr. Grasfield has lived in Sharon for twenty-six years. He is an entrepreneur in the high tech industry but his interest in the preservation of history; he added that he has restored and preserved his own historic home.

The Board thanked Mr. Grasfield for coming in.

Review & Approve Consent Calendar

1. Vote to approve the regular and executive session minutes of October 14, 2014
2. Vote to waiver banner fee for H.U.G.S. banner that was hung from October 20 – 27
3. Vote to change the dates of the Veterans' Day banner to November 3-12, 2014 in the second position
4. Vote to approve the Striar Hebrew Academy - Scholastic Book Fair Banner to be hung from November 12-17, 2014 in the second position

5. Vote to allow spouses of retirees to remain eligible to receive health insurance coverage regardless of pension option selected at time of retirement
6. Vote to sign containerized rubbish disposal Notice of Award
7. Vote to appoint Peter Melvin and Lois Diamond to the Commission on Disabilities for terms to expire on December 31, 2016
8. Vote to authorize Chief Wright and a firefighter to travel to Nebraska for aerial truck training and education from November 12 – 14, 2014
9. Vote to appoint Abe to a full member on the ZBA – December 31, 2017

Selectman McGrath asked to hold number 5 and requested clarification.

MOTION: To approve the October 28, 2014 consent calendar with the exception of item #5
(Heitin – McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

Mr. Turkington noted that under the state retirement system, an employee has three pension benefit options. It is the sole discretion of the Town to allow spouses of retirees to remain eligible to receive health insurance coverage regardless of pension option selected at time of retirement. This will affect less than 1% of the employees. Selectman Roach is in support. Selectman McGrath asked the Town Administrator if he sees any pitfalls and Mr. Turkington replied that he has does not.

MOTION: To approve consent calendar item #5
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Article 7 Position – 2014 STM

Selectman Roach has given this article a lot of thought and he intends to not support the article. Chairman Heitin is not in favor of the article either.

The Board is 3-0 against this article.

Veteran's Department Location Discussion

Chairman Heitin said that there has been some discussion about moving the Veterans Service Officer, Paul Bergeron, from Town Hall to the Community Center. He expressed concern about the budget; the budget for the current fiscal year does not have the wiggle room to accommodate the increased salary and associated costs. Selectman McGrath said that there was a discussion to increase Mr. Bergeron's hours to 19 per week.

Selectman Roach's main concern is also the budget. He believes that we should hold off until the financial issues can be addressed. He feels we are changing his job. Selectman McGrath disagreed with Selectman Roach about the Board changing his job by increasing his hours.

Selectman McGrath said that we are trying to address the department's shortcomings. He said that there isn't an identifiable office for the Veteran's Agent; there is a secretary on the second floor that can assist walk-ins. He said that the Veteran's Service Officer does not have set hours. Selectman McGrath said that he has already outfitted an office at the Community Center, at no cost to the Town. He does not need transportation costs. It is completely ADA compliant. Selectman McGrath said that we do not have to increase his hours until the new fiscal year, if the budget is an issue.

Selectman Roach added that he meets with veterans at night, usually on Tuesday evenings, here at Town Hall. If he moves to the Community Center, the night meetings may be difficult if parking is at a premium. He added that the walk from the person's car to the office is quite a walk. Selectman McGrath disagrees – there is far more parking at the Community Center and the building is designed to accommodate handicapped individuals.

Selectman Roach asked if this move is temporary, as the plan was to move the Veterans Service Officer and the Board of Health over to the Fire Station once the public safety building opens. Selectman McGrath said he was not aware of that plan, but it could be done. Chairman Heitin believes there is room for middle ground. He believes that if we stay with the fifteen hours for now but we can move Mr. Bergeron to the Community Center. The other selectmen are comfortable with this plan.

MOTION: To relocate the Veterans Service Office to the Community Center; will review after 1 years' time; and will keep the budget the same for one budget cycle
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Request for Proposal for Assignment of Cell Tower Property Lease Revenue Streams Discussion

Mr. Turkington noted that we had four responses to the Request for Proposals for the assignment of cell tower property lease revenue streams. Town Counsel is presently reviewing the proposals. The two top responses come from Unison and Crescendo and he hopes to be able to provide a recommendation in the best interest of the Town.

Representatives from Crescendo were present and noted that their proposal is a pure assignment of rent. They also noted the differences between their proposal and Unison Site Management's proposal and that the easements with respect to the water tanks are very important to the Town, and their proposal allows Sharon to keep control of the easement.

Report of the Town Administrator

The Town Administrator reported the following:

- The warrant for the Special Town Meeting should be delivered by the end of this week.
- Met with state officials at the Hammershop Pond Dam and the Town was granted a year extension.
- They are negotiating an extension with Republic Services for curbside collection.
- Capital Outlay Committee begins meeting on Thursday.
- Community Gardens presented the Town a check of \$1,000 for their water bills and the Town Administrator suggests keeping that fee on a yearly basis.

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

Chairman Heitin said that there is a response letter to Cliff Towner, advising him not to contact town vendors.

Chairman Heitin reminded residents of the Veteran's Day Services on Tuesday, November 11.

Executive Session – 8:13pm

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation, strategy with respect to collective bargaining, and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, at the end, adjourn for the evening. Discussion of any of these in open session would be detrimental to the Town.
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye
Roach: Aye

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:50pm
(Heitin) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye
McGrath: Aye
Roach: Aye