

MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

August 6, 2013

7:00 p.m.

The meeting of the Board of Selectmen was held at 7:10 p.m. in the David I. Clifton Jr. Ball Room at the Sharon Community Center with Chairman Walter Joe Roach, Selectman Richard Powell, Selectman William Heitin and Town Administrator Benjamin E. Puritz

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HEARING FOR WATER RATES

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VOTED: (Heitin/Powell) Voted unanimously to open the Water Rates Hearing at 7:10 p.m.

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Selectman Heitin started the hearing by saying “that the Water Management Advisory Committee (WMAC) has spent at least two years going through analyzing the water rate structure. Selectman Heitin also stated that “there are various options the Town could consider – most will never happen. There’s a lot of information about how good current structures relate to conservation of water.” Infrastructure is a huge component in regard to water.” Power point presentations will be presented by the head of the Water Department, DPW Superintendent, Eric Hooper and David Crosby, Chair of the Sharon Water Management Advisory Committee and a proposal by Paul Lauenstein, a Sharon resident and a member of the WMAC. The concept of a per person use will be discussed.

DPW Superintendent, Eric Hooper, began his power point presentation by explaining the operations of the Water Department. Mr. Hooper presented a proposal that would increase the fixed quarterly rate from \$15 to \$20 and increasing the rates in the summer to encourage more conservation. Mr. Hooper stated “the rate structures were not supposed to do social engineering and later talked about encouraging conservation as part of the rate structure to satisfy demands from state regulations.”

DPW Superintendent, Eric Hooper, continued the power point presentation by explaining the operations of the Water Department which are the following:

- Financial side of the Water Department – Fixed Operating Costs –Variable Operating Costs – Infrastructure Maintenance (Capital) and Environmental Concerns;
- Budget History;
- Nature of Water Rates – purpose being generating revenues to cover operating and capital costs and provide incentives for conservation use;
- Basic Water Needs;
- Significant Outlier Groups;
- Rate Alternatives – Flat Rates – Uniform Rate – Increasing Block Rate – Rate Combinations;
- Water Use by Household Size (Seasonal) – Water Usage of larger households is more efficient than that of a 1 or 2 person household.

David Crosby, Chair of the Water Management Advisory Committee (WMAC), began his power point presentation by saying that the “WMAC conducted a two-year study on water rates.” Mr. Crosby talked about a couple of proposals that would charged based on the amount of gallons used per person per household and

pointed to figures that showed larger households are more efficient than smaller households of one or two, in terms of the amount of gallons per person per household, based on the Town census data.

According to the study, over 90 gallons on average per person per day was used by households of one or two and 50 gallons is used per person per day by households of seven or eight. The target is to try to get everyone under 55 gallons per person per day.

The following was illustrated in Mr. Crosby's power point presentation:

- Cost of Water Delivery
 - Actual 2013 Budget:** \$5.80 per 1,000 gallons (which included the Fixed Cost/1,222 Gal. \$4.864, the Variable Cost/1,000 Gal. and the \$15 fixed rate \$0.931 – Total Cost/1,000 Gal \$5.795
 - Modified 2013 Budget:** (reflects Water Master Plan capital improvements schedule) \$7.65 per 1,000 gallons (which included the Fixed Cost/1,000 Gal. \$6.713, the Variable Cost/1,000 Gal. and the \$15 fixed rate \$0.931 – Total Cost/1,000 Gal \$7.65
- Average Cost/1,000g by Household Size;
- Residential Consumption by Household Size;
- Average Cost vs. Residential Gallon Per Capita Day (RGPCD) Usage;
- Current Rate Structure;
- Quarterly Usage by Household Size;
- Metered Consumption;
- Four Proposals: (Option 1 – Rates based on Household Size) (Option 2 – Single Rate) (Option 3 – Modified Ascending Block Rate) (Option 4 – Existing Rate Structure);
- Options and Impact by Household Size.

Paul Lauenstein, a Sharon resident and a member of the WMAC for nine years, presented his comments to the Sharon Water Commissioners. Mr. Lauenstein stated that Sharon's 2010 Water Master Plan revealed that the Town has not been raising enough revenue to keep up with maintenance of its aging water supply infrastructure. Mr. Lauenstein mentioned that Sharon's newest well was built 24 years ago (Well #4). Well #4 provides almost half of the Town's water. The capacity of a well tends to diminish gradually over time as the sand and gravel around the intake becomes clogged.

Mr. Lauenstein made a proposal that would keep the current base quarterly rate of \$15, but would raise the summer rates by \$3 instead of \$1. A petition proposing the above signed by 552 residents, was presented.

Chair Roach informed the audience that if they wanted to speak, to come up to the microphone and provide their name and address.

- ❖ Marjorie Asnes, 8 Courtland Drive – “How do you get 92 gallons of water used by one person in a household? My husband and I average about 50 gallons. Large family rates go down and small families go up. I disagree with tonight's water presentation.” - Eric Hooper commented that the 92 gal. per person comes from water bills.
- ❖ Richard Kramer, 77 Beach Street – “It would have been helpful to see the memorandum before the Water Hearing began. I would like to commend Eric Hooper for tonight's presentation.” Mr. Kramer wants to correct the record just a little bit about conserving usage and the impact that the recent changes

and the impact of them going forward. “It seems that we are continuing to impact the most conserving user’s percentage wise. I do not think there is such a thing as a 1 or 2 person household. You should be looking at median and per centile rather than the average. Summer rates should be increased even more.” – Mr. Hooper explained the difference between average and per centile.

- ❖ Linda Waller, 19 Walpole Street wanted to know “Why don’t we have an Independent Water Department?”- Selectman Heitin and DPW Director explained the separate water enterprise accounting structure.
- ❖ Dave Ableman, 75 South Main Street – Discussed conservation and what impact the water rates would be. Rates not being high enough in summer months. Water conservation is important. People who use more water pay less. Household size is a luxury. Mr. Ableman stated “Isn’t it true that the Town’s attorneys are specifically advising that the rates based on household size are not permissible?”- Mr. Hooper questioned where Mr. Ableman got his numbers. Mr. Hooper proceeded to give the following proposed annual average rates:

	<u>Current</u>	<u>Proposed</u>	
1 person household	\$200	\$224	up 11%
2 person household	\$255	\$285	up 11.75%
3 person household	\$307	\$331	up 11%
5 person household	\$465	\$519	up 11.78%
6 person household	\$505	\$560	up 10.86%

- ❖ Leonard Zandrow, 8 Sylvan Road – Mr. Zandrow is very interested in the conservation aspect and that water is a very precious resource. “Is it fair to say that there is an assumption here that there is an actual household size and that the numbers came from the census at the Town Clerk’s Office? You have people in the military, people going away for nine months i.e, college, Florida, etc, business travel.”
- ❖ Ian Cooke, Executive Director of the Neponset River Watershed Association – Worried about the impact of water withdrawals. Our organization is dedicated to protecting the health of the Neponset River and its watershed. One important factor in protecting the health of the river is limiting the volume of water withdrawals in the basin to a sustainable level. Sharon’s focus should be on household efficiency, not household size. In 2011 the most efficient third of Sharon’s one-person households used 38 gallons per capita per day (GPCD), whereas the least efficient third of Sharon’s one-person households used 164 GPCD, or 4.3 times more! The top third of users from each household size collectively account for 75% of the extra water consumed in the peak summer quarter of 2011 (i.e. summer use divided by average winter use). Urges the Town of Sharon to retain its existing increasing block rate system, as the most effective way to encourage conservation by the small portion of Sharon’s residents (across all household sizes) who are using water at fundamentally unsustainable volumes, and as an essential tool to discourage others from beginning to use water in this manner.
- ❖ Laura Nelson, a Sharon resident and a member of the Finance Committee, 236 Edge Hill Road – Not a true representation of people in a household. Difference of the rates between summer and winter – each of those increments is only \$1 for each of those tiers. Believes that is unfair. When you jump from \$3 to \$4, it’s a 33% increase and from \$8 to \$9 a 12% increase. Feel this is also very unfair. Are reading of meters factored into any of the numbers? “I feel that I am subsidizing for the families that have large families.”
- ❖ Alexander Korin, 18 Robin Road – concerned about the conservation and infrastructure. How much does it cost pumping the water?
- ❖ Andrea Bresnick, 12 Cow Hill Road – I would like to commend the Town for their conservation efforts and for the rebates. I have lived here for 22 years and know that every April and October the water

turns brown and we have had to replace our appliances. It is getting better and appreciates all that is being done to correct this problem. Continue the conservation efforts.

- ❖ Richard Kramer, 77 Beach Street – “It has been suggested tonight that the highly efficient users are being subsidized. That is simply not true.”
- ❖ Marilyn Kahn, 114 Ames Street – Is very conservation minded. “The idea of a separate meter for watering concerns me. If you make people pay for a meter to water their lawns, they are going to put in a well.” Mr. Hooper stated that wells are effectively prohibited. You need 2 acres to put in a private well.

Voting on Water Rates will be at the September 3, 2013 Board of Selectmen Meeting

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VOTED: (Heitin/Powell) Voted unanimously to declare the Water Rates Hearing closed at 9:50 p.m.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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VOTED: (Heitin/Powell) Voted unanimously to approve the Regular Session Minutes and Executive Session Minutes of July 9 and Regular Session Minutes of 23, 2013

FALL TOWN MEETING PRELIMINARY ARTICLES

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The Fall Town Meeting Preliminary Articles put on hold until a later date

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BILLBOARD REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL BID REVIEW

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The Billboard Request for Proposal Bid Review has been deferred until for the September 3, 2013 Selectmen’s Meeting.

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APPROVAL OF BANNER REQUEST

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VOTED:(Heitin/Powell) Voted unanimously to approve the banner request by the Sharon Soccer Association from August 12 – 19, 2013 (2nd position) and August 26-29, 2013 (1st position)

SUPPLEMENTAL AGENDA

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Consider request by Andrea Pannore to close off Robin Road for a block party on August 18, 2013 from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

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VOTED: (Heitin/Powell) Voted unanimously to approve the request of Andrea Pannone for the closing of Robin Road on Sunday August 18, 2013 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for a block party.

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Consider adjourning to Executive Session to discuss Police Superior Officers Collective Bargaining, real property transfer, Pending Litigation re 411 East Foxboro Street cellular facility and at the end to adjourn the evening.

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The meeting adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

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Roach: Aye

Powell: Aye

Heitin: Aye