

MINUTES
SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN
December 10, 2013

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order at 6:00pm with Chairman Walter “Joe” Roach and Selectman William Heitin.

Executive Session

MOTION: To enter into executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and, at the end, to recess until the hour of seven o'clock and re-open in open session

Roach: Aye
Heitin: Aye

Selectman Powell and Town Administrator Ben Puritz came to the meeting at 7:04pm.

Mark Lite – Candidate for Lake Management Committee

He has been a resident for 25 years and they have enjoyed the lake with his family over the years and would like to give back to the community.

He has watched the Conservation Commission meetings and is aware of the fanwort and the Asian clams and has spoken with Mr. Towner. He knows there are issues with the boat ramp as well.

Selectman Powell noted that the lake is an important asset to the town. Chairman Roach asked if he has the time to attend the meetings and Mr. Lite replied that he has a flexible schedule and should have no issues making the meetings.

Sharon Friends of the Council on Aging Raffle

Gordon Gladstone explained the purpose of the Friends of the Council on Aging and things the Friends have done. The raffle is one of two fundraisers they hold each year.

The Board selected the twenty-seven winners of the raffle. Mr. Gladstone thanked those who contributed by buying raffle tickets or providing the prizes.

Jane Desberg – Interview for reappointment to the Housing Partnership

Ms. Desberg noted that she is the longest serving current member of the Housing Partnership. She attended a meeting at the Council on Aging to discuss providing more affordable housing for seniors. She noted that young adults with special needs aging out of the system have difficulty finding housing and that is something to look at. Selectman Powell asked if group homes can help with our affordable housing stock and Ms. Desberg replied that she is unsure but can look into it.

Selectman Heitin noted that the Board has a qualified candidate in front of them and thanked Ms. Desberg for her time.

Kenneth Zoller – Candidate for the Board of Health

Dr. Zoller has been a Sharon resident for 22 years and has been a kidney doctor for about 33 years. Chuck Levine told Dr. Zoller of the opening. He has been involved with the Red Cross over the years. He's in the medical reserve corps and is looking to increase his volunteering.

Chairman Roach asked if he has attended any of the Board of Health meetings and Dr. Zoller replied that he has watched the meetings on replays. Selectman Powell noted that they have been wanting to get a doctor on the Board of Health for a long time.

Paul Pietal – Town Administrator Screening Committee

Selectman Powell recused himself from the discussion and left the room.

Mr. Pietal provided a scope of services to the Board. The Committee has had further discussions with the Collins Center. The scope of services he provided covers Phase I & II (everything up to interviewing) and costs \$7,000. He noted that the Town will need to incur some costs as well (copying, advertising, etc.) – the Collins Center estimates \$1,700 - and he is attending next week's Finance Committee meeting to request a reserve fund transfer.

Chairman Roach noted that he and Selectman Heitin are in agreement with spending the \$7,000 and they support the request of the additional \$1,700 for administrative costs, including advertising costs, postage, paper, etc.

MOTION: To approve a reserve fund transfer from the Finance Committee in the total amount of \$8,700 to be used for the search committee, including the scope of services discussed
(Heitin – Roach) 2-0 **PASSES**

Selectman Heitin reviewed the primary criteria the Board discussed in the earlier executive session: Management responsibility in the past; does not need to be a previous Town Administrator, but understands municipal government; pro-active, not reactive; and someone who is able to think out of the box. Selectman Heitin noted that the Board is not willing to set very specific parameters with the salary and want a preferred residency requirement. He added that the Board needs to take the time to find the right candidate, and knows that we will not get anyone in place by the time that Mr. Puritz is leaving. Chairman Roach noted that the criteria may not be final and things may be added.

Selectman Powell returned to the meeting at the conclusion of this discussion.

Superintendent of Public Works Eric Hooper – DPW/Water FY15 Budgets

Mr. Hooper began by explaining that the DPW budget is three components: Department of Public Works, Water and Street Lights.

DPW historically has had some staff turnover and due to some retirements, we have been able to save money by hiring at a lower rate.

DPW Proposed Level Funded Budget:

The level funded proposed budget is \$2,856,085. The Option 1 proposed budget is \$2,915,442, an increase of 2.08%. The level funded proposed budget for salaries and wages is \$2,031,149 which

includes contractually obligated step increases of 2% for eligible personnel only and 2% cost of living increases for all personnel. Overtime hours is assumed to be 85% of the historical 5-year running average. This represents a decrease of \$21,120 due in part to personnel turnover and retirements and the reduction of the full-time Community Center night custodian position to a 20-hour part-time position. A significant increase (\$17,500) is proposed for the Vehicle Maintenance line as maintenance costs of vehicles have increased significantly because of past year weather conditions. The Community Center will not be open on weekends and will have a reduced evening schedule.

DPW Proposed Option 1 Budget:

The proposed Option 1 budget is \$2,915,442, an increase over the appropriated FY2014 of 2.08%. The proposed Option 1 budget for salaries and wages is \$2,090,503 which includes contractually obligated step increases of 2% for eligible personnel only and 2% cost of living increases for all personnel. Overtime hours is assumed to be 90% of the historical 5-year running average. Some savings are expected due to personnel turnover and retirements, and the full complement of Community Center custodians is retained. A significant increase (\$17,500) is proposed for the Vehicle Maintenance line as maintenance costs of vehicles have increased significantly because of past year weather conditions. Due to continued staff shortage, the efficiency of the F&G and Engineering Departments will continue to be compromised. The Community Center will remain open evenings.

Mr. Hooper noted that he and the Recreation Director and Council on Aging Director are trying to come up with a solution to the question of how do you staff programs and keep the Community Center open without having a town staffer there? Have a Board member present? They are working on a plan and they hope to come up with something and present it to the Board. Selectman Powell asked about using a tax write-off individual and Mr. Hooper expressed concern giving keys and alarm code to a tax write-off individual.

Water Budget:

Because significant water main replacement projects during the past several years, the proposed budget assumes that the water reserve fund has been virtually exhausted. Expected revenue for FY14 with the recently approved rate increase is \$2,900,000.

The proposed budget of \$2,843,799 includes \$1,344,645 for salaries and wages which includes contractually obligated step increases of 2% for eligible personnel only and 2% cost of living increases for all personnel, \$574,154 for materials and supplies, \$622,000 for long-term projects (Billings Street from the Mann's Pond Parking area to the East Street intersection) and an additional \$75,000 to repurpose a small work truck by replacing existing body with a dump body for use during water main break and repair activities. A further \$165,500 debt principal and \$62,500 to fund prior year borrowing to fund the Pond Street and Massapoag Avenue and Glendale/Glenview water main replacement projects. The partially completed project in the Brook Road neighborhood where 100+ year old cast iron mains will be replaced in order to correct fire flow deficiencies has been delayed for one year. The proposed budget is possible without any additional layoffs.

Street Light Budget:

The proposed FY'15 budget for Street Light is a level funded budget. The proposed budget of \$187,500 includes \$85,000 electricity costs, primarily associated with Town owned "cobra head" street lights. An additional \$47,500 is allocated to street light maintenance, also in line with past year expenses. This

includes \$7,500 for materials and supplies expenses to be allocated to continued efforts to correct underground failures notably in the Bird Streets, Castle Drive and Beaver Brook Road areas.

This budget also includes \$55,000 for debt service to fund a changeover to LED cobra head street lights from the current High Pressure Sodium (HPS) or mercury vapor (MV) type. The energy savings is projected to be sufficient to cover the debt cost incurred. There are approximately 1450 66-watt street HPS lights that will be converted to 25 watt LED. Another 200 higher wattage MV and HPS (125W – 295W) will be converted to 74 watt or less LED.

The DPW spent over \$122,000 during FY13 for electricity for all streetlights. This includes approximately 1650 cobra head street lights, 500 lollipop style, 100 decorative period-style lights in the Town Center and 4 traffic signals. The lollipops, decorative style and traffic signals are not included in the conversion project.

The payback program will occur over 10 years. LED lights have a 20 year life. Consequently, savings will be realized after year 10. Town Administrator Puritz noted that every scenario regarding utility rates/changes from 0-3%/per year increase is beneficial for the town.

Mr. Hooper noted that the underground wiring is still our issue to maintain and noted that working with NSTAR is difficult at times. Chairman Roach asked about the turnaround time to replace a light. Town Administrator Puritz noted that as part of the bid package – it's a four hour response time. The lollipops are not included in the conversion project. Mr. Hooper noted that they are having a hard time replacing the lollipops. They are just replacing the “cobra head” streets and converting them to LED lights.

Town Administrator Puritz noted that the savings could help DPW with the underground wiring issues.

Joel Fishman & John Carroll – Carroll Advertising

Attorney Joel Fishman noted that he and his client, John Carroll, are present to provide a progress report and to request some modifications to the mitigation agreement. Attorney Fishman added that the Town needs to do its due diligence with respect to two modifications and will be deferred until the next meeting.

Attorney Fishman explained the requested modifications:

Extend the time for filing for digital billboards until no later than thirty days after the Town Meeting vote which authorized such billboards is legally effective; modify paragraph two of the mitigation agreement to give Carroll Advertising 90 days from the date it receives final approval from the Town of Sharon boards (after the expiration of the appeal period with no appeal or after the favorable resolution of any appeal) in order to obtain all necessary approvals from the Commonwealth’s Office of Outdoor Advertising and to submit an approved financing document to the plan. Attorney Fishman has reviewed this with Lisa Whelan and she while she defers to the Town, she doesn’t see an issue with this. The final item is that Carroll Advertising has 30 days from the date that it is determined how many digital signs Carroll Advertising is going to end up with, in case they need approval for a static sign.

On the Koopman site, they are willing to provide space for a public safety receiver site and the Fire Chief and Police Chief and they are in support in the request for a variance.

MOTION: To extend the time for filing for digital billboards until no later than thirty days after the Town Meeting vote which authorized such billboards is legally effective
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To extend the time for any Conservation Commission filing with respect to the five faces for which applications have already been filed with the Board of Appeals until December 11, 2013
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To modify paragraph two of the mitigation agreement to give Carroll Advertising ninety days from the date it receives final approval from the Town of Sharon boards (including after the expiration of all appeal periods) in order to obtain all necessary approvals from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Advertising and to submit an approved financing document to the Town
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To provide a thirty-day period from the date that it is determined how many digital signs Carroll Advertising is going to end up with, in case Carroll Advertising needs approval for a static sign
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

Benjamin Puritz – Selectmen FY15 Budget

This is a reduced Selectmen's budget. This reflects a level funded budget for expenditures totaling \$18,734. The savings is with the personnel side. The Selectmen's Secretary has advised that she will be retiring before the start of FY15. There is compensation for the Town Administrator's successor. There is a reduction of \$28,815 from last fiscal year.

Selectman Heitin noted that he is going from two people working 40 hours to one person working 25. He expressed concern about losing 15 hours. The Town Administrator feels it is a little early to make budget changes. Selectman Heitin doesn't want to close the book on the fifteen hours and doesn't want to leave this to the new Town Administrator.

Benjamin Puritz – Insurance FY15 Budget

The health insurance line item increased from \$6.5 million in FY13 to \$8 million in FY14. For FY15, we are looking at \$8.2 million, only a 3% increase.

The other non-health insurance elements, based on claim estimates, are increasing after a history of declining or stable rates. The total insurance budget is a 4.13% increase.

Benjamin Puritz – Vocational Education FY15 Budget

We outreached to Southeastern and Norfolk Aggie. We are carrying a 3% increase for both assessments. The principal driver is the number of participants and we will be in touch with them during the budget process.

Approval of Minutes – November 26, 2013

MOTION: To approve the regular and executive session minutes of November 26, 2013
(Powell – Heitin) 3-0 **PASSES**

Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2013

MOTION: To approve the regular session minutes of December 5, 2013
(Powell – Roach) 2-0-1 **PASSES** (with Selectman Heitin abstaining)

SERSG DPW Services Contract

Selectman Heitin said that the contract is a \$1 million cost to the town, based on the contractual unit prices for things like paving, mulch and other DPW-related products.

MOTION: To approve the SERSG DPW Services Contract as discussed beginning February 1, 2014 for a twelve-month period, ending January 31, 2015
(Powell – Heitin) 3-0 **PASSES**

Municipal Hearings Officer Appointment

MOTION: To appoint Lauren Barnes as the Municipal Hearings Officer as well to authorize her participation in the upcoming municipal hearings officer training program and further approve travel costs and emergency stay, if necessary
(Powell – Heitin) 3-0 **PASSES**

Open 2014 Annual Town Meeting Warrant

MOTION: Approve the opening of the Annual Town Meeting Warrant and to close at noon on January 15, 2014
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

Establish Date for 2014 Fall Special Town Meeting

The Town Clerk indicated her preference is Monday, December 1, 2014, her second choice is Monday, November 17, 2014 and her third choice is Monday, November 24, 2014.

MOTION: To schedule November 17, 2014 for the Special Town Meeting
(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance of Meeting

The Board received a letter from the School Superintendent, notifying them that they are returning the building at One School Street back to the town, as they no longer have need for it

MOTION: To accept the return of the building at One School Street from the School Committee
(Powell – Heitin) 3-0 **PASSES**

Selectman Heitin noted that we need to discuss the future utilization of the building at a future meeting.

Chairman Roach noted that the tax classification hearing was held last Thursday.

Collective Bargaining Agreement – Police Union

The Town Administrator noted that the contract allows for a 2% salary increase for FY14 and FY15.

MOTION: To approve the contract with the Massachusetts Coalition of Police, based on the items outlined by the Town Administrator

(Heitin – Powell) 3-0 **PASSES**

Executive Session

MOTION: To enter into executive session to discuss a real property transfer and pending litigation, and at the end, to adjourn for the evening. Discussion of any of these items in open session would be detrimental to the Town.

Roach: Aye

Powell: Aye

Heitin: Aye

Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:20pm

Roach: Aye

Powell: Aye

Heitin: Aye