

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
November 16, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair William Heitin remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Hanna R. Switekowski and Emily Smith-Lee were in attendance as was Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. and Assistant to the Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Board observed a moment of silence in honor of Kevin Earley who was killed in an auto accident last week.

Public Hearing – Red Lentil One Pond Street – All alcoholic beverages license

MOTION: To open the public hearing for an all-alcoholic beverages license for Red Lentil located at One Pond Street, Sharon MA.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

The Board was introduced to Pankaj Pradhan, owner of the newly established Red Lentil at One Pond Street, the former site of The Square Kitchen and Bar and Pizzigando. Mr. Pradhan is branching out from another location in Watertown. The menu will feature vegan and vegetarian fare.

The Board confirmed that all application paperwork presented was adequate. Seeing no questions from attendees of the hearing, the Board thanked Mr. Pradhan for his time, wished him luck in this venture, and welcomed him to Sharon.

MOTION: To close the public hearing.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve an alcoholic beverages license for Red Lentil located at One Pond Street, Sharon MA.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Tax Classification hearing

MOTION: To open the tax classification hearing.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE

Mr. Funk provided the following information for the Board:

The total real and personal property assessed value for FY 2022 is \$3,955,240,010. This is a 7% increase from FY 2021.

The average single-family home's assessed value for FY 2022 is \$608,600. This is a 5% increase over FY 2021 value of \$580,000.

The total amount of revenue to be raised by all sources for FY 2022 is \$100,633,800. This is a 3.5% increase from FY 2021. These sources of revenue not only include Real and Personal property tax but also include Enterprise and CPA funds to name a few.

The tax levy for FY 2022 is \$78,115,990. This is an 3.7% increase over FY 2021. This revenue was derived from a tax base that consists of 6,364 units of real property and 168 units of personal property. Under The Community Preservation Act (CPA) the Town will raise at the local level an additional 1% of the real property tax levy with \$100,000/Parcel of Residential property value being exempt from the surcharge. The CPA surcharge estimated revenue for FY 2022 is \$638,741 under authority of the CPC.

The proposed single tax rate for FY 2022 is \$19.75 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation. This is a \$0.68 or 3.5% decrease from the FY 2021 tax rate of \$20.43.

The average single-family home tax bill for FY 2022 is projected to be \$12,020. This is an increase of 1.7% or \$200 over FY 2021. The CPA adds 1% to this average tax bill, or \$100.

The assessed value of the new construction and personal property new growth that took place during the twelve-month period from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 is \$49,354,190. This translates into \$1,079,875 of increased tax levy capacity over the basic limits of Proposition 2 1/2 and is a 15% increase over last year's figure.

The Tax Classification law allows the Select Board to increase the combined Commercial, Industrial and Personal property (CIP) share of the Town's tax base up to a maximum of 150% of what it is at current market value. This has the effect of reducing the share of the tax burden that is borne by the residential property class. Since the CIP property classes represent only 8.8% of Sharon's tax base, even the maximum allowable tax shift to these classes produces a relatively negligible decrease in the tax burden of the residential property class.

The full implementation of the Tax Classification Law in Sharon would have the effect for residential properties of lowering the 2022 single tax rate of \$19.75 by 96 cents to \$18.79. At the same time, it would increase the commercial tax rate by \$9.88, from \$19.75 to \$29.63.

To illustrate, if the maximum allowable tax burden shift were made from the residential property class to the CIP classes, its effect on the average residential assessed value of \$608,600 would be to reduce the tax bill by \$584 to \$11,435. However, the tax bill for an average valued commercial property (\$1,835,236) would be increased by \$18,132 to \$54,378, which is a 50% increase.

It is the recommendation of the Board of Assessors that the Select Board choose a residential factor of 1.00 for, not adopt a residential exemption, and not adopt a small commercial exemption for FY 2022.

Ms. Switekowski commented on the impact on the senior population. She is aware there are options for seniors, both income and asset restricted. Mr. Funk advised that he speaks at a Council on Aging event every year to explain the process to those who may need assistance.

MOTION: To close the tax classification hearing.

(Switlekowski - Heitin)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: Could not vote due to technical issues, internet connection.
2-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To choose a residential factor of 1.00, not adopt a residential exemption, and not adopt a small commercial exemption for FY 2022 based on the recommendation by Administrative Assessor Jeffery Funk and the Board of Assessors.
(Switlekowski - Heitin)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: Could not vote due to technical issues, internet connection.
2-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To set the tax rate at \$19.75 pending final review by the Department of Revenue and Finance Director Krishan Gupta.
(Switlekowski – Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Mountain Street parking

The Board had time to research with the Conservation Commission and Police Department and feels confident that restricting parking from dusk to dawn is a reasonable solution to the neighborhood concerns regarding parking on Mountain Street. There were no comments received from neighbors since the last meeting. There being no objection or further comment, the Board was prepared to act. It was acknowledged that the Board could revisit the topic in the future if necessary.

MOTION: To approve signs restricting parking on Mountain Street from dusk to dawn in the specific area demarcated on the map included in the Select Board meeting materials of October 26, 2021.
(Heitin-Switlekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Pole relocation hearing – Beach Street

MOTION: To open the pole relocation hearing.
(Switlekowski – Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

The Sharon Engineering Division of the Department of Public Works was asked to review the “Petition for Verizon Job #1A5FXoJ for pole 8 on Beach Street, dated October 22, 2021. The site was visited to verify the proposed location and we have the following comments:

There is one cobra streetlight and one separate box light that we want removed and retained in a safe location where it won’t be damaged.

The existing pole is located in the sidewalk and the proposed pole appears to be proposed to be in asphalt. If this is the case, the applicant is required to clean any debris left after the new pole is dug and also fill and pave the old pole location for pedestrian safety, when excavated. Since the old location is a proposed access roadway to the new high school, it is essential that the entire old pole is removed completely, so it won’t need to be addressed as part of the school project.

It appears that there is a Verizon wire drop on the existing pole that goes underground. What are the plans for reconnection and/or abandonment of the old drop? We would like the old wiring completely removed with the pole. Where does the drop go and will additional pavement disturbance be required?

The Town Engineer would like to be notified prior to this work being done, so we can oversee the project.

The Engineering Division of the Sharon Department of Public Works recommends that the Sharon Select Board approve the pole location request #1A5FXoJ, as long as the conditions above are agreed to and addressed by Verizon.

Mr. Donald Voner, representative for the petitioner was present and stated that he has sent revised documents which address the concerns of the Engineering Department.

MOTION: To close the hearing.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve the pole relocation request as discussed.
(Switekowski - Heitin)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: Could not vote due to technical issues, internet connection.
2-0 **PASSES**

Gift from Girl Scout Troop 68071

The donation of a plaque has been offered by Girl Scout Troop 68071. Troop leader Mary Mandel and co-leader Erica Moses were in attendance as were members of the Troop, Sophie Foulger, Lila Mandel, Sara Lessard, and Clair Gladysz. These Girl Scouts, among others who could not attend this evening, have been working hard to earn their Silver Award. They have reached out to the DEI Committee on trying to develop a message that all people are welcome in Sharon. They have designed a plaque that conveyed their sentiment which they would like to produce and display somewhere in Town. A mockup was provided.



The Board is supportive of this initiative and hope this would be placed somewhere in Town Hall. The Board has been kept well aware of the project. The congratulated the Scouts on their hard work and thanked them for attending the meeting tonight.

MOTION: To accept the gift of a plaque from Girl Scout Troop 68071 as discussed to be displayed in Town Hall.
(Heitin-Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Employment contract – Steve Coffey

Newly appointed successor Police Chief, Stephen Coffey, thanked the Board for their appointment at the last meeting.

He provided an overview of his recommendation for promotions after a couple of weeks of thought and reflection. He proposed to promote Sgt. Scott Leonard and Sgt. Brad Fitzhenry to the positions of Lieutenant. The Deputy Chief position will not be filled immediately. There will remain four lieutenants for a period of about 4-6 months. This will allow Chief Coffey to evaluate, supervise, and examine the lieutenants in their administrative roles.

He stated that the next few years are critical for staff development with the recent retirements and hiring. Most importantly, training and developing the first line supervisors, Sergeants is a priority. He proposes to promote Erin McIssac and Steve Kraus to Sergeant positions in early March. This will also open an Administrative Sergeant position which is held by Scott Leonard that will likely be filled by Paul Hertzberg.

In order to speed up and make the transition to Chief more effective, Mr. Coffey will move into a temporary or interim Deputy Chief position until March 1st, where he can shadow Chief Brewer.

Once we have the new recruits “street ready” there will be another detective made. During the next several months they will be creative with coverage and investigations using some administrative staff and identify

patrol investigators to gain some training, investigations and development with the Detective Bureau. The next few months, there will be many moving parts and some adjustments may need to be made. Again, all promotions would become effective March 1, 2022.

Mr. Turkington expressed his support for Mr. Coffey's recommendation. He put a considerable amount of thought into the stability of the department as well as training opportunities and the ability to evaluate them in their new roles. He wholeheartedly endorses the plan for a seamless transition for the Department.

The Board expressed their support for these recommendations and agrees that the thought behind the plan is clear and well-thought. Ms. Smith-Lee asked about financial impact of the contract, understanding that it may be negligible.

MOTION: To approve the employment contract for Stephen Coffey.
(Smith-Lee -Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve the organizational structure for the Police Department as presented.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the request from Chabad Sharon to display a menorah in Sharon Center from Sunday, November 28 through Monday, December 6, 2021.
- II. Vote to validate Town Administrator Fred Turkington and Finance Director Krishan Gupta as the points of contact for the Norfolk County ARPA Grant Program
- III. Vote to approve the following banner requests:
- IV. Vote to elevate David Young to full member of ZBA for a term expiring December 31, 2021

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.
(Heitin-Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

Mr. Turkington is working with a sub-committee of three members of the Conservation Commission. Four applicants from the original pool of more than 50 applications will be interviewed on November 15 and 16. We hope to bring aboard the new employee on or about December 13.

Finance Director Krishan Gupta and I interviewed three candidates for the position of financial analyst/veteran's assistant on October 28 and November 1. We are pleased to announce the appointment of Sharon resident Indira Pisupati who began work on November 8.

Finance Director Krishan Gupta is leading an exploration into the feasibility of establishing a self-insurance fund and hiring a third-party administrator to manage workers' compensation claims and public safety injured on duty (IOD) rather than fully insuring that liability beginning in FY2023. The review will not only consider potential cost-savings, but ease of administration, speed of claims resolution, and return to work.

Le Petit Prince/Bilingual Montessori School of Sharon. The leaseholders have expressed interest in entering negotiations toward purchase of the leased area and building, as well as the possible acquisition of additional adjacent land. We expect to have an initial discussion between counsel and the leases next week.

DEI affinity workshops. The consulting firm contracted through DEIC to conduct board training and strategic planning regarding diversity, equity and inclusion has scheduled the last session on Tuesday, November 30 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. We may move the date in deference to those observing the third night of Hanukkah.

We received / exchanged approximately 20 pieces of correspondence between 12 noon on Friday, October 22 and 9:00 a.m. on Friday, November 12. Topics included:

Emails making suggestions for better communication regarding paving program and response from Town Administrator and DPW Superintendent;

Emails regarding objectives and strategies as it relates to ensuring Lake Massapoag remains a sustainable natural and recreational resource;

Email asking the Select Board to install a traffic signal at North Main Street and School Street;

Email commenting on the proposed parking restriction on Arboro Drive;

Email from Governance Study Committee explaining that the committee will not review of the Personnel bylaw based on a lack of expertise to complete that charge;

Emails treatment by on-call DPW staff concerning removal of leaves from storm drains during storms on October 29-31;

Emails expressing opinions on candidates and process for promotion to police chief;

Emails from Sharon firefighters' union seeking discussion on premium pay for exposure to COVID-19 from Federal CLFRF fund;

Email inviting the Select Board to participate in the menorah lighting on Sunday, December 5 at 4:30 p.m.; and,

Emails from the Town Administrator regarding grant opportunities and community events.

Topics not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours in advance of the meeting
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None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:00 pm.
(Heitin – Switlekowski)

Heitin: AYE

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Alcohol license application
- Legal notice
- Hearing materials
- FY2022 tax classification summary
- Tax recapitulation forms
- Pole petition 1A5FXoJ
- Legal notice
- Abutter notification
- Correspondence from Troop 68071
- Plaque mockup
- Draft employment agreement
- Memo outlining assignments
- Mountain Street parking information
- Request letter
- Correspondence from Norfolk County
- Banner request forms
- Membership list
- Letter of resignation