

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
February 21, 2023

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

Public comment

Several residents of the Lakeview Street area commented about the need for sidewalks in the area. The residents who spoke relayed their concerns that this should be a priority for safety. Those that have not walked or cycled on Lakeview Street are urged to do so.

Public hearing to adjust ambulance rates as of April 1, 2023

MOTION: To open the public meeting.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Chief Wright explained that the ambulance rates were last adjusted in 2017. He feels that adjustment is appropriate due to increased costs. The proposed rates are as follows:

BLS: \$1,950 (from \$1,293)
ALS1: \$2,350 (from \$2,099)
ALS2: \$3,450 (from \$3,381.96)
Mileage: \$40 (from \$36.11)

It was asked how these increases might affect residents? It was explained that with insurance reform, there are now different plans. Private insurers pay for ambulance services. There are, however, a la carte insurance plans today. Chief Wright assured the Board that there are payment plans for those in need and some charges can be waived in cases of extreme hardship.

MOTION: To close the public hearing.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve the increase in ambulance rates as proposed by Chief James Wright effective April 1, 2023.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Safer grant authorization

Deputy Chief Mike Madden explained about the SAFER grant and expressed the desire of the Department to apply for funding again this year. This funding is available by grant to help Fire Departments meet staffing standards of MEFA. Sharon Fire Department applied and was awarded this grant in 2019 which helped to properly staff the Department at that time. In 2019, the grant funding structure was 75/75/35 percent reimbursement for salary increases incurred for hiring additional staff spread over the three-year period covered by the grant. Reimbursement now is 100% for all three years. This year it is expected that the award amount will be reduced, and the selection process more competitive. Select Board approval is required of the Fire Department to begin the application process, and the Board indicated their support.

Appoint Samantha Cooper as full-time police officer

Chief Coffey provided background on Samantha Cooper for the Board's consideration as a full-time police officer. Samantha Cooper is 26 years old, originally from Quincy Mass. Her family moved to Brockton where she attended the Brockton School system and graduated from Brockton High School in 2015. Samantha has worked at Northeastern University Police Department for four years, starting as a dispatcher, before being hired as a full-time police officer in January of 2021. She graduated from the Cambridge/Northeastern Police Academy in June of 2021.

She has attended several different colleges including Northeastern University in pursuit of her degree. Over the past year, Samantha has trained in, Health & Wellness Instructor, Stress Coordinator, Sexual Assault Investigations, Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), Mountain Bike, Criminal Investigations and is certified in 911 dispatch. She is a black belt in Karate, where she instructs and takes Karate classes at the Islamic Center of New England here in Sharon. Samantha has created great relationships with the students and their parents who have attended these classes. Samantha has known our most recent hire, John Marsinelli, from childhood. John speaks very highly of Samantha and believes she would make an excellent Sharon Police Officer.

A thorough background check was conducted which had several letters of recognition for her performance as both a dispatcher as well as a Police Officer at Northeastern University Police Department. Samantha's references had all positive things to say about her.

The Board thanked Ms. Cooper and Chief Coffey for their time and welcomed Ms. Cooper to the Sharon community.

MOTION: To appoint Samantha Cooper as a full-time police officer.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Operating budget review – Department of Public Works

Eric Hooper, Public Works Superintendent, provided the Board with an update on the operating budget for fiscal year 2024. A summary of budget was included with the Board's meeting materials. Mr. Hooper explained that this a level service budget. Staffing has remained the same since 2003. Unlike other large departments, staffing is not so heavily funded. He explained that fluctuations in the price of gasoline have affected the budget. The Department has been trying to offset fuel expenses with fuel efficient vehicles.

Ms. Switekowski asked about the train station budget, particularly with respect to repairs to the staircases. It was explained that the repairs to the stairs are the Town's responsibility, not the responsibility of the MBTA. The account is robust enough to absorb repair costs and repairs are expected for spring when weather breaks.

Daily parking has increased slightly over the past year. The Department has considered different revenue opportunities, including allowing for long-term parking and a stop for Blue Apple bus service to Logan at train station, like the program offered by Mansfield.

The Board thanked Mr. Hooper for his presentation.

Roadway and sidewalk plan review – Public Works

Stakes have been put out on Lakeview which represent where a potential sidewalk would be located. The Department has included Lakeview as a priority sidewalk. The Town owns most of the land on the non-lake side of the street. There is a proposal for installation of speed humps on Lakeview Street in the fall. These work reasonably well as a speed calming measure but are a long-term maintenance issue for Public Works as they cause damage to the road.

Completion of sidewalk installation is proposed in three phases. This is a practical solution as it takes time to prepare the side of the road and install the sidewalk. Due to scheduling, procuring contractor services cannot happen other than in phases for scheduling reasons. The wetlands will impede installation beyond the camp on the Massapoag Avenue side of Lakeview. Permitting will be challenging as Lakeview is a scenic road and hearings before the Planning Board are necessary. Funding for sidewalks would come from the Capital Outlay process and would be proposed during the next capital season. Installation of speed humps will be funded through Chapter 90 this construction season.

Mr. Hooper explained that a plan is in place for Lakeview but is not yet definitive. Sidewalks have also been requested on Morse Street.

Solid waste and recycling

It was explained that bid documents for solid waste and recycling services will be released next week and the new contract will take effect on July 1. The recycling calendar must be updated as plastic recycling has changed over the past few years. A draft of the bid documents were provided to the Board with their meeting materials. It was explained that composting is independent of this bid. There have been interdepartmental discussions about offering cardboard recycling at a drop off spot in Town but a solution has yet to be found. Mr. Turkington also advised that a quarterly newsletter or outreach of some kind is built into the contract.

Support for Deborah Samson commemorative stamp

Mr. Steve Connolly of 622 Massapoag Ave and a member of the Sharon Historical Society explained that it takes about two years to complete the process for a commemorative stamp to be developed. Mr. Connolly wished to thank the Town of Sharon for listening to the appeal over the last few weeks for a commemorative stamp recognizing Deborah Samson. This is the chance for Sharon and Deborah Samson's story to shine on a national scale. There is the possibility that this could happen in 2025. If letter campaign is approved, everything will be set in motion to make it happen. Mr. Connolly acknowledged that book authors, senators, congressmen, and private citizens are concentrating efforts to make this happen. The Board has drafted a letter of support which was shared with Mr. Connolly and will be sent directly to the Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee

Order articles for Annual Town Meeting

Mr. Turkington advised that a list of articles was included in the Board's meeting packet. He and Ms. Barnes have with the Moderator and agreed on a consent agenda. The only downside being if any article is held, it would affect the order and/or schedule. A description of the articles to be considered on consent was provided.

It was explained that drafts of the Zoning bylaw changes (articles numbered 27-30) are still being reviewed by counsel and the full text will be available tomorrow. A Public hearing is scheduled for March 9.

Article 20 remain a citizen’s petition. Counsel has reviewed and formatted, and the draft has been made available to petitioner for their support.

MOTION: To approve the order of articles for Annual Town Meeting as presented with the removal of Article 23 and renumbering of all remaining articles.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the open session minutes of January 24 and February 7, 2023
- II. Vote to approve the request for SBYSA registration Sharon Youth Lacrosse registration, March 6-13, 2023 in 1st position
- III. Vote to appoint Patricia Carroll as Parking Clerk through December 31, 2023 (replacing Shaun Strobel)
- IV. Vote to approve the amendment to the collective bargaining agreement with firefighters local 1880 IAAF
- V. Vote to award a contract for delivery of the 2022 Annual Town Report to the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 95, in the amount of \$1,200
- VI. Vote to approve a beer garden offered by Max Performance at the August 2023 Sharon Triathlon per the plan outlined in the January 27, 2023 letter
- VII. Vote to approve selected items from the recreation game room to be auctioned as surplus as recommended by the Recreation Advisory Committee and Recreation Director, Linda Berger if not claimed by other Town or School Departments

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

As part of a risk assessment conducted by the Town’s professional liability insurer, police, school, and Town staff will be participating in training entitled “Preventing and Addressing Workplace Discrimination”. The first session with police will be conducted on March 13 and 14. This is an effort to avoid future discrimination claims given recent claims history.

Chief Wright and Deputy Chief Madden concluded discussions with the Sharon firefighters local on a contract amendment to implement the two-deputy chief model. Negotiations were required since one captain's position will become a non-union deputy position. The amendment was approved by the union on February 9; Select Board approval on the consent agenda is appreciated.

The order of articles suggested is based on expectations for discussion at Town Meeting. The Moderator also prefers to have all consent items in numerical order, which means any article pulled for discussion will be heard prior to all non-consent agenda articles. In this case, the zoning articles that are administrative and non-controversial will be heard separately from the three substantive articles. We assume a two-night town meeting, although Andy suggested that the personnel bylaw articles be placed ahead of zoning articles. As you know, the second night of town meeting usually brings out a smaller crowd with more intense feelings about direct democracy and sensitive matters such as governance, zoning, and policy-related legislation.

We received / exchanged approximately 14 pieces of correspondence between Friday, February 3 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 16. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations: one submission related to consideration of appointment to Town boards and committees (DEIC);
- copy of peer town financial analysis provided to FinComm; notice from town counsel of settlement of litigation by Sharon Marketplace over intersection improvements on South Main Street;
- invitation to presentation on solar canopies at Middle School parking areas;
- Three emails exchanged regarding estimated water billings;
- Three emails advocating for traffic calming measures or sidewalks on Lakeview Street;
- Three emails regarding conduct of SSBC selection committee and SSBC contrary to bylaw provisions; and,
- Email invitation to Sharon Historical Society display on Black History Month and presentation at their March 12 quarterly meeting.

Topics not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours in advance of the meeting

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:51 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Rate schedule
- Fee comparison
- EMS projection
- Recommendation
- Operating budget
- Correspondence
- Draft specifications
- Draft support letter
- Request letter
- Article list
- Minutes
- Request form
- Memorandum of Agreement
- Bid proposal

- Memoranda
- Letter of 1/27/23 from Max Performance
- Report