

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
September 26, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Hanna Switekowski and Emily Smith-Lee 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 period

Judy Crosby asked that the Board carefully consider the cost of the water treatment facility considering the construction of other new facilities in town such as the High School, Public Library, and potential increases to trash collection fees.

Jamy Buchanan Madeja confirmed that the Select Board received a letter she sent on behalf of her clients, the unincorporated association known as 4Sharon. She went on to comment that 248 people have supported a petition urging the Board to oppose the Well 4 site for the PFAS water treatment facility. Some of the reasons for the opposition include significant health and environmental impacts from the building itself as well as from the loss of the natural buffer to the railroad tracks. In addition, construction at this location would include major grading of a long-established hillsides and wooded slope with destruction of mature trees diminishing clean-air benefits.

Don Brichta expressed that although he respects the feelings of the neighbors who oppose the placement of this water treatment facility, when one owns property which abuts town owned property, there is some risk that the town may change the use of that property. It is his feeling that the Board should do what is best for the Town of Sharon.

Frank Xia expressed his feelings that the process for selecting a site for the water treatment facility is biased and questionable. In addition, he feels that there are flaws in the financial calculations for the Well 4 site.

Julia Tavares expressed her feeling that this is not a “Not In My Back Yard” situation. The position of the neighborhood is based upon the flaws in the process of selecting Well 4 as the site of the treatment facility.

Sam Liao of 12 Turning Mill Road expressed that he lives nowhere near this area and is not personally impacted by this issue but wanted to offer his insights into the process. He feels that additional study should be considered before selecting a location.

Board and Committee interviews

Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that the Board asks a standard set of questions for each candidate:

Please tell us about your personal background, education, employment, things you like to do for fun, etc. and how/if it relates to the committee for which you seek appointment.

Why are you interested in appointment to the particular committee? What goals do you have for your service?

(If applicable) We often have more interested citizens who step forward to serve. If not chosen for the particular committee to which you have applied, would you consider a different assignment?

How can we ensure the work of your committee reflects the breadth of thought that reflects Sharon's diverse community?

Mr. Brendan Brown, candidate for Sharon Cultural Council, introduced himself to the Board. He explained that he has been a resident of Sharon for about five years or so now. He has two children in the school system. Mr. Brown's background involves starting a rock and roll band after a year in college at Northeastern University. He was a touring musician for seven years. He now leads the experience, strategy, and design group for an experiential marketing agency. He is very involved in culture at a global level but looks forward to being involved at the local level. Mr. Brown loves the access to so many trails in town.

Ms. Deborah Utter, candidate for Sharon Cultural Council, introduced herself. She explained that she lives in Sharon, and has lived here, for about twenty-five years. She has been a full-time faculty member at Boston University also for about 25 years. She loves teaching and her students. Boston University has a very diverse student population. Ms. Utter has wanted to get involved in the community, found the Sharon Cultural Council and thought it suited her interests. She explained that she went to college on a music scholarship and thought she would be a concert cellist. She has played in the Sharon Community Orchestra and her children have been involved in music and theatre in town.

Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that appointments would be made at the Board's next meeting on October 10 and thanked Mr. Brown and Ms. Utter for their time this evening.

The Board met Mr. Joel Fishman, candidate for Library Reuse Committee. Mr. Fishman stated that he has lived in Sharon for 68 years. He graduated from Sharon High School then went on to study at Boston College, ultimately earning a law degree. He served as Middlesex County District Attorney until 1985 and opened a practice with Bill Keating in Foxboro in 1986. He was Bill's law partner until 1998 when Mr. Keating was elected Norfolk County District Attorney. He retired on May 1 this year. He was involved in many zoning cases during his time as an attorney.

Michael Fillion, candidate for Library Reuse Committee, was introduced to the Board. Mr. Fillion has lived in Sharon for about 50 years and was once Brad Fitzhenry's hockey coach. He and Mr. Fishman were neighbors. Mr. Fillion received a degree in structural engineering from Northeastern University and has his own structural engineering firm. He has served in roles such as President of the Boston Association of Structural Engineers and President of the Structural Engineers Association of Massachusetts. He is the current chair of the National Council of Structural Engineers Existing Building Committee as well as the Massachusetts Structural Engineering Emergency Response Committee. For fun, Mr. Fillion spends a lot of time outdoors, walking his dogs and still plays hockey.

Ms. Pierre-Louis thanked Mr. Fishman and Mr. Fillion for stepping forward to fill these vacancies. She explained that appointments would be made this evening so the committee may begin its work.

Discussion on Library Reuse Committee

Mr. Turkington explained that Mr. Baldassari had been appointed as chair of the Library Reuse Committee at the committee's last meeting. His time commitments both at work and with the Standing Building Committee have changed with the change in leadership of that committee. Mr. Popkin also had a substantial change in work commitments that led to his need to drop off the committee as well.

One member of the committee had not yet been sworn in but participated in a motion to elect the vice-chair. The addition of two new members will provide an opportunity for the committee to consider reorganizing again. Town Clerk Mark Hogan has advised that while Mr. Popkin has emailed a note of resignation, a signed statement has yet to be received, thus appointment of one individual this evening should be contingent upon receipt of a signed resignation letter.

The committee has preferred to meet on Thursday evenings and will meet again in October. Mr. Turkington has received some feedback from members of the committee that were a little more explicit on the charge to provide more context on the desired outcome.

The Board agreed that the expertise of Mr. Fishman and Mr. Fillion will help to fill the gap by the resignations of Mr. Baldassari and Mr. Popkin.

MOTION: To appoint Joel Fishman to the Library Reuse Committee and to appoint Michael Fillion to the Library Reuse Committee contingent upon receipt of a signed resignation letter from James Popkin.
(Smith-Lee – Switlekowski)

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

The Board then deliberated on the following addition to the charge of the committee based on feedback from some of the members:

The committee should be guided in completing the task by the following key points:

- There is no anticipated municipal use for the property
- There is an expectation that a purchaser or long-term leaseholder (similar to the approach taken with the Wilber School rehabilitation) will submit a proposal that takes into account renovations for the planned use; there is no expectation that taxpayers will make renovations to building systems, envelope or structure in advance of sale or lease of the property to a third-party
- There is limited septic capacity and limited on-street parking available that restricts the viability of uses (short of a creative pairing with other Town-owned land, an agreement for public-private parking at a nearby property, or allowing shared parking as part of a mixed-use project, as well as exploring the availability of dedicated parking for the North Main Street building vis-à-vis library dedicated parking in the High Street lot)

Ms. Smith-Lee mentioned that this really isn't a change to the charge and Mr. Turkington agreed; rather it is intended more to give the committee guidance, so they start out knowing what outcome the Board is looking for which meets this criterion. The only concern about this document is that it should not be construed as something to limit their research.

The Board agreed to hold a joint meeting with the Library Reuse Committee to discuss these guidelines and did not take a vote this evening.

Consider and vote employment agreement for Deputy Police Chief

Chief Steve Coffey took a moment to introduce Brad Fitzhenry as his selection for promotion to Deputy Police Chief. Chief Coffey explained that Brad grew up in Sharon and attended Sharon Schools. He completed his undergraduate studies at Arizona State University and went on to earn his master's degree. Brad began his twenty-five-year career in Sharon as a special officer in 1996, a reserve officer in 1998, and has risen in rank since being promoted to a full-time officer in 1999.

The Board thanked Chief Coffey and congratulated Lieutenant Fitzhenry on his selection for this position. Lieutenant Fitzhenry thanked the Board, Chief Coffey, and Mr. Turkington. He is grateful for this opportunity and looks forward to this new challenge. Mr. Turkington added that the promotion will take effect on October 30. He reminded the Board that Chief Coffey presented the current organizational structure at the Board's last meeting. It was a difficult choice for promoting a new Deputy Police Chief given such a talented command staff. The plan is to rotate the remaining three lieutenants through detective, operations, accreditation, budgeting, and community relations roles to prepare each for consideration of the position of Chief when Chief Coffey retires.

MOTION: To appoint Brad Fitzhenry to the position of Deputy Police Chief and approve an employment agreement effective October 30, 2023.

(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Consider and vote to select site for water treatment facility

Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that the Board toured three potential sites for a water treatment facility, accompanied by relevant personnel and neighborhood residents. Although she couldn't attend, she viewed the recorded tour and visited the sites later with Mr. Hooper. Ms. Smith-Lee acknowledged the concerns of the neighbors and emphasized the importance of considering cost, impact, and environmental factors together when selecting a site. Ms. Switekowski agreed that the Moose Hill Parkway site would be ideal if not for environmental and cost issues, favoring the well 4 site instead. She suggested working with neighbors to mitigate concerns and plan for traffic safety during construction. Ms. Pierre-Louis's priority is ensuring clean water for the community, and she believes the well 4 site, saving \$6.5 million, is the best option.

MOTION: To select Well 4 as the site for the water treatment facility and direct Town personnel to make every effort to coordinate with the neighbors and the abutters in the implementation of that plan.

(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Special Town Meeting

As discussed during previous meetings, the requirement for a Special Town Meeting is driven by the need to meet state and federal guidelines for applying for low-interest or zero interest loans to help finance the water treatment facility as the application deadlines precede the spring Annual Town Meeting in May.

MOTION: To hold a Special Town Meeting on Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 7:00 pm at the Sharon High School.

(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To open the Special Town Meeting warrant from Wednesday, September 27, 2023 at 8:30 am through Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

(Switekowski - Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To insert the following six (6) articles in the Special Town Meeting warrant.

Article	Sponsor
Additional appropriation for water treatment facility	Select Board
Amend General By-Law – set deadline to mail Town Meeting warrants	Select Board
Increase trash revolving fund from \$2.5M to \$3M	Select Board
Accept Weyman Lane and Atherton Lane as public roadways	Select Board
Petition General Court to extend statutory limit of 25 years for intermunicipal agreements	Select Board
Long-term lease authorization for solar project at well #5 (Smith-Lee – Switlekowski)	Select Board

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following banner request/requests:
 - a. Hugs Sharon Domestic Violence Awareness, October 2 – 9, 2023 – 1st position and waive fee
- II. Vote to award the following contracts:
 - a. Arden Engineering Constructors, LLC of Pawtucket, RI for South Main Street traffic signal components in the amount of \$525,000
 - b. Ferguson Waterworks Waterworks of Canton, MA for South Main Street Water infrastructure components in the amount of \$37,094.63
 - c. Scituate Concrete Products of Marshfield, MA for South Main Street drainage structures and components in the amount of \$147,688
 - d. N. Cibotti, Inc. of Braintree, MA in the amount of \$610,962.01 for South Pleasant Street Area Water Main Replacement – Phase 2
- III. Vote to approve request by Sharon Lions Club to hold fall White Cane Day fundraising event on Saturday, October 14, 2023 from 9:30 am to 12:30 or on October 21 in the event of rain
- IV. Vote to authorize the Town Administrator to sign Power Purchase Agreement, Lease, and Notice of Lease, Agreements with Solect Energy Development, LLC, as well as take action on other agreements and documents as may be necessary to effectuate solar energy projects at the following Town owned properties:
 - a. Middle School
 - b. DPW Roof
 - c. DPW Canopy
 - d. High School
- V. Vote to approve recommended parking changes at Heights Elementary School and Post Office Square to receive \$485,000 in grant funding for traffic signal and intersection upgrades on South Main Street and on the North Main Street approach to Post Office Square
- VI. Vote to approve Emma’s Run to be held on Sunday, May 6, 2024, at Veterans’ Memorial Park Beach as requested by the Recreation Advisory Committee
 - a. Memo from Linda Berger
- VII. Vote to designate Fire Chief Michael Madden as Emergency Management Director

There was a brief discussion about parking and handicapped parking in Post Office Square, including the municipal lot behind the stores.

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

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

Vote to award a contract to N. Cibotti, Inc. of Braintree, MA in the amount of \$610,962.01 for South Pleasant Street Area Water Main Replacement – Phase 2

MOTION: To approve the supplement to the consent calendar.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

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

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

We received / exchanged approximately 45 pieces of correspondence between Friday, September 8 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 21. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including: notice of vacancy on the Housing Authority, notice of MMA legislative breakfasts, notice of organization of temporary advisory Library Reuse Committee, notice of water treatment facility tours, notice of tentative Porchfest rain date of October 15, notice of Rotary Peace Pole dedication on October 1; notice of opening of grant funding round with Cultural Council; invitation to SEPAC assistive technology fair, invitation to library ground-breaking on Friday, September 22 at 11A and Freedom to Read event; applications for appointment to committees from Deb Vitter (Cultural Council) and Richard Caproni (Telecommunications & Technology); resignations of James Popkin and Matthew Baldassari from Library Reuse Committee;
- Emails (4) exchanged regarding installing handicapped accessible sidewalk at Tree Lane and Norwood Street;
- Email from Paul Lauenstein and response regarding payment to water enterprise fund by Sharon Gallery required by 2007 MOU;
- Email from Town Administrator recommending Board discussion on filling vacancies on the temporary advisory Library Reuse Committee, and indications of interest from Joel Fishman and Mike Fillion;
- Emails (4) exchanged between Cultural Council chair Aaron Glick and Town Administrator regarding mural project;
- Emails (3) exchanged between Mark Macdonald and Assistant Town Engineer regarding LIP project at 268-290 Edge Hill Road;
- Emails (11) from Betsy Schneider, Julia Tavares, Marina Nillni, Meredith de Carbonnel, Katie Gorman, Xiaofeng Xia, and responses from Town Administrator and Water Superintendent regarding water treatment facility siting, costs, decision-making and timeline; and,
- Email from Phillip King regarding extension to respond to OML complaint against SSBC

Sharon Day will take place on Sunday, October 1 from 11 am to 3 pm.

Town Offices will be closed on October 9 to observe Indigenous Peoples' Day.

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

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:55 pm.
(Switlekowski – Smith-Lee)

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Board/Committee application
- Water treatment facility site presentation
- OPEB presentation
- Draft amendment
- Request letter
- Grant of Deed Restriction
- Original ANR plan
- New 81x plan
- Amendment to deed restriction
- Minutes
- Ice cream vendor permit applications (6)
- Block party request form
- Collective bargaining agreement
- Proclamation
- Town Administrator's report