

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
February 7, 2024

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 6:00 pm by Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Emily Smith-Lee and Hanna Switekowski 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

There being no public comment, Ms. Pierre-Louis moved on with the meeting.

Board/Committee interviews

Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that the Board asks the following standard questions of each Board or Committee 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?

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?

The Board welcomed Ms. Kimberly Hokanson, whom they have met previously during a past interview for the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. In responding to the Board's questions, Ms. Hokanson explained that she was born in Texas. She is a social worker with 20 years of experience in the field of child welfare. She teaches at the Boson University School of Social Work and has two children. She is disabled due to a brain injury and likes to research women's history.

The Board advised that Paul Remy, Chair of the Commission on Disabilities, has reached out the Board and explained that the Commission has met with Ms. Hokanson. He states that Ms. Hokanson made a compelling impression and feels her appointment would complement the Commission's current composition. The Board thanked Ms. Hokanson for her time this evening and advised that although it is the Board's policy to make appointments at the meeting following interviews, the Commission on Disabilities has had a long-standing vacancy and they felt comfortable making an appointment this evening.

MOTION: To appoint Kim Hokanson to the Commission on Disabilities through December 31, 2026.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

The Board welcomed Ms. Susana Reyes, candidate for the Sharon Cultural Council. In responding to the Board's questions, Ms. Reyes explained that she works in the education and culture industry. She is a recent MBA graduate with an undergraduate art degree. She has been looking for an opportunity to support the community which also align with her goals and thought that the Cultural Council would be the ideal environment to do so.

Her interest in the arts combined with her project management skills will help to advance the Sharon Cultural Council goals.

The Board thanked Ms. Reyes for her time this evening and advised that although it is the Board's policy to make appointments at the meeting following interviews, the Cultural Council has numerous vacancies and they felt comfortable making an appointment this evening.

MOTION: To appoint Susana Reyes to the Sharon Cultural Council through June 30, 2027.
(Smith-Lee - Switlekowski)

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Budget review – Public Safety

Fire Department – Chief Michael Madden

Chief Madden presented an overview of the Fire Department budget. He explained that negotiations are underway with Local 1880 so the salaries line item of the budget will not be finalized until an agreement is reached with the bargaining unit.

Some of the changes over last year's budget include an increase in apparatus maintenance. The Fire Department has been plagued with apparatus breakdowns recently. The Town's contract with Holbrook for dispatch service is generally increased at 2.8% annually. Telephone expenses have increased with the addition of two Deputy cellphones and each front line apparatus is now equipped with Wi-Fi for operation of dispatch programming. Equipment expenses have also increased significantly over last year. Overall, Chief Madden explained that there is a 4.06 percent budget increase this year.

Ms. Smith-Lee asked about timing with respect to negotiations and when the Select Board should expect to finalize budgets. Mr. Turkington advised that the Select Board is scheduled to present their budget to the Finance Committee on March 18.

Ms. Switlekowski congratulated the Fire Department on being awarded a grant as announced earlier today. Chief Madden also provided a brief update on the Community Connect program. He said that registrations for the program have been slow. There are 496 residences currently enrolled.

The Board thanked Chief Madden for the update.

Police Department – Police Chief Steve Coffey

Over the past few years, the Police Department has hired ten new officers. Looking ahead, the Department will hire another five officers due to retirement and receiving the COPS hiring grant. Training will be a necessity for the next few years. The Department continues to prioritize building trust and respect throughout the community by attending special events and being a part of the various committees, boards, businesses, groups, and organizations. Over the past few years and especially the last few months with current events, there has been an increased demand for police presence. Another consideration for the budget, the Police Patrol/Sergeant Union Contract is expiring as well as the Lieutenants Contract and will enter negotiations in June of 2024.

Adjustments to step raises, stipends, night differential, and other contractual obligations were factored in along with a 2 percent increase. Three new hires for the COPS Hiring Grant were placed at \$62,264.71. Two potential candidates hold bachelor's degrees. There will likely be two lateral transfers, which were placed at a step 3 salary with no degree.

With fifteen officers having under 10 years or less experience, training is extremely important. Academy fees have increased. Officers will continue to attend Crisis Intervention Team training due to the increased calls for mental health incidents. Two officers will be promoted to specialty positions such as Detective & Prosecutor which will require training. The POST Commission is requiring all Departments to have their personnel annually trained in Use of Force, firearms (twice a year), Taser, OC spray, and all policies pertaining to Use of Force. SPD has young supervisors that need leadership training and with POST Commission all new Sergeants are required to attend a one-week supervisors' training by MPTC (NEW). We continue to send supervisors to FBI-LEEDA supervisory training.

The Board thanked Chief Coffey for his budget overview.

Adopt Orders of Taking – Atherton and Weyman Lanes

It was explained that this is the first of several steps needed to formally accept both Atherton and Weyman as public ways. If the Board votes to adopt the orders of taking this evening, the fully executed document must be recorded by the registry of deeds within 30 days. Acceptance was approved at 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

MOTION: To authorize the Select Board to approve and sign the Orders of Taking for Atherton and Weyman Lanes.
(Smith-Lee – Switlekowski)

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

Fee proposal by Sharon Garden Club

Mr. Turkington explained that the Board received correspondence from the Garden Club about the change in fees at Adult Center. The Board voted to set the rate in 2015 and has not adjusted the rate since. It is unknown why the fees have increased over time but its suggested that the fee be returned to \$50 and the Board consider a fee increase at a future meeting. Ms. Smith-Lee asked that an accounting be provided so that any future increase may be offset.

MOTION: To restore the meeting/use fee to \$50 for Sharon Garden Club.
(Switlekowski– Smith-Lee)

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

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes
 - a. November 20, 2023 – open session, Tri Board
 - b. January 23, 2024 – open session, Select Board
- II. Vote to approve the following banner request/requests:
 - a. SYBSA registration – February 12-19 in 1st position
 - b. SYBSA registration – February 26-March 4 in 2nd position
 - c. Friends of the Fourth Sharon July 3 festivities, June 19 -July 3, 2024, in 1st position and consider a fee waiver

- III. Vote to approve a one-day liquor license for Saurav Sharma for a private event at the Sharon Community Center from 11 am to 3 pm on March 9, 2024
- IV. Vote to release the following approved Executive Session meeting minutes
 - a. January 5, 2022 as redacted
 - b. February 1, 2022
 - c. June 21, 2022
 - d. August 23, 2022 as redacted
 - e. September 13, 2022
 - f. November 15, 2022
 - g. December 20, 2022
- V. Vote to award a contract not to exceed \$18,115.98 to The Country Press, Inc., of Lakeville, MA for printing of the 2023 Annual Town Report
- VI. Vote to appoint the Town Administrator as the authorized representative for the Sharon Lead Service Line Inventory Preparation project
- VII. Vote to award contracts to the lowest responsive and responsible bidders of the SERSG DPW services IFB for a twelve-month period commencing March 1, 2024 in the aggregate amount of \$2,552,259.07

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

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

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update. He explained that staff is in the midst of preparing the FY25 budget. Priorities will meet on Monday to review revenue estimates since the November TriBoard meeting. State Aid is substantially lower. The next Board meeting will be on February 27. During that meeting, there will be a review of the DPW and Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee budgets. There will be a sustainability update by the Neponset River Watershed Association.

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

None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 7:38 pm
(Switlekowski– Smith-Lee)

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

List of Documents

- Warrant article list

- Request by Energy Advisory Committee
- Minutes
- One-day liquor license application
- Contract agreement
- Donation request memos (3)
- DEIC request letter
- Board/Committee/Commission applications (3)