

February 27, 2023 Minutes
Town of Sharon Finance Committee Meeting

Present: Ann Keitner, Patricia-Lee Achorn, Anja Bernier, Brian Collins, Gordon Gladstone, Charles Goodman, Lajos Kamocsay, Daniel Lewenberg, Ira Miller, Olga Volfson.

Not Present: Jada Wang.

Also Present: Lee Ann Amend – Library Director, Krishan Gupta - Finance Director, Fred Turkington – Town Administrator, Cheryl Weinstein – Library Trustee.

Documents Cited:

- FY24 CPA Projects
- FY 2024 Library Budget Request
- SSBC Article 01-26-2023
- Fraud Risk Policy

1. Ann Keitner, Chair, gave opening remarks:

This meeting is being held via remote means through the Zoom online platform pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021.

2. Budget Presentations:

- a. Community Preservation Committee (CPC) – Dave Martin, Committee Member:
 1. Mr. Martin discussed the five CPC projects the committee voted on with the funding amounts, as applicable:

#	Description	Category	Amount	Status
1	Lake Massapoag weed & bacteria hazard mitigation: Project includes additional testing to support the health and sustainability of the Lake. This is a second phase to monitoring & testing funded in prior year (\$24,500) Applicant: Lake Management Advisory Committee	Open Space	\$80,000	Voted on (2/1) by a vote of 6-0-0 Voted on (2/9) by a vote of 6-0-0 to take \$80,000 from Undesignated reserves as there are no funds available in open space. PROJECT APPROVED
2	Rehabilitation of Water Department Building: Project includes extensive rehabilitation of the interior space used to house water department personnel and infrastructure - prior year building assessment (70k) resulted in this estimate and plan. Applicant: Sharon DPW	Historic	\$853,931	Voted on 2/9 by a vote of 4-2-0 to take \$100,000 from the Historic reserves and \$326,500 from the Undesignated reserves. This equates to half of requested funding; the remainder will come from the Water Department bonding or grants etc. CPC moved to suspend bylaw required to take a vote at a second meeting. PROJECT APPROVED

3	Moose Hill Cemetery Restoration: Restoration and rehabilitation of gravestones and grounds Applicant: Sharon DPW	Historic	\$50,000	Voted 1/12/ (5-0-0) Voted - 2/1 (6-0-0) to take \$50,000 from the Historic reserves. PROJECT APPROVED
4	Unitarian Church Playground: Project would fund enhancements to the existing playground at the Unitarian Church in exchange for formal public access rights Applicant: Unitarian Church	Recreation	\$9,900	Not enough information . Project can be brought next year.
5	Exterior Siding - Sharon Housing Authority Project will re-side one building at Sharon Housing Authority complex located at Hixson Farm Road, as part of a larger \$1m+ project to re-side all buildings Applicant: Sharon Housing Authority	Housing	\$53,642	Voted (2/9) 6-0-0 to take \$53,642 from Housing reserves. CPC moved to suspend bylaw required to take a vote at second meeting. PROJECT APPROVED

2. Rehabilitation of Water Department building final proposal for the \$853,931 project:
 - a. \$100,000 – Historic reserves. Technically only \$13,000 of the project is directly related to historic preservation of the building, but the Historic Commission has approved a wider use of funds for this project
 - b. \$326,500 – Undesignated reserves. Other than Rattlesnake Hill this is only project to receive undesignated funds
 - c. \$426,965 – CPC will not fund this remaining amount needed for this project. Discussed that the Water Department will raise funds through bonding, grants, etc. to cover this amount
3. CPC is receiving other requests for funding for large projects as well. Are having discussions regarding how to equitably disperse funds and what projects will potentially need funding over the next five years
4. The Finance Committee's role is to either recommend or not recommend funding, but cannot change the amount CPC has voted on for a project
5. CPC funding gets some level of a State match, so it is not just local tax dollars used for these projects
6. CPC decided that the Unitarian Church playground project was too complex to pursue this year, as it involves a private entity. May pursue this in the future.

b. Library budget – Lee Ann Amend:

1. After approaching the Personnel Board was able to make the Circulation Supervisor position a professional position due to the technical and other expertise required and that the position supervises up to 20 people. Eliminated a page position after moving it to a part-time position
2. Ms. Weinstein reviewed the Library Director's salary and other town's library director salaries and found that Ms. Amend is underpaid comparatively. Approached Personnel Board and the Town Administrator and was able to get a comparable salary for her based on her expertise and career history - \$107,000 as of last July 1, moving to \$111,000 as of July 2023
3. Ms. Amend reviewed the proposed budget for next fiscal year, detailing the reasons for decreased and increased line items:

ORG	DEPARTMENT	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2021	FY 2022	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	F/Y 24	F/Y 24
OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	Actual Spent w/Encumb	Actual Spent w/Encumb	BUDGET (Voted)	Actual Spent w/Encumb	BUDGET (Voted)	Actual Spent w/Encumb	BUDGET (Proposed)	BUDGET (Proposed)	VS FY 23	VS FY 23
										\$ Chg	%chg
610	LIBRARY DEPARTMENT										
511000	SALARY	\$ 729,193.33	\$ 772,779.40	\$ 839,142.00	\$ 755,640.64	\$ 843,268.00	\$ 775,064.00	\$ 844,794.00	\$ 909,800.00	\$ 65,006.00	7.69%
511050	VACSICKBB						\$ 4,237.83		\$ -	\$ -	
514000	LONGEVITY	\$ 3,300.00	\$ 4,700.00	\$ 5,900.00	\$ 5,275.00	\$ 5,325.00	\$ 4,475.00	\$ 4,525.00	\$ 4,725.00	\$ 200.00	4.42%
519000	EARNED TIME	\$ 9,455.51	\$ 7,993.44	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 11,006.67	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,395.27	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	25.00%
519400	OTHER & for Sunday hours	\$ -	\$ -								
	Salary Total	\$ 741,948.84	\$ 785,472.84	\$ 855,042.00	\$ 771,922.31	\$ 858,593.00	\$ 794,172.10	\$ 859,319.00	\$ 927,025.00	\$ 67,706.00	7.88%
521000	ELECTRICITY	\$ 24,095.09	\$ 21,390.78	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 16,926.21	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 18,466.69	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	20.00%
521100	FUEL	\$ 6,665.40	\$ 5,117.83	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 6,440.44	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 7,248.75	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,500.00	33.33%
524000	TECHNOLOGY	\$ 19,932.46	\$ 11,488.26	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 28,630.62	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 36,398.68	\$ 11,000.00	\$ 11,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
524608	BLDG MAINT - FLOOD REMEDIATION	\$ (4,290.07)	\$ -						\$ -	\$ -	
524800	GROUNDS	\$ 35,282.21	\$ 17,083.50	\$ 23,500.00	\$ 52,283.54	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 23,815.48	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 20,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
529000	CONTRACTED SERVICES			\$ 1,955.00			\$ 9,477.99	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 7,500.00	\$ (12,500.00)	-62.50%
530200	LEGAL	\$ 3,022.50	\$ 741.00	\$ 1,000.00		\$ 1,000.00		\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
534000	POSTAGE	\$ 389.13	\$ 319.86	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 474.28			\$ 3,335.63	\$ 5,500.00	\$ 4,500.00	-18.18%
534100	TELEPHONE	\$ 1,187.00	\$ 1,228.79	\$ 1,200.00	\$ 1,248.65	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,268.04	\$ 1,300.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 200.00	15.38%
534300	ADVERTISING	\$ 26.01	\$ -	\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00		\$ 500.00	\$ 500.00	\$ -	0.00%
542000	OFFICE SUPPLIES	\$ 18,643.91	\$ 14,859.72	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 18,076.79	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,911.46	\$ 15,000.00	\$ 15,000.00	\$ -	0.00%
571000	LIBRARY IN STATE	\$ 155.87	\$ 149.64	\$ 300.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ -	\$ 200.00	\$ 200.00	\$ -	0.00%
573100	OCLN DUES	\$ 37,603.00	\$ 40,896.48	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 39,412.58	\$ 42,000.00	\$ 51,160.97	\$ 44,000.00	\$ 45,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	2.27%
573200	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	\$ 2,917.62	\$ 3,056.02	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,234.83	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,070.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ -	0.00%
578200	MATERIALS	\$ 154,983.22	\$ 165,273.04	\$ 155,000.00	\$ 166,737.34	\$ 165,000.00	\$ 171,890.72	\$ 170,000.00	\$ 175,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	2.94%
	Expense Total	\$ 300,613.35	\$ 281,604.92	\$ 283,000.00	\$ 333,420.28	\$ 292,250.00	\$ 341,044.41	\$ 328,500.00	\$ 328,700.00	\$ 200.00	0.06%
	DEPARTMENT TOTAL	\$ 1,042,562.19	\$ 1,067,077.76	\$ 1,138,042.00	\$ 1,105,342.59	\$ 1,150,843.00	\$ 1,135,216.51	\$ 1,187,819.00	\$ 1,255,725.00	\$ 67,906.00	5.72%

		FY 2024 BUDGET REQUEST
610	LIBRARY DEPARTMENT	
511000	SALARY	The budget is based on the FY23 union contract budget and includes a replacement position (upgrade and re-classification from Circulation Supervisor to Head of Circulation Services.
511050	VACSICKBB	No one is expected to leave as of this writing.
514000	LONGEVITY	Contractual increases based on length of service.
519000	EARNED TIME	Based on the last three years and time paid out.
519400	OTHER & for Sunday hours	N/A
521000	ELECTRICITY	A \$5,000 increase was added to cover the additional charges expected for electricity
521100	FUEL	A \$2,500 increase was added to cover the additional charges expected for fuel
524000	TECHNOLOGY	Level funded
524608	BLDG MAINT - FLOOD REMEDIATION	Not funded
524800	GROUNDS	Level funded
529000	CONTRACTED SERVICES	Reduced by \$12,500 as fewer expenses will be expected for Town IT services this year.
530200	LEGAL	Level funded
534000	POSTAGE	Reduced by \$1,000 as fewer mailings are expected.
534100	TELEPHONE	Increased by \$200 to cover possible cost increases.
534300	ADVERTISING	Level funded
542000	OFFICE SUPPLIES	Level funded
571000	LIBRARY IN STATE	Level funded
573100	OCLN DUES	Increased by \$1,000 to cover additional cost increases by the network.
573200	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Level funded
578200	MATERIALS	Based on State Aid to Public Libraries required for materials expenditures.
	EXPENSE TOTAL	

3. Library Project Funding Discussion – Chair

- Ms. Keitner, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Turkington, Ms. Amend and the architect met to discuss the estimated range for the short fall for this project. Need the contract signed by June 30, 2023 to proceed
- Waiting to see if the summary judgement is granted. Prepared to put to bid before Annual Town Meeting (ATM) if the summary judgement is received in time. Ability to contract with the approved bidder by end of May 2023 if ATM approves funds
- Will continue to pursue funding sources without further borrowing if the bids come in at the target price. Will put together a scenario for the warrant. If the court case is not settled this can be put to a later date. Stabilization and appropriating from free cash without increasing the debt service to the Town is a possibility, which is an appropriate use of these funds. Previously borrowed unexpended funds of approximately \$1.5 million could be used for this project or used to provide a tax refund to residents. This project will

cost more money than previously discussed, which won't increase tax rates, but is important to make clear at ATM

- d. Project budget will be presented and voted on tomorrow night at the Building Committee meeting.

4. Article Votes

- a. General bylaw change: Standing Building Committee membership terms, project threshold, etc. Mr. Turkington discussed language changes to the bylaw, including:
 - 1. Changed number of Sharon Standing Building Committee (SSBC) regular members from the range of 'six - ten' to nine. Committee discussed potentially making the requirement 10 members instead of nine
 - 2. Separated SSBC Selection Committee from SSBC
 - 3. Appointing authorization doesn't have to be a member
 - 4. Chair serves as ex-officio
 - 5. Amount to be expended on a project in order to involve the SSBC increased to \$1 million
 - 6. Committee encouraged standardizing the name of the SSBC across the document by changing 'Town Standing Building Committee' to "Sharon Standing Building Committee"
 - 7. Appointee timeline is June 30 of each year, with completion of work by end of December of each year
 - 8. Mr. Gladstone will review comments and finalize the document for the Finance Committee to vote on at a later date.
- b. General bylaw change: Finance Committee Nominating Committee delineate responsibilities and procedural changes:
 - 1. Potential to vote to appoint an ex-officio
 - 2. Clarifies duties of the Nominating Committee
 - 3. Number of Committee members from a range to a specific number. Discussed having 11 members as it is easier to get a quorum
 - 4. David Fixler of the Nominating Committee expressed his desire that the Nominating Committee and the Town Moderator had been involved in this process. Will invite the Moderator to the next Finance Committee meeting
 - 5. Discussed that it is inappropriate for Finance Committee members to appoint future Finance Committee members
 - 6. Discussed the issue of a committee member having a conflict of interest and that it is the duty of the Nominating Committee to the Finance Committee to review conflicts of interest and choose Finance Committee members accordingly.

Motioned: by Anja Bernier, **Seconded:** Patricia-Lee Achorn to vote that the member of the Finance Committee that sits on the Nominating Committee to the Finance Committee is an ex-officio. **Voted:** 8-0-2. Daniel Lewenberg and Charles Goodman abstained.

5. Fraud Risk Policy

- a. Ms. Keitner updated the language to the Fraud Risk Policy after receiving suggestions from Committee members at the last few meetings and sent to Committee members for review.

Motioned: by Ira Miller, **Seconded:** Anja Bernier to accept the Fraud Risk Policy with changes. **Voted:** 9-0-1. Charles Goodman abstained.

6. Town Finances Q2 Update Discussion – Krishan Gupta

- a. 'Tailings' under the Liabilities section refers to checks that haven't been cashed for 2 years after being issued by the Town. Will turn over to the State as unclaimed funds
- b. 'Payroll related' liability refers to contributions for retirement, etc. when there is a timing difference
- c. Currently the Town's finances are balanced through December 2022
- d. Fire Department staff transitions may leave their budget short \$70,000 - \$100,000, necessitating a transfer. Don't anticipate any other concerns for this fiscal year
- e. Not currently tracking utilities separately and haven't heard concerns from departments. Requested Mr. Gupta get a sense of this from the departments regarding whether they believe they will stay within their budgets for this year for this line item.

7. Annual Town Meeting (ATM) Planning – Chair

- a. Author needed for the additional warrant item – MS / DPW solar lease. Ms. Volfson agreed to write up this article
- b. Finance Committee write-ups due 3/7. Chair encouraged members to let her know if their write-ups will be in later than that date. The process is to vet and vote on them after they are received
- c. Discussion re: content of next few meetings:
 - 1. SSBC bylaw finalized and Committee will vote on the changes on March 6, as well as vote on certain consent agenda items, change to Planning Board article, and the direct mailing article, review the March 2 Priorities Committee meeting, Finance Committee bylaw change, and discussion with Town Moderator
 - 2. School budget presentation and Committee vote on March 13, as well as vote on zoning, etc.
 - 3. Vote omnibus budget and last remaining articles on March 22.

8. Liaison Updates:

- a. Schools - Ann Keitner, Ira Miller:
 - 1. Negotiations with STA are ongoing
 - 2. The Schools are working on their budgets and may be making modifications. They will present to the Finance Committee on March 13.
- b. Library – Charles Goodman:
 - 1. No further updates.
- c. Planning Board – Brian Collins:
 - 1. Mr. Collins stated that the drafts for his warrant items are underway, but will hear discussion at the public hearing on zoning articles at the March 9 meeting before finalizing to make sure to incorporate information as needed
- d. Standing Building Committee - Gordon Gladstone:
 - 1. High School still continuing on schedule. Site work is being done
 - 2. Other potential building projects are being discussed.
- e. Community Preservation - Patricia-Lee Achorn:
 - 1. This committee has concluded their meetings for the year.
- f. Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee – Dan Lewenberg:
 - 1. This committee met to discuss geese control, prioritization for weed control and other items
 - 2. Still waiting to hear back on the 604B grant – they are behind schedule on awarding the grants. Submitted a letter of interest to the Office of Environmental Affairs, although these tend to be for larger grant projects like engineering, drainage systems, etc.

9. Minutes to be voted

Motioned: by Gordon Gladstone, **Seconded:** Ira Miller to approve the February 6, 2023 Finance Committee meeting minutes. **Voted:** 10-0-0.

10. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair in 48 hours

None.

11. Adjournment:

Absent any objection, the Chair assumed unanimous consent to adjourn for the evening.

Adjourned at 10:31 pm.