

SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 1, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:32 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

Member attendance

Arguimbau: at 8:00	Carver: Present	Geller: Absent	Goodman: Present
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Present
Rangarajan: Present	Silverleib: Present	Wluka: at 8:00	

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the September 29, 2021 meeting.
(Keenan - Rangarajan)

Carver: AYE	Monahan: AYE	Rangarajan: AYE	King: AYE
Keenan: AYE	Goodman: AYE	Silverleib: Abstain	

6-0-1 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting as amended.
(Goodman- Keenan)

Carver: AYE	Monahan: Abstain	Rangarajan: AYE	King: AYE
Keenan: AYE	Goodman: AYE	Silverleib: AYE	

6-0-1 **PASSES**

Prepare update for Select Board

Mr. Pietal provided an update based on previous meeting minutes for the committee's input. The committee agreed that the update was comprehensive and recommends it for the basis of the update to the Select Board at their meeting of December 7, 2021.

Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the work of the Town Meeting subcommittee. He stated that MA Municipal Association will be coming in and the subcommittee hopes to hear about trends. In addition, they have flushed out a list of people in town to hear from such as the Moderator, the Asst. Moderator, and Select Board for an open forum for residents to speak. They would also like to have members of the 2009 commission come and speak about their previous experience.

Mr. King provided an update on the work of the Boards and Committees subcommittee. They discussed methods for surveying residents. They have inquired about working with a high school Civics class about the possibility of partnering in data collection. Mr. Carver also mentioned the Northeastern Public Administration program.

Liaison reports

Sarah Monahan had a discussion with the Library Board of Trustees for about an hour. They felt strongly that the Board should remain elected. State Law requires a board of three, six, or nine members. May not be

enough people to run. They feel their members are passionate about the library and not necessarily using the position as a stepping stone for higher office.

With Town-wide questions, the Trustees feel that work and family concerns are the most common factors for Town Meeting attendance. Many Trustees liked the Town Council model as well as the idea of a change to a five-member Select Board. They feel that the Board could be more diverse if it were larger. They suggested requiring one Select Board member from each precinct since there are five precincts in Sharon presently. They also felt that the PTO has done a good job of promoting diversity, and equity issues.

Mr. Carver met with the Finance Committee Nominating Committee who take their duties very seriously. They feel the committee works well as does the process of moderator appointment. On town-wide issues, they brought up two points not heard yet, the first being concern about bullying at town meeting as it can be an intimidating experience. They also feel that the length of the meeting is also an obstacle. Ann Carney, who has experience as a municipal employee and now does consulting work, feels that town meeting is the least democratic. She advocated for a Town Council form of government, feeling that they consistently get things done. Ms. Weinstein opined that any board authorized to spend taxpayer money should be elected.

Ms. Arguimbau just came from the Planning Board meeting. It will likely take another meeting to get through all the questions. They asked whether they would be asked to come to our meeting. Codification of zoning was discussed.

Mr. Wluka advised he has reached out to the Board of Health and has not yet received a response. He will likely attend their next meeting. He commented on his observations on Planning and ZBA on structure issues. Mr. King commented on structure issues between planning and Zoning.

Mr. King suggested perhaps Capital Outlay has already been considered based on other membership. Mr. Pietal stated that there is a case to be made that there may be a conversation to be had about the work of their committee or a perspective they could share.

Mr. Goodman is the liaison for the School Committee and the Chair would like them to all speak individually. He is working on coordinating that with them.

MAPC - David Wluka

Mr. Wluka reached out to Mark Fine of MAPC. He would like to set up a preliminary meeting on Friday for introductions to see what the work of the committee entails. Maureen is available on Friday to join Mr. Wluka for the preliminary meeting.

Other business

Mr. Pietal has had a discussion with Colleen Tuck and asked if the committee thought he should share. With respect to the size of the Select Board, her thought is the size is currently correct. She feels size keeps quorum and open meeting issues from being an issue. It was her feeling that there isn't really a workload as there is no day-to-day work, they are a policy-setting body. With respect to elected versus appointed positions, she felt that Town Clerk should remain elected. If the position were appointed, the likelihood for the Clerk to leave for other opportunities would increase. She indicated that it may be time to consider RTM.

Mr. Pietal also spoke to Gordon Gladstone. His mantra is "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." They had a discussion about folks not knowing how the Town works and the citizen's role in government. They also discussed precincts. Gordon's point about that came up at a different point. The town is pretty homogenous in its issues. He did prefer a five-member select board to three.

He also spoke to Marlene Chused, the former Town Clerk. She indicated that she prefers that the clerk position remain elected. She feels that an elected Clerk is invested in Town and that continuing education is advantageous. She also prefers a three-member Select Board and had concerns about RTM.

Mr. Wluka recalls a past warrant article about King Phillip's rock perhaps 15-20 years ago which swayed participants. This involved a piece of private property that abutted conservation land. There was an argument for the belief of the land to be sacred, should be protected, and did convince the body to purchase the land.

There is a consistent thought in listening to comments; the value of educating citizens. It was suggested that this may be another effort where an educational facility might be of assistance.

There was a brief discussion about future meetings. It appears that the committee has organically fallen into a Wednesday evening meeting schedule. It was proposed that Wednesday evening continue to be the regular meeting night. It was agreed that meetings would begin at 7:30.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:45 pm.
(Silverleib - Arguimbau)

Goodman: AYE
Rangarajan: AYE

Carver: AYE
King: AYE

Keenan: AYE
Wluka: AYE

Silverleib: AYE
Pietal: AYE

8-o-o **PASSES**