

SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 26, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:35 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present	Carver: Present	Geller: Present	Goodman: Present
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Present
Wluka: Present	Rangarajan: Absent		

Minutes

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting with edits.
(Arguimbau - Keenan)

Carver: AYE	Monahan: AYE	King: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Keenan: AYE	Arguimbau: AYE	Geller: AYE	

7-0-0 **PASSES**

Mr. Goodman apologized for being late to the meeting but had comments he would like to add regarding the minutes.

MOTION: To approve the amended minutes of the January 12, 2022 meeting with edits suggested by Mr. Goodman.
(King - Wluka)

Goodman: AYE	Monahan: AYE	King: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Keenan: AYE	Arguimbau: AYE	Geller: AYE	Wluka: AYE

8-0-0 **PASSES**

Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the work of the Town Meeting subcommittee. The subcommittee met last on January 19 and had two guest speakers, Sam Liao member of the 2009 Charter Commission, and David Fixler, Assistant Town Moderator. Mr. Liao relayed his experiences participating in the work of the charter commission. He suggested that what this committee may learn from past experiences might be to focus on what can be done rather than do everything all at once.

Mr. Fixler spoke about his experiences on the Governance Study Committee in 2001. At that time, the committee suggested that the Town hold two Town Meetings in the spring and fall. They suggested also at that time that a Charter Commission be established. Both Mr. Liao and Mr. Fixler mentioned that technology may help improve meetings.

Mr. Carver mentioned that Sherborn and Westford are also studying the governance of their communities. Westford is committed to open town meeting and they are developing a survey about attendance and participation at town meeting in addition to surveying state Moderators. Sharon's moderator, Andy Nebenzahl has not yet seen the survey. If the information collected by these communities were shared with this Committee, it would save from doubling efforts.

Mr. Pietal has copied the Westford survey into the drive in the survey folder. Mr. Pietal asked for thoughts on organizing the drive and Ms. Monahan suggested that all information be stored by meeting date.

There was a brief discussion on using Google docs. Ms. Monahan explained that shared documents containing the opinions of committee members would violate opening meeting law as all deliberations are to be held in an open forum.

Liaison reports

Mr. Pietal provided an update on his discussions with the Personnel Board. He concentrated on the topics of the Select Board and Town Meeting. He stated that one member of the Personnel Board felt that a five-member board would be better. Another member thought that the three-member Board has been working well. Regarding open town meeting, the Board was unanimous in that open town meeting should be preserved. Having the opportunity to attend Town Meeting and vote is important, whether folks chose to or not. One more point was that the members didn't know what other options there are for the legislative body.

Ms. Monahan asked how many other liaison reports were expected. Mr. Pietal mentioned that School Committee, Planning Board, Board of Health, and Council on Aging remain. He further mentioned that a member has resigned. Maureen was to provide a report on the thoughts of the Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Pietal volunteered to meet with ZBA.

A discussion on whether to fill the vacant seat will be deliberated at the next meeting.

Draft timeline

Mr. Pietal, Mr. King, and Mr. Keenan met to discuss a timeline for the remainder of the work of the Committee in order to be prepared to provide a report to the Select Board by January 2023. He explained that the Committee will likely near completion of the exploratory phase this spring. Resident input should follow and the committee should begin deliberations sometime this summer. He shared a draft timeline that he prepared and thanked Mr. Keenan for his suggestion to discuss and develop this.

Mr. Wluka thinks it is important to have goals and appreciates having this visual timeline. He asked whether having a survey to distribute at Town Meeting might be possible.

Topics not anticipated

Mr. Pietal has included the Westford survey in the survey folder of the drive. He added letters to MAPC and a reply from Mark Fine to the correspondence folder as well as a letter from Ted Phillips regarding remote meetings. The Sherborn executive summary was added to the research folder. He will move those into the meeting folder.

The committee then scheduled the next meeting for February 9 at 7:30. Future meeting dates will be discussed that evening.

Adjourn

Seeing nothing further to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 8:25 pm.