**SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*August 31, 2022*

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm by Chair Paul Pietal. Mr. Pietal noted that this meeting was not being live-streamed, but would be recorded for later broadcast on SCTV.

**Member attendance**

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

Also present at the meeting was Mark Fine from MAPC.

**Correspondence**

Chairman Pietal referred to one letter from Town Administrator reporting on status of Personnel Boards in some Massachusetts communities; that letter is in the Correspondence Folder in our shared drive.

Mr. Turkington also wrote to say that the GSC is on the Select Board agenda for Sept. 13.

There is a student intern available to us via Fred’s office.

Mr. Pietal also announced that we have space and technology reserved for our second Public Forum on September 19, 2022.

**Updates**

**Additional MAPC Work**

Mark Fine has offered assistance with report writing, support at Open Forum, and any further research questions.

There was extended discussion of the topic of removal/recall from a committee or board. MAPC can provide examples of how other towns provide processes for removal, frequently with specific standards spelled out related to attendance.

**Town-wide Survey Results Update**

Mr. Carver highlighted additional findings from the survey data, related to the ways in which some important survey responses varied across the attendance groups.

After some discussion of the content, the sense of the committee that we should post a set of PowerPoint slides and text document summarizing all the survey results on the Committee website.

**Deliberation on Sub-Committee efforts**

Mr. Pietal proposed that we take up the form of government motion prior to the Consent Agenda, because several items on the consent list refer to modifications of Town Meeting. Members agreed.

1. Proposal on form of government: Moved that the town retain the open town meeting form of government

Discussion: Ms. Arguimbau summarized the research of the Town Meeting subcommittee, as well as the nature of the subcommittee’s debate and vote on the question. She spoke in favor of Open Town meeting, noting the subcommittee’s recommendations to improve the operation of Town Meeting as well as the subcommittee’s 4-1 vote in favor.  
  
Mr. Keenan then spoke in favor of a Town Council form of government. He provided a slide presentation that reviewed the history of town government in Sharon and Massachusetts, with supporting materials from the subcommittee’s interviews and research.   
  
Substantive discussion ensued about the pros and cons of OTM vs. Town Council, with exchange of questions and answers. Issues raised included potential of disenfranchisement, preservation of democratic rights, accountability, concentration of power, and degree of citizen engagement. At a few points, Mr. Fine provided some state-wide context and the experience of other municipalities, as well as clarifications about the Council-Manager form of governance.  
  
The discussion also included an overview modifications of Town Meeting which have potential for increasing citizen engagement. Ms. Arguimbau summarized several of the proposals to better educate voters, make the meeting run more efficiently, and otherwise enhance town meeting.

**MOTION:** Moved that the town retain the open town meeting form of government. We call on the Select Board to work to improve the existing form of our town government by implementing changes/recommendations from the Governance Study Committee to encourage greater participation and provide opportunities for voters to better understand issues prior to any Town Meeting.

(Arguimbau-Geller)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Arguimbau: Aye | Carver: Nay | Geller: Aye | Goodman: Aye |
| Keenan: Nay | King: Aye | Michalek: Aye | Monahan: Aye |
| Pietal: Aye | Rangarajan: Absent | Wluka: Aye |  |

8-2-0 **PASSES**

1. Consent Agenda for Unanimous Votes  
   Ms. Monahan requested clarification of items vi, vii, and viii, and Ms. Arguimbau provided same.   
   1. Proposal to test on-site electronic voting at Town Meeting
   2. Proposal to support efforts enabling remote participation in Town Meeting
   3. Proposal to prioritize town warrant on internet
   4. Proposal on educating voters about Town Meeting warrant
   5. Proposal on illustrations in town warrant
   6. Proposal that the town clerk and Select Board identify an appropriate Annual Town Meeting date
   7. Proposal on multi-day sessions
   8. Proposal on annual schedule
   9. Proposal to minimize scheduling conflicts
   10. Proposal on Town Meeting presentations
   11. Proposal on the order of the Town Meeting
   12. Proposal regarding items removed from consideration at Town Meeting
   13. Proposal to retain several practices
   14. Proposal on vote counting
   15. Proposal on educational videos
   16. Proposal on internships
   17. Proposal to limit simultaneous service on boards and committees
   18. he Select Board should consider using a Human Resources employee or outside contractor to do the Personnel Board functions
   19. Recommendation to Select Board that they should not change the specific duties, fiscal oversight responsibilities, or the name of the Finance Committee
   20. Recommend the Select Board consult with a board or committee experiencing a vacancy for input regarding preferred qualifications prior to filling said vacancy
   21. Recommend that the Library Board of Trustees remain an elected Board
   22. Recommend that the Planning Board remain an elected Board
   23. Recommend the Town Administrator and staff ensure that all Board and Committee webpages on the Town website reflect or contain a description of duties, list of members, meeting minutes and agendas

Committee discussed the three items noted. As the hour was late, we decided to continue discussion of the remaining items until our next meeting.

**Planning for meeting on September 7, 2022**

Continue discussion of “Consent Agenda” items, and other governance motions initially listed in the agenda. Recognized the likelihood of another meeting, probably on September 14, 2022.

**Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the August 17, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections.

(Arguimbau – Goodman)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Arguimbau: Aye | Carver: Aye | Geller: Aye | Goodman: Aye |
| Keenan: Aye | King: Aye | Michalek: Aye | Monahan: Aye |
| Pietal: Aye | Rangarajan: Absent | Wluka: Aye |  |

10-0-0 **PASSES**

**Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting**

None

**Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:48 pm.