**SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*September 7, 2022*

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

**Member attendance**

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

Also present at the meeting were Mark Fine from MAPC, Sam Liao, Kathleen Kelly, Lajos Kamocsay, and Angel Cosme.

Mr. Pietal reminded the committee that we are on the Select Board agenda next Tuesday. He plans to share survey results with the Board and report on progress to date.

**Correspondence**

Mr. Pietal notified Mr. Turkington that we had posted our survey results on our website, and they discussed posting the results on the main town web page. Committee members concurred that it should be on the main page.

**Deliberation on Sub-Committee efforts**

1. Recommend based on information that we have that the town transition to five (5) person Select Board

Members of the subcommittee discussed the thinking behind their votes on this topic, and there was a wide-ranging discussion of the merits and risks of each option.

**Motion** – Recommend based on information we have that the town transition to five (5) person Select Board. (King - Wluka)

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

(7-3-0)

Before moving on, there was a short discussion about how these votes should be reported in our document to the Select Board. It was agreed that all votes should be accompanied by rationales and background information, and that non-unanimous votes should include majority and minority opinions.

1. Consent Agenda for Unanimous Votes of subcommittees

Given the presence of other Personnel Board members in the meeting, Mr. Pietal requested that we discuss item xviii prior to the other items. Mr. Pietal and Ms. Kelley (Planning Board Chair) have a planned meeting with an attorney on this issue.

Ms. Kelley has asked if we could delay consideration and vote on this item until the meeting with the attorney takes place and the Personnel Board can render an opinon. Mr. King suggested that we vote provisionally now, so that we can present current status at the Sept. 19 Open Forum.

MOTION: Table this item until we hear back from the Personnel Board, but share current status at the Public Forum. (King – Goodman)

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

(10-0-0)

We then read through the list of remaining items, with Sub-Committee chairs summarizing the substance of each.

* 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 [Hold for later consideration]
	18. he Select Board should consider using a Human Resources employee or outside contractor to do the Personnel Board functions [Hold for later consideration]
	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 [Tabled]
	22. Recommend that the Planning Board remain an elected Board [Hold for later consideration]
	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

MOTION: To accept all items on the Consent Agenda except xvii, xviii, xxi, and xxii. (King – Goodman)

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

(10-0-0)

1. Proposal to allow noncitizen participation in government

This proposal would seek approval from the Commonwealth to permit legal residents of Sharon who are not US citizens to serve on town boards, vote in municipal elections, and attend and vote at Town Meeting.

MOTION: Current law requires that a person be a U.S. citizen in order to be eligible to vote in federal,

state and local elections. Recently, several communities in Massachusetts have petitioned the

state legislature to allow legal residents who are not U.S. citizens, such as green card holders,

to vote in local elections. Many of these residents have lived in their communities for decades but have not been able to become citizens because of the length of time required by federal law to become a citizen.

We recommend that the Select Board seek home rule legislation that permits noncitizen legal residents of Sharon to participate more fully in community life by being permitted to register to vote in Sharon town elections and therefore to also participate at Town Meeting and serve on local boards and committees.

This recommendation applies only to:

Participation in local elections and Town Meetings. It does not apply to state and federal elections.

Sharon residents with a legal immigration status other than citizen. It does not apply to undocumented immigrants. (Keenan – Goodman)

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

(10-0-0)

1. Proposal on Open Warrant meeting.

This item recommends holding an Open Warrant meeting, separate from the Town Meeting Pre-meeting, during which the sponsor of each article be present to explain and field questions. The intention is to improve citizen understanding of the items on the Warrant. The concern was raised that attendance would likely be low, and that this might not be an effective improvement to Town Meeting.

The consensus of the group is to hold this item until the next meeting.

**Planning for meeting on September 14, 2022**

Decision is to hold a subcommittee session from 7:30 to 8:30, and then convene the full committee.

Mr. Rangarajan volunteered to draft an announcement that the Survey reports are now posted, as well as announcing the Public Forum on September 19 at the Community Center starting at 7:00 pm. He will share the draft with Melissa to publicize through the town email lists and social media.

**Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the August 31, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections.

(Wluka – Keenan)

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

8-0-2 **PASSES**

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

**Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 10:06 pm.