

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 24, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Select Board Chair William A. Heitin remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Hanna R. Switekowski and Emily Smith-Lee were in attendance as was Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. and Assistant to the Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:00 pm by temporary Chair Paul Pietal. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Joint meeting with Governance Study Committee

Mr. Heitin thanked the members for joining the meeting tonight. He explained that the Select Board would appoint a chair this evening and then discuss the logistics for the committee to begin the work they've been charged with undertaking. He would like to nominate Mr. Pietal to the position of Chair of the committee due to his experience leading other committees. Ms. Switekowski asked if any other members were interested. There being no indication of interest by other members, Mr. Pietal stated he was happy to accept.

**MOTION:** To appoint Paul Pietal as Chair of the Governance Study Committee.  
(Heitin - Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Heitin: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

The Board went on to discuss the following logistics in getting the Governance Study Committee started. Mr. Heitin stated that Melissa will serve as administrative assistant to the committee and will be responsible for posting agendas, drafting minutes, and posting material to committee web page. The Committee will be obligated to hold at least one public hearing on topics citizens wish the committee to study. Timing should be after a few committee meetings where they organize the prioritized list of topics, approach to items of study, etc.

The Board stressed availability of staff to coordinate and assist with research questions for comparable towns experience and insisted on any requests for Town Counsel support go through Town Administrator. The committee should review potential meeting dates through October 31 to assure full participation of 11 members to the extent possible and they should discuss whether to use sub-committees for information gathering and to try to have full participation in discussion and votes on recommendations as frequent meetings of the 11 members will be difficult if full attendance is important.

#### Committee approach

Overall importance of comprehensive review to assure no unintended consequences of any proposed changes. Can't be piecemeal approach. Realize the committee will recommend language for bylaw changes to Select Board that it will consider and determine whether to forward to Town Meeting for consideration

Bylaws were codified and organized in 2017. Zoning regulations to be updated within next 8 months. Personnel bylaw was never updated since original in mid-80's. Approach to be bylaw proposal to fix issues or offer new processes/procedures. If charter should be pursued, it should be based on updated work of this committee as approved by Select Board and Town Meeting.

The following seven specific topics were prioritized:

1. Consider whether the Town should change the form of legislative body from open town meeting to representative town meeting or some other form.
  - Direct vs. representative democracy
  - Size of town/number of voters/modern realities impact on utility/equity of open town meeting

2. Consider and recommend whether Section 494 of the Town By-Laws, which sets the dates of the Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election, should be changed.
  - Set date (as in first Monday of May) in bylaw or allow Select Board to set date every January when Warrant is opened (to better address logistical issues below)
  - Childcare
  - Elderly/disabled voter participation limited depending on afternoon vs evening or weekend vs weekday meeting date (driving at night, etc.)
  - Secular and religious holidays
  - Fiscal year realities impacting ability to schedule in narrow March 15 and June 15 window
  - Adequacy of indoor space to hold open town meeting given emerging new normal post-COVID-19
  - Educating voters in order to have meaningful participation
  - Limitations in state law to allow remote participation in open town meeting
3. Consider whether to increase the number of members of the Select Board and recommend a process for evaluating, debating, and deciding the issue.
  - Impact on leadership role among members, participation opportunities on priorities and capital outlay committees
  - Timing of implementation as to staggering of terms if adopted
  - Impact of numbers changing ratios when filling vacancies on elected boards
  - Other unintended consequences/companion bylaw changes on areas impacted by number of members
4. Consider whether to appoint rather than elect the Library Trustees or Planning Board, Other Boards and Committees and consider the length of term
  - Accountability of elected vs appointed officials serving on volunteer boards
  - Recruitment of candidate's vs applicants
  - The ability to attract qualified candidates
5. Evaluate the specific duties of the Finance Committee in relation to warrant articles and fiscal oversight and make recommendations as to the adequacy and appropriateness of current practice.
  - Should Fin Com continue to make recommendations on all articles or merely financial ones (Select Board and Planning Board to comment on articles in area of cognizance)?
  - Should fiscal oversight responsibilities of Fin Com be more clearly specified?
6. Review and consider recommendations to update the personnel by-law to reflect Federal and state legislative changes and court decisions, reflect best practices, and role, if any, of personnel board as it relates to school department employees.
  - Do we need personnel board to approve and rate job descriptions?
  - What is the relationship between personnel bylaw rating process and collective bargaining laws?
  - Should anyone other than the School Committee approve and rate job descriptions for school department employees? Can another body perform this function, even in an advisory role, under state law setting independence of school committees? Are there similar conflicts with library personnel?
7. Consider whether to recommend a process for evaluating and consolidating town by-laws into a charter document.

Ms. Switekowski commented that a level of decorum should be maintained as appointed officials, particularly on social media.

Ms. Smith-Lee remarked and the Board stressed that the work of this committee is very important.

**MOTION:** To adjourn the Governance Study Committee meeting at 7:27 pm.  
(Carver - Arguimbau)

Carver: AYE	Arguimbau: AYE	Monahan: AYE	Silverleib: AYE
Rangarajan: AYE	King: AYE	Geller: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Goodman: AYE			
9-0	<b>PASSES</b>		

## 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

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.

a. 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)

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**

a. Consent Agenda for Unanimous Votes

Ms. Monahan requested clarification of items vi, vii, and viii, and Ms. Arguimbau provided same.

- .Proposal to test on-site electronic voting at Town Meeting
- i.Proposal to support efforts enabling remote participation in Town Meeting
- ii.Proposal to prioritize town warrant on internet
- iii.Proposal on educating voters about Town Meeting warrant
- iv.Proposal on illustrations in town warrant
- v.Proposal that the town clerk and Select Board identify an appropriate Annual Town Meeting date
- vi.Proposal on multi-day sessions
- vii.Proposal on annual schedule
- viii.Proposal to minimize scheduling conflicts
- ix.Proposal on Town Meeting presentations
- x.Proposal on the order of the Town Meeting
- xi.Proposal regarding items removed from consideration at Town Meeting
- xii.Proposal to retain several practices
- xiii.Proposal on vote counting
- xiv.Proposal on educational videos
- xv.Proposal on internships
- xvi.Proposal to limit simultaneous service on boards and committees
- xvii.he Select Board should consider using a Human Resources employee or outside contractor to do the Personnel Board functions
- xviii.Recommendation to Select Board that they should not change the specific duties, fiscal oversight responsibilities, or the name of the Finance Committee
- xix.Recommend the Select Board consult with a board or committee experiencing a vacancy for input regarding preferred qualifications prior to filling said vacancy
- xx.Recommend that the Library Board of Trustees remain an elected Board
- xxi.Recommend that the Planning Board remain an elected Board
- xxii.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)

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.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 22, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:05 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present at 7:45	Carver: Present	Geller: Present	Goodman: Absent
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Present
Rangarajan: Present	Silverleib: Present	Wluka: Absent	

### Open Meeting Law/Public Records Law - Mark Hogan, Town Clerk

Town Clerk Mark Hogan attended the meeting to provide information on and answer the Committee's questions relative to open meeting and public records laws. Mr. Hogan explained about posting meeting agendas and spend a good deal of time on how subcommittees work. Subcommittees need to post their own agendas and take minutes. He went on to explain that email and electronic correspondence is the most common area for inadvertent open meeting law violations to occur and how to avoid that happening. He suggested avoiding commenting on social media as a member of the committee as well as "reply all" or corresponding with the entire committee by email or limiting the content of emails to relay only data so that inadvertent deliberations don't happen. Mr. Hogan also explained about public records law and that correspondence pertaining to the business of the Governance Study Committee is subject to public records law, even if it has originated from personal email. The committee has an email address, [governancestudycommittee@townofsharon.org](mailto:governancestudycommittee@townofsharon.org), which committee members should copy so that correspondence is captured by the Town's email servers for responses to public records requests.

### Data gathering and analysis

Mr. Carver shared a presentation based on survey results provided by the Select Board office. The survey compares data with cities or towns that either border Sharon or that the Finance Committee has determined are "peer" towns based on population and other factors. Finance Committee uses peer towns for salary comparison. Mr. Carver's research found that these parameters may not necessarily be the best basis for comparison for the work of the committee. He showed examples of which communities become nearer to Sharon when the basis for comparison changes. If the Committee can determine which parameters are important for comparison with respect to governance, communities to research can be identified. Mr. Pietal expressed his gratitude to Mr. Carver on behalf of the Committee and is anxious to see where this research leads.

Mr. Keenan shared the results of his data gathering in partnership with Town Clerk Mark Hogan on participation and voter turnout at Town Meetings and Town Elections. He explained that there was information provided in the drive relative to other communities so he thought it may be worthwhile to investigate what was happening in Sharon. Mr. Hogan provided him with 25 years of records on voter participation.

The data illustrates the average attendance at 80 town meeting sessions was 3.6% of registered voters, while median attendance was 2.1%. For 31 town elections in the same quarter-century, the average turnout was 21%. The median turnout was 19%.

Mr. Pietal asked whether the Committee have given any thought to whether they felt the Town was well run. Mr. King remarked that there was room for improvement. Mr. Pietal's point is that if the overall consensus is the Town is well run, there may not be much interest in attending Town Meetings or Elections. Will participation make the Town run better? Ms. Silverleib stated that Sharon could be considered a commuter community also due to a large portion of the population that commutes into Boston making attendance difficult.

## Subcommittees

Mr. Pietal asked the Committee for their thoughts on how to go about creating subcommittees. It was suggested that the bulk of the work of the committee centers around direct/indirect governance and the makeup of some Boards and Committees, perhaps two subcommittees should be formed around that work. It was agreed that this was a great way to start.

Mr. Geller, Ms. Silverleib, Ms. Arguimbau, Mr. Keenan, Mr. Carver, and Mr. Rangarajan volunteered for the Town Meeting subcommittee, and Ms. Monahan, Mr. King, and Mr. Pietal agreed to work on the Board and Committee subcommittee.

## Liaisons to Boards, Committees, and Commissions

Mr. Pietal requested that committee members review the Boards and Committees on the town's website and perhaps think of which they may want to liaise with.

## Vice-Chair and/or Clerk

Mr. Pietal explained that although he plans to be at all meetings, it is a good idea to have a Vice-Chair who can manage meetings in cases of illness or other unexpected absences.

**MOTION:** To nominate Ganesh Rangarajan for the position of Vice-Chair.  
(Monahan-Silverleib)

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

9-0-0 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To nominate Robert Carver for the position of Clerk.  
(Arguimbau-Silverleib)

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

9-0-0 **PASSES**

## Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of August 24, 2021, as amended to correct minor typographical errors.  
(Silverleib-King)

Arguimbau: AYE	Carver: AYE	Geller: AYE	Silverleib: AYE
Keenan: Abstained	King: Abstained	Monahan: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Rangarajan: AYE			

7-0-2 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of August 30, 2021.  
(Geller-Rangarajan)

Arguimbau: AYE	Carver: AYE	Geller: AYE	Silverleib: AYE
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Keenan: AYE  
Rangarajan: AYE

King: AYE

Monahan: AYE

Pietal: AYE

9-0-0 **PASSES**

<b>Adjourn</b>
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**MOTION:** To adjourn at 9:10 pm.  
(Silverleib - Arguimbau)

Arguimbau: AYE  
Keenan: AYE  
Rangarajan: AYE

Carver: AYE  
King: AYE

Geller: AYE  
Monahan: AYE

Silverleib: AYE  
Pietal: AYE

9-0-0 **PASSES**

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

November 10, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: at 8:07	Carver: Present	Geller: Present	Goodman: at 7:22
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Present
Rangarajan: Absent	Silverleib: Absent	Wluka: Absent	

### Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting.  
(Geller - Carver)

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

5-0-1 **PASSES**

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the Town Meeting subcommittee's activities. At their first working meeting, guest Town Clerk Mark Hogan answered questions about his role in the management of Town Meetings and questions from the subcommittee members. Mr. Hogan explained that several town officials have a responsibility for organizing different parts of the meeting, particularly the Moderator who controls most of the meeting. After the meeting, the Clerk's office is responsible for reporting the results to the Attorney General's office and other Departments. Before the meeting, the Clerk's office helps to prepare and send the warrant, organizes the audio/visual components, checks in voters, and conducts hand counts. They also discussed the costs of Town Meeting which have changed from typical years because of COVID. Combined with the fact that the High School is under construction and not able to be used, the past couple of years look different from a cost perspective. The 2021 overall cost was \$18,676 which included staff overtime wages. There was also a discussion about capacity. There are typically 330 parking spots at the high school and across the street at the Ames Street playground. The high school auditorium, cafetorium, and gymnasium can accommodate anywhere from 2900 to 3100 and there are generally a handful of officials who sit on the stage. They discussed that hand counts take an average of 7 minutes to conduct, a frequent criticism of Town Meeting. They also discussed what improvements could be made. Mr. Hogan is investigating the possibility of electronic voting systems but COVID has delayed being able to see them used live at meetings in other communities that use them. At one of their upcoming meetings, the Town Meeting subcommittee expects to have MA Municipal Association in to discuss forms of government.

Mr. King provided an update on the Board and Committee subcommittee's activities. Their discussions centered around a survey, how to collect data from residents, how to develop the content of a survey, and what questions to ask. Social media doesn't capture the entirety of the population. They discussed anonymity and public records and the potential of having a third party conduct a survey. They discussed possible resources and how to conduct a survey without a budget.

The IT Department provided information on how many email addresses are on file between those who have signed up for notification of updates on the webpage and those on file with DPW, a total of about 2600. It is not clear whether they are all active email addresses.

Mr. King advised that the next subcommittee meeting is next week.

### **Citizen outreach**

This topic was put on the agenda to develop questions and determine survey methods but this was just discussed as part of the subcommittee updates. Mr. Pietal suggested it would be a good idea to start thinking about questions.

It was mentioned that perhaps the annual census that goes out in January could include a survey. It was mentioned that there may be more than one registered voter per household.

### **Liaison reports**

Mr. Carver had a productive meeting with the Finance Committee on Monday evening. He advised that they covered a long list of topics. He stated he would not give a lengthy summary unless there were questions. They stated that their role is essentially to comment on the warrant, make financial estimates of articles, and so on on the part of the public. Their responsibilities have grown over the years. They keep an eye on getting our bond ratings up. They mentioned that Town Hall staff produces high-quality reports which makes their work much easier. They feel that they are a committee that works well together. They discussed open town meetings versus representative town meetings and the majority favored open town meetings. They were unanimously in favor of expanding the Select Board membership. They feel that the moderator appointed nominating committee works well.

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

None

### **Adjourn**

Mr. Pietal adjourned at 8:00 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

December 15, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present	Carver: <i>Absent</i>	Geller: Present	Goodman: Present
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Present
Rangarajan: Present	Silverleib: <i>Absent</i>	Wluka: Present	

Town Administrator Fred Turkington and Town Clerk Mark Hogan were also in attendance.

### Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the November 10, 2021 meeting as corrected.  
(King - Keenan)

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

7-0-2 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the December 1, 2021 meeting with suggested correction.  
(Goodman- Rangarajan)

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

8-0-1 **PASSES**

### MAPC - Mark Fine and Brian Luther

Mark Fine and Brian Luther of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council attended to discuss. Mark and Brian work on municipal services projects. MAPC is a regional planning agency for 101 communities in Massachusetts. They provide technical assistance to eight subregions for smart growth and regional collaboration. MAPC provides collective purchasing, community engagement and data services for the communities they serve.

Mark and Brian provided examples of recent projects for the community of Dedham and the Metro West subregion which are similar to the work of this committee and answered the committee's questions. They discussed the nature of the data collected and how they may help Sharon's Governance Study Committee complete the work outlined in their mission or simply to help collect data. It's up to the committee if and how they would like to engage with MAPC.

### Subcommittee updates

The TM subcommittee has not had a meeting since their last update. They will meet again on December 22.

The Board and Committee subcommittee met on December 13 and had a guest speaker, Michelle Shain, who spoke about surveys. It was suggested that the questions should be broad. It was also suggested that paying a third party to collect and analyze data would be best.

### **Public hearing**

This item came up as part of the update Mr. Pietal provided to the Select Board. After a brief discussion, the committee's consensus was that it is too early to plan for a public hearing. This will be discussed again at a future meeting.

### **Other business**

There was a discussion involving posting notices under open meeting law. Ms. Monahan explained that the default in Sharon is a physical posting location. Towns do have the option to have the website as their default posting location and inquired about recommending this to the Select Board.

Mr. Hogan explained his feeling that it may not be a good idea to make the website primary in the event that the website goes down, power goes out or there is an internet outage in the area. He suggested that perhaps the Select Board could make it a policy to post online as well but does not recommend online serving as the primary location. Ms. Monahan understood and also commented that indeed, outages of any kind with a duration exceeding 6 hours would result in an improper posting.

The committee also discussed the possibility of proposing that all Boards and Committees make their meeting materials available as well similar to ZBA or Planning Board.

There was a brief discussion about the date and time of the next full committee meeting. It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on January 12 at 7:30 pm.

### **Adjourn**

At 9:13 pm, seeing no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting.

## 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

8-0-0 **PASSES**



## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

January 12, 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
Rangarajan: Absent	Silverleib: Absent	Wluka: Present at 7:45	

### Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the December 15, 2021 meeting.  
(Goodman - Geller )

Arguimbau: Aye	Carver: <i>Abstain</i>	Geller: Aye	Goodman: Aye
Keenan: Aye	King: Aye	Monahan: Aye	Pietal: Aye

7-0-1 **PASSES**

### MAPC Presentation and next steps

Mr. Pietal stated that he felt that many towns seem to be similar and the numbers appear to be consistent. Ms. Monahan felt that MAPC could help with surveys and getting feedback. The next step would be to have either the Town Administrator or the Select Board execute the draft letter requesting consideration in the next funding round in February.

Mr. King inquired whether these services would have to be put out to be in a competitive market. The group had no definitive answer but the Town Administrator would know. Mr. Keenan has not yet reached back out to the Collins Center to discuss their next steps but is happy to do so.

The draft letter was reviewed via screen share and the consensus was to proceed with the execution.

**MOTION:** To approve the draft letter to MAPC and request the Select Board authorize its release.  
(Wluka - King)

Arguimbau: Aye	Carver: Aye	Geller: Aye	Goodman: Aye
Keenan: Aye	King: Aye	Monahan: Aye	Pietal: Aye

Wluka: Aye  
9-0-0 **PASSES**

### Subcommittee updates

The Town meeting subcommittee has met twice since the last GSC meeting. Mr. Keenan reports that Michael Dutton, Bridgewater Town Manager, chair of the Form of Governance committee for MA Municipal Management Association, and Town Moderator Andy Nebenzahl attended as guests. Each spoke about their areas of expertise and preferences.

Mr. Dutton explained that local governments are trying to better manage risk and granting more power to Town Administrators and Town Managers. He explained that an open Town Meeting is a Massachusetts tradition. Some communities sometimes have trouble meeting quorum, some have issues with a learning curve for those attending Town Meeting, consistency in decision making. Mr. Dutton has had no experience with representative Town Meeting, but rather with the council/manager form of government. He felt that the perceived strengths of the council/manager form of government would be clarity and efficiency. Town Council tends to have more expertise which has benefits for long-term strategies. He felt the downside to changing from open Town Meeting is that some people miss it.

It was also discussed how members of various boards are placed and the size of a typical council. When asked about how to increase attendance at Town Meeting, Mr. Dutton feels that after the pandemic lifts, attendance may increase due to citizen involvement virtually. He did give a bit of advice which was, as this committee makes recommendations that it do so with a forward-looking focus.

Mr. Keenan explained that he has been doing some local research which revealed that this committee is the sixth group to study governance since 1962. It was interesting to go back and look at news clips from *The Sharon Advocate*. Much of the same work was undertaken in the same way and asked the same questions of the same people. It was striking how often this has come up. He is preparing a presentation that he will share with the committee at a future meeting.

The subcommittee met most recently with Andy Nebenzahl. Mr. Nebenzahl spoke about the charter review commission. He also gave advice on not trying to do too much. While things need attention, don't try to paint with too broad a brush. He mentioned that the addition of the consent agenda has cut a considerable amount of time from the Town Meeting process. With respect to the charter proposal, he stated he might not vote the same way this time around. He feels committed to open Town Meeting. He wonders if the charter failed because it was too complex. He talked about the need for improved communication or more education, although it may be somewhat difficult to do that. Electronic voting may be a good tool but expensive. Wayland has used electronic voting effectively. With regard to a manageable crowd, he felt that it was a non-issue. Mr. Nebenzahl also opined that the Town can do more to overcome childcare issues.

The Boards and Committees subcommittee met last Wednesday. The focus of the meeting was whether to proceed with surveys, or whether perhaps a listening session better way to engage residents. Mr. Pietal stated that at some point, the committee must have people come speak and offer their thoughts. It was asked whether this was what MAPC could do for the committee.

Mr. Pietal asked whether the group has talked about their opinions on a 3 or 5 member Select Board. Mr. King said they had informally, but wish to engage more with residents before attempting a deeper discussion.

### **Liaison reports**

Ms. Arguimbau explained that the Planning board is drafting a response to the questions asked. Mr. Pietal stated that the Personnel Board also spoke briefly about their responses as well.

### **Remote meeting legislation**

Ms. Monahan had asked to include this topic for the Committee to consider. There is a sunset provision in the existing legislation for virtual meetings and if not extended or altered to allow hybrid possibilities, meetings will return to in-person in April. She wished the Committee to consider perhaps bringing in the Town's legislative delegation to discuss the possible future direction, perhaps beginning with Mr. Phillips as he is a Sharon resident. The Committee agreed that Mr. Pietal should extend an invitation to Mr. Phillips.

### **Update on identification of peer communities**

Mr. Carver provided an update on research he has done on how best to compare peer towns for governance evaluation and presented slides with the data. The information was included for the group in their meeting materials as well.

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

At the last meeting, a memo from the Town Clerk about the process of posting was circulated for the committee to review. It was mentioned that the official posting site is the Town Hall vestibule and Mr. Hogan recommended leaving it due to complications with power and internet outages. However, it was discussed that perhaps the Select Board may consider a formal policy that a courtesy copy be posted on the Town's website. The feeling was that this information has already been circulated to Boards/Committees. Before taking action, the Committee would research whether an existing policy is in place.

Mr. Pietal advised that the next meeting of the full committee would take place on Wednesday, January 26 at 7:30 pm.

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.

## 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.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

February 9, 2022

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

### Member attendance

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

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the work of the Town Meeting subcommittee. He noted that there were three guests: Marlene Chused, former Town Clerk; Anne Carney, Chair of the previous Governance Study Committee; and Susan Osgood Peck of the 2009 Charter Commission. He provided an overview of their comments.

Mr. King provided an overview of the work of the Boards subcommittee. They spent a lot of time discussing Boards and Committees including the Select Board. He mentioned there are three candidates vying for Select Board at the upcoming election. Mr. King is interested in having the candidates attend a subcommittee meeting to discuss their views on the topics which make up the committee's charge. The subcommittee also discussed the Town's administration.

Mr. Carver had a recent conversation with the Milton Moderator. Milton is a community that recently changed its Select Board from three to five members. Mr. Turkington has agreed to help facilitate conversations with officials from Duxbury and Milton. There was a discussion also about having a conversation with the current members of the Select Board.

### Liaison reports

Mr. Wluka provided an update by email on the status of his meetings with the Board of Health. Mr. Wluka had a discussion with Leandra McLean. She is forwarding material to the members of the Board of Health and Mr. Wluka will attend one of their March meetings.

Mr. Rangarajan provided an update on his meetings with Council on Aging. He reports that they feel well supported. A comment was made about the loss of the Sharon Advocate. In addition, they liked the idea of perhaps a Select Board representative from each precinct.

Mr. Goodman advised that he has met with three members of the School Committee and has a meeting on Friday with another member. The impressions of those members were that the new members of the School Committee have come along well. There was concern about the learning curve of new Board or Committee members. Apathy was also a major topic of discussion. It is felt that many people prefer to do other things with their time than become involved either at Town Meeting or as part of a Board or Committee.

### Committee vacancy

As mentioned at the last meeting, Maureen Silverleib has resigned. Mr. Pietal asked for opinions on whether to fill the vacancy. Ms. Monhan mentioned that she feels having an odd number is prudent for breaking possible tie votes. She further mentioned that there are only two women on the committee and the work of the committee may benefit from the opinions of parents of school-aged children. Mr. Geller mentioned that the appointment should be based on merit.

**MOTION:** To recommend to the Select Board that the departed member of the Governance Study Committee be replaced.

(Geller - Keenan)

There was no vote taken.

After a brief discussion, there was an amendment made to the motion.

**AMENDMENT:** with a focus on ensuring that the committee has a broad representation of the population of the town.

Goodman: AYE

Monahan: AYE

King: AYE

Pietal: AYE

Keenan: AYE

Carver: AYE

Geller: AYE

Rangarajan: AYE

(King - Keenan)

8-0-0 **PASSES**

### **Courtesy copies of agendas posted to website**

Ms. Monahan inquired with Mark Hogan at a previous meeting about the default posting location for meeting notices. Mr. Hogan expressed his desire for the default location to remain as-is due to concerns about power, internet, and website outages. Ms. Monahan expressed that since meetings are happening remotely, people are likely expecting meeting notices to be posted electronically as well and it might be worthy to ask the Select Board to institute a policy whereby all Boards, Committees, and Commissions post a courtesy copy of their meeting notices on the webpage. If so, it may also be worth including subcommittees as well.

**MOTION:** To recommend to the Select Board that the Select Board adopt a policy that requires all Sharon public bodies, including subcommittees, to post courtesy copies of all meeting notices to the Sharon town website in a manner prescribed by the Select Board.

(Monahan - Carver)

Carver: AYE

Monahan: AYE

King: AYE

Pietal: AYE

Keenan: AYE

Goodman: AYE

Geller: AYE

Rangarajan: AYE

8-0-0 **PASSES**

### **Further outreach**

The committee had a discussion regarding social media and the Sharon-specific Facebook pages as viable sources of information or communication.

Mr. Hogan has sent an invitation on behalf of the Committee to the three candidates for Select Board to discuss their views at either a subcommittee meeting or a meeting of the full committee if the committee agrees they would like to do so.

Mr. Turkington is available to speak with the Committee at the next meeting and he will provide some contacts for Milton and Duxbury. The committee shared their thoughts on who else should be contacted to round out their research. Mr. Rangarajan asked what other groups, clubs, or collectives there may be to speak with such as Rotary Club or Lions Club. He's interested in reaching those who haven't yet been contacted. Mr. Goodman mentioned that during his conversations with a member of the school committee, it was brought up that some of the families moving into Town are new to this country and don't know what organizations like the PTO are, or what they do. The same may be said as they are likely not familiar with or trustful of local government. Mr. Carver explained that the Town of Winchester has produced a video that explains that very thing. They have Representative Town Meeting form of government but it may be worthwhile to have the committee review it. He also mentioned speaking with the Town Clerks, Town Moderators, and the Legislative Delegation.

Mr. Rangarajan mentioned that there is an Indian Association of Sharon, a Chinese Association of Sharon, an Islamic Society, as well as faith based groups. If anyone has any connections to these groups, they should reach out. Mr. Keenan mentioned that a contact of his from North Attleboro sent some 200 odd letters to maybe

town officials, but reaching out directly by mail to invite groups to a forum may be an effective way to reach people as well.

### **Topics not anticipated with 48 hours of posting**

The next meeting will be held on March 2 due to school vacation. Mr. Turkington will attend as a guest and an invitation will be extended to the candidates for Select Board.

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no further business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.



**SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*March 2, 2022*

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

**Member attendance**

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

**Discussion with Town Administrator, Frederic Turkington, Jr.**

The committee discussed and agreed at a previous meeting that it would help to hear from Town Administrator, Fred Turkington, about his experiences in municipal government. Mr. Turkington thanked the committee for inviting him and spoke about his background. He explained that he began his career in Norwalk, CT as an intern while in grad school. He accepted a position as an Assistant Town Administrator in the much smaller community of Vernon, CT, a community of 30,000 with a demographic similar to Natick. He served as Chief Administrative Officer in Canton, CT until 2005 when he transitioned to employment in Wayland, MA. He has worked in environments with both three and five-member Select Boards as well as a city council of twelve.

Mr. Turkington commented that Sharon is the first community where he has worked where there has been a three-member Select Board. He stated he is not sure there is a right or wrong answer with respect to size as his experience has been that the five-member board and 12 member city council worked effectively in their respective communities. His concern with the citizen's petition presented before the last annual Town Meeting was that there would be unintended consequences that should have been vetted and thought through. Additionally, the move from a three to five-member board also presents a math problem in that the State requires shorter staggered terms for newly elected members which would be 1-1-1 over three years or 2-2-1 over three years. If that move were to have happened as a result of Town Meeting for example, with Mr. Heitin retiring and three contested Select Board seats, the two incumbents would have a combined experience of fewer than five years. He understands there is no way around this if the community elects to increase the size of the Board but in the initial transition year, it would be helpful that two long-standing incumbents remain on the board so as to retain institutional knowledge.

He provided an overview answered the committee's questions about the benefits and challenges of both open and representative town meetings. He answered the committee's questions about the benefits of a charter and how a charter differs from bylaws and whether the home rule petition would remain if the Town adopted a charter.

The committee thanked Mr. Turkington for taking the time to meet with them.

**Discussion with Select Board candidates**

The three candidates for Select Board were also invited to speak with the committee this evening about their opinions on a three versus a five-member Select Board. Mr. Xander Shapiro, Mr. Dan Lewenberg, and Ms. Kiana Pierre-Louis explained their thoughts on the subject. All support a change to a five-member board. Mr. Shapiro mentioned that based on the discussion with Mr. Turkington, he expects to give the matter more thought. Mr. Lewenberg stated that the Finance Committee unanimously supported the citizen's petition and he stands with that position. Ms. Pierre-Louis mentioned that there may be an increase in accessibility with a five-member board in addition to there being a diversity of views.

The committee thanked the candidates for running, and for sharing their time to discuss this matter.

## **Winchester RTM video**

Mr. Carver found, during his research, a video prepared by the Town of Winchester explaining how their representative town meetings function. The link was shared with the committee. Those who have viewed it found that it was very well done and might be a useful tool for Sharon. Sharon TV was consulted about taking on a project similar to the Winchester RTM video. They are happy to do anything that will help with outreach.

The committee agreed that this is a worthwhile project and that the next step may be to create a framework for a similar project in Sharon. There was a brief discussion about setting this item aside while the committee engages in other tasks.

## **Adjourn**

Due to the time, Mr. Pietal tabled the remainder of the evening's business adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 16, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

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

### Prepare Select Board update

The committee is due to give another update to the Select Board. The last update was given in December. If the committee is okay with him doing so, Mr. Pietal will review the minutes and develop a draft for the committee to review for the March 30 meeting.

It was asked where the committee stood with respect to the assistance from MAPC. Although nothing has been received yet by MAPC, they indicated they would get back to the committee in March.

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update for the Town Meeting subcommittee meetings. The subcommittee met last on March 9. Mr. Robert Hiss, Moderator for Milton, was the guest speaker. Milton has had a very large representative Town Meeting for many decades. There are 279 elected voting members from ten precincts in the community plus ten elected or appointed officials who also attend. Mr. Hiss also explained that he is the appointing authority for about ten boards and committees. Their discussion also covered the demographics of Milton, remote meetings, and electronic voting at Town Meeting. Mr. Keenan also mentioned that for the first time, Milton will not be printing the Town Meeting warrant this year. In response to Ms. Monahan's question, it was explained that Milton's Town Meetings typically go three to five evenings during the week. Whether or not weekend dates were an option did not come up. However, it was noted that non-voting residents have the ability to speak at Town Meeting with prior approval of the moderator.

A potential survey was developed based on the survey shared by the community of Westboro which the subcommittee suggested should be distributed at the upcoming Annual Town Meeting to capture the thoughts and demographics of those who attend. The full committee commented on the proposed questions and asked for the rationale behind some of the demographic information being collected. There was a discussion on why only Town Meeting attendees were being surveyed. Ms. Arguimbau explained that a survey for those who do not attend Town Meeting is being discussed and planned for the future as well. There will be a chance for everyone to have input. The Town Meeting subcommittee felt it important to attempt to find out why people go as well as why they don't go to Town Meeting. It was agreed that the Town Meeting subcommittee would finalize a survey based on tonight's comments.

**MOTION:** The Town Meeting subcommittee will finalize a survey for distribution at May ATM  
(Wluka - Geller)

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

8-0-1 **PASSES**

Natick is also forming a Governance Committee, and the committee felt it would be interesting to see their charge. Mr. Portal has also been monitoring the Town Clerk's page for others who may have taken out papers for Select Board. At this time, as Kevin Haskins and Sam Liao have taken papers, it makes sense to invite them

to come to a future meeting of the full committee if there are no objections. Seeing none, Mr. Pietal will reach out to Mr. Hogan to extend the invitation.

### **Liaison updates**

Mr. Goodman is making progress with the School Committee and has recently spoken with another member. Mr. Wluka is expected to talk with the Board of Health at their March 23rd meeting. Ms. Arguimbau is meeting with the Planning Board on March 24 but they have been very busy with the zoning codification project for the upcoming Town Meeting.

### **Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of January 26, 2022.  
(Wluka- Arguimbau)

Arguimbau: Aye	Geller: Aye	Goodman: Abstain	Rangarajan: Aye
Keenan: Aye	King: Aye	Monahan: Aye	Pietal: Aye
Wluka: Abstain			

7-0-2 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the February 9, 2022 meeting.  
(Geller- King)

Arguimbau: Aye	Geller: Aye	Goodman: Aye	Rangarajan: Aye
Keenan: Aye	King: Aye	Monahan: Aye	Pietal: Aye
Wluka: Abstain			

8-0-1 **PASSES**

The committee tabled a vote on the meeting minutes of March 2, 2022 so they could be revised to include more detail about the conversation with the Town Administrator.

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

With regard to the update for the Select Board, the committee had no objections to Mr. Pietal's plan for presentation. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, March 30 at 7:30 pm.

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:10 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 30 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

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

### Select Board candidate - Sam Liao

Mr. Liao introduced himself. Moved to Sharon over 28 years ago and has been very involved since moving to Town. He first became involved with the High School expansion project and served on the School Committee beginning in 1999 for 11 years. He was elected to the Charter Commission. His career took him away for the last twelve years. He is now back and wishes to continue to be involved.

When asked about the topics within the purview of the charge of this committee, Mr. Liao stated that he is neutral and open to hearing what the Governance Study recommends regarding the size of the Select Board. He mentioned that it may be worth hearing more broad discussions and diversity of opinion on topics. He also feels that open Town Meeting is the purest form of democracy and would prefer to preserve that if possible.

After further discussion and addressing the committee's questions, Mr. Pietal thanked Mr. Liao for taking the time to meet with the committee and discuss these issues this evening.

### Summary update to Select Board

Mr. Pietal summarized the available approved meeting minutes and put together a summary which was included in the meeting folder for review.

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan advised that the Town Meeting subcommittee met last on March 23rd. Dan Bruce, Moderator in the Town of Walpole was the guest for that meeting. Mr. Bruce explained that he has served five consecutive one-year terms as Moderator. In his role as Moderator, Mr. Bruce appoints members to the Finance Committee and Capital Budget Committee, similar to other communities. Mr. Keenan mentioned that other communities have done away with their Personnel Boards due to difficulty recruiting members. For example, Duxbury and Halifax have dissolved their boards. Walpole's Representative Town Meeting works well and has 150 voting members serving 8 precincts. Elections have become more competitive due to topics similar to what drives attendance at open Town Meeting. During COVID, Walpole had made changes and held their Town Meeting outdoors on a Saturday. Before the pandemic, Walpole's Town Meeting was generally convened for two or three nights. Most recently, it took four hours to complete Town Meeting business in a single session.

Walpole is undergoing reprecincting now which is fairly routine. Mr. Bruce also spoke about electronic voting which he explained was a very successful, time-saving experience. Walpole also had a very positive experience with color-coded voting cards and will not likely return to electronic voting.

Mr. Keenan sent a version of the revised questionnaire which incorporated changes from the last discussion. This was added to the drive in Word format. The .pdf format is cleaner but the Word document was shared for the committee to review. There was a brief discussion about possible technology options for collecting survey data and possible use of a QR code.

Mr. King mentioned that he will have an update after the Boards subcommittee's meeting next week.

## **Liaison updates**

Ms. Arguimbau mentioned that she has emailed the Planning Board chair and reminded the committee that the Planning and Zoning Boards are involved with a zoning codification bylaw. They were given questions about a month or two ago but it is possible that they may not have time to discuss until after the Town Meeting.

Mr. Wluka advised that he had a very engaging conversation with the Board of Health. He has prepared a report which has been uploaded to the drive for the committee to review.

Water Management Advisory Committee reached out and asked if they would be consulted for their opinions on the topics of the committee's charge. Considering the Town's issues with PFAS, a discussion with WMAC is likely advantageous. Mr. Pietal will reach out to that Committee.

## **Plan for public hearing/public input**

Based on the timeline previously shared with the committee, the exploratory phase should be coming to an end. There was a discussion on how best to engage with residents and collect their input. Mr. Carver mentioned that the committee's existence and mission are probably not widely known at this point and may need a campaign of some kind to get the word out.

There was a discussion about surveys and who should be surveyed and the medium for surveying. Mr. Keenan mentioned that the window for collecting survey data from Town Meeting attendees is closing quickly and preparation should be finalized soon if there is an appetite for doing so. The committee discussed who should be consulted and to what degree students should be engaged and how to reach them.

There was also a discussion on utilizing the resources provided by MAPC. Mr. Pietal explained that a letter was received from Mark Fine confirming their engagement. Mr. Wluka will liaise with Mr. Fine and discuss the possibility of their help with a survey.

## **Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the March 2, 2022 meeting.  
(King - Geller)

Arguimbau: Abstain

Carver: AYE

Geller: Abstain

Goodman: AYE

Keenan: AYE

King : AYE

Monahan: AYE

Pietal: AYE

Rangarajan: AYE

Wluka: Abstain

7-0-3 **PASSES**

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

The next scheduled meeting will be April 13.

## **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 13, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:34 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

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

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update from the Town Meeting Subcommittee, which met on April 6. That meeting featured a guest, Angela Harkness, Westford, town moderator. Westford shares many characteristics with Sharon, including an Open Town Meeting. The annual town meeting is held on a Saturday in June, and normal attendance is about 1-2% of registered voters, and the Westford Select Board created a Town Meeting Access committee to investigate ways to increase attendance. That committee has been divided into three subcommittees, charged with (1) surveying residents about impediments to participation, (2) surveying moderators across the state for their experience with improving engagement, and (3) investigating technologies that might facilitate and increase the efficiency of Town Meetings.

Ms. Harkness' presentation was particularly clear and informative. Approximately 800 voters (5% of the voting population) responded to the first survey, and 46 moderators of other towns (including Sharon) completed the second. The surveys identified action items, which the committee grouped according to goals, then categorized as high, medium, and low priorities. Ms. Harkness indicated that she wants to implement low-cost, high-priority recommendations in time for this year's ATM. She provided us with documents reporting the survey results, and those documents are in our shared folder.

She noted that the committee used multiple communication channels and methods to reach voters, resulting in a good response rate.

One finding that surprised her: many residents report feeling intimidated by town meeting. The Access Committee will work to educate residents about the realities of OTM. The committee is unified in the belief that greater participation leads to greater representation.

In the Moderator survey, one noteworthy finding was that most moderators report that TM attendance does not reflect town demographics.

In response to a subcommittee question about systematic impediments to participation, the main affected groups were parents of young kids, people with work conflicts, and retirees who winter elsewhere.

Ms. Harkness' experience as Moderator and this survey have changed her thinking about citizens who come for a few votes and leave. She now thinks that some participation is preferable to none, and might lead to greater involvement in the future.

Another subcommittee question asked if people stay away because they are satisfied? Ms. Harkness thought that was unlikely; more commonly people indicate a belief that decisions have already been made. Length of meetings was reported as another common deterrent.

Finally, she noted that Westford is investigating electronic voting, which was previously voted down at ATM.

Mr. Keenan concluded by noting that the planned survey to be distributed at Town Meeting is nearly ready for implementation. There is a current copy in the shared drive. He thanked Mr. Rangarajan for his research into vendors and software to facilitate data collection and compilation.

Mr. Geller praised Ms. Harkness' presentation as the best one we have seen. Ms. Arguimbau concurred, noting that we already do some of the recommended items in the Westford report. Mr. Rangarajan also agreed, particularly noting the clarity and quality of their action items.

Mr. Pietal commented on the idea of the phenomenon of voters coming for one issue, agreeing that for some issues that's all that people are willing to do.

Mr. Rangarajan observed that we are seeing a common theme from moderators around the value of saving time when votes must be counted. There is a consistent agreement that electronic voting is a time saver. Mr. Geller concurs that electronic voting is the way to go.

Mr. Keenan reported that the Town Meeting Subcommittee is expecting a presentation from Option Technologies, an electronic voting firm. They have already suggested that we attend ATM in Wayland and/or Weston, where their systems will be used this year.

Mr. Pietal asked how many of our votes go to a hand count and suggested that we inquire of Mr. Hogan or Mr. Nebenzahl. Mr. King recalled Mr. Hogan noting that standing votes are fairly scarce and move quickly with the use of multiple tellers.

Mr. King provided a report from the Board and Committees subcommittee, which met on April 5. He began by noting that they had paused their planning for a broader town-wide survey, and decided to see what is learned from the town meeting survey.

The subcommittee had discussed community engagement with the work and functioning of boards and committees and raised several questions. Should we publish committee mission descriptions for the public—the roles of different committees are probably not well known among residents. Should we standardize the way different committees post and report on the town website.

Mr. Pietal has investigated whether committees know how to update their sites, or do they have to work through the IT department, but has no definitive answer yet.

There was then a discussion of whether the Town Meeting survey should include a QR code that would send Town Meeting attendees to the GSC website. After input from several members, it was decided that Mr. Keenan and Mr. Rangarajan examine the layout of the already crowded survey to see if there's a good place to put a QR code.

Mr. King also reported that the subcommittee has discussed a removal policy for committees, as there is currently no standard process in place. Mr. Pietal added that it would be good to articulate processes.

Ms. Monahan added that the subcommittee discussed updating our own webpage with, for example, bullet points from each meeting like the ones Mr. Pietal assembles for the Select Board.

In reference to the Select Board, Mr. Rangarajan reminded us that there are modest costs involved with photocopies and with the survey software, and noted that we'll need a small amount of funding.

## **Liaison updates**

None.

## **General updates**

**Swampscott Representative Town Meeting.** Mr. Carver reported on his correspondence and a phone interview with Town Moderator Michael McClung, who had been invited to attend a Town Meeting



Subcommittee meeting, but had not signed on. Mr. Carver observed that Swampscott's experience was quite similar to that of other towns we have contacted. They have one of the larger RTM's, with 324 members. They have successfully conducted virtual meetings during COVID, and Mr. McClung spoke of a "mission control team" of 10 people to monitor questions, confirm the identity of members, tally votes, coordinate speakers, and so on. Voting during the meetings has gone smoothly. He stated that "RTM is a two-edged sword: on the one hand, you've got a built-in base of engaged residents; on the other hand, if it's too large a meeting (Swampscott is 3rd largest in Mass at 324), you've simply got another thing to recruit for."

Mr. Carver commented that one feature of RTMs is the provision for non-RTM members to speak on issues, even though they cannot vote. We have previously raised the question of engaging tax-paying residents who are non-citizens, and therefore non-voters. We may want further discussion of how to facilitate participation that is limited to speaking but not voting and educating residents about the option.

### **Governance Study Committee web page**

Mr. Pietal will work with Ms. Imbaro on this.

### **Remaining timeline**

Mr. Pietal referred to the Draft April-July Schedule sent out with the meeting packet. He thanked Mr. Keenan for drafting this schedule and commented that he is hoping to intensify our efforts before summer. He asked for comments, questions, and suggestions for the draft.

Ms. Monahan wonders if a broader survey should precede public hearings.

Mr. Rangarajan asked if this schedule was too ambitious? Should we think about phasing/staging elements of our mission into separate rounds?

Mr. King recommended adding a full committee meeting between the 2 forums, to allow debriefing of the forum process.

Mr. Carver suggested marketing the public hearings and having surveys to follow. Forums might increase awareness and improve survey results.

Mr. Keenan commented that the schedule is aggressive, but we do need to look ahead to our deadlines. We should be writing reports in October, and some of the intervening steps will require time. We have previously discussed consulting assistance from MAPC or Collins Center, which may not be forthcoming. We may likely need to do this on our own.

Ms. Arguimbau noted that surveys can happen while other things are happening. We can be running the survey while meeting for other purposes.

On the subject of open forums, Mr. Geller reflected on the experience of the Conservation Commission, which has had forums that were poorly attended.

Ms. Monahan raised the idea of placing forums further apart on the calendar. The 1<sup>st</sup> could be quite open-ended on general issues of governance, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> focus on the draft recommendations before writing a report. We might ask the public for reactions to our draft recommendations. This idea received considerable support.

Mr. Keenan asked what tasks are most critical for subcommittees to do in the near term.

Mr. Carver asked where we stand with conferring with existing civic groups in town. At an earlier point, the Committee had discussed this approach to seeking input. Mr. Pietal noted that we still need to nail that down.

Mr. Pietal then summarized the action steps:

- Prepare a second broader survey. Mr. Keenan & Mr. Rangarajan expressed willingness to start, with assistance from the contact person that Mr. Goodman brought in previously.
- Reconnect with MAPC re: their availability in early May. This is a task for Mr. Wluka.

After some discussion about the target audience for a second survey, the consensus view was to make the survey available to everyone, with questions about current service on a board.

Ms. Monahan reminded us that the Boards Subcommittee already has the first draft of some survey questions. Next subcommittee meetings should move forward with refining the questions.

Mr. Pietal supports an approach with multiple rounds, noting there are still issues that the committee has not yet discussed, such as a charter for example. The committee felt they should stage and sequence the issues in the coming months.

**Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting with the correction of two typographical errors.

(Arguimbau - King)

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

6-0-2 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the March 30, 2022 meeting.

(King - Geller)

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

8-0-0 **PASSES**

**Updates on Old business**

Status on vacancy: One application has been received

Mr. Pietal meets next week with Select Board and will discuss funding.

Mr. Carver asked where things stand on enlisting student assistance with surveys and other tasks. The committee suggested contacting the School Superintendent and asking Mr. Goodman to inquire of the School Committee.

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

Mr. King raised the topic of resuming in-person meetings which Mr. Geller endorsed. Ms. Arguimbau commented that scheduling time and space could be a challenge.

Mr. Pietal indicated that he was inclined to do so only if we are unanimous, wishing not to force anyone. Ms. Monahan noted that the Open Meeting Law permits the streaming of in-person meeting.

**MOTION:** (Geller-Rangarajan)As soon as possible, the full committee should begin meeting in person.

Arguimbau: AYE* (*conditional on large room)	Carver: AYE	Geller: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Keenan: AYE	King: AYE	Monahan: NAY	Rangarajan: AYE

**7-1-o PASSES**

*Mr. Pietal reiterated his goal of unanimity on this issue and notes the absence of two members. He will explore with Ms. Imbaro.*

The next scheduled meeting will be on April 27.

**Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:15 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

April 27, 2022

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

### Member attendance

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

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the warrant hearing which took place on Monday evening. He then explained that the Town Meeting subcommittee met last week. The surveys for Town Meeting have been printed. Mr. Rangarajan worked with the vendor to fit the document on one piece of paper.

Mr. Pietal advised that the Select Board has authorized funding for printing and copying expenses for the survey. So far, expenditures are just under \$300.

Mr. Keenan concluded by mentioning that a guest speaker will attend an upcoming meeting to discuss electronic voting possibilities.

Mr. King advised that the Boards subcommittee spent a good deal of time at their last meeting discussing the survey. They will meet again on May 16.

### Liaison updates

Mr. Pietal reached out to Mr. Crosby of the Water Management Advisory Committee and will meet him tomorrow at 3 pm to discuss logistics for an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Arguimbau has not yet heard back from Planning Board as they have been busy with the zoning recodification project for Town Meeting. She will continue trying to arrange a meeting with them.

There was a discussion about perhaps meeting with the Finance Committee again as there are new members who may have additional input. Mr. King has reached out to the Natick Select Board as Natick is in the process of forming a Governance Study Committee. They will discuss more next week about what Natick will study.

### Survey discussion

A copy of the survey was shared with the group. Each survey question was discussed and the members commented on the benefit of having the data sought from each question and whether changes should be considered.

It was mentioned that Michelle Shain has experience with surveys. Mr. Goodman offered to connect with her and ask if she may be willing to offer suggestions.

### Public hearing update - schedule

Ms. Monahan and Mr. Keenan discussed coordination of the survey process with themed public hearings. The schedule was shared to illustrate potential changes. It was felt that there was a concentration of activity in June. The updated schedule spaces out the public forums throughout the spring and summer. It also closes the survey in July so the data can be compiled and analyzed.

## MAPC Update

Mr. Wluka has been the liaison with MAPC and was unable to attend the meeting this evening thus a discussion was tabled for a future meeting.

## Website

Mr. Pietal discussed access to the webpage with IT Director, Don Hillegass. The committee has the option to provide important links and disseminate information via the webpage. He explained that the website templates are provided by the vendor, Civic Plus. Mr. Pietal has been provided access and can arrange for another individual to have access if there are any volunteers to manage the webpage. Seeing no interest expressed, Mr. Pietal agreed to take a stab at managing the website. Mr. Hillegass agreed to provide the website traffic at some point.

## Select Board meeting update

Mr. Pietal provided an update to the Select Board earlier this evening. As mentioned earlier, they have agreed to provide funding for printing the survey for Town Meeting. There has also only been one application received so far for the vacancy. The applicant does not fit the demographic the committee had mentioned they prefer to broaden the perspective of the group. The vacancy remains open and posted.

## Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the April 13, 2022 meeting.  
(King- Geller)

Arguimbau: AYE  
Keenan: AYE

Carver: AYE  
King: AYE

Geller: AYE  
Monahan: AYE

Goodman: Abstain  
Pietal: AYE

7-0-1 **PASSES**

## Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

The next meeting will be May 11 at 7:30 pm.

## Adjourn

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:02 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

May 11, 2022

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

### Member attendance

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

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the last meetings of the Town Meeting subcommittee. The subcommittee heard from Mark Fite of Option Technologies, Inc. regarding electronic voting. Mr. Fite provided information about the services provided by OTI and fielded questions about security and cost. Most Towns that avail themselves of the technology rent the equipment as it would take more than four meetings per year to be a cost-effective purchase. In addition to equipment costs, there is a cost for software and on-site assistance.

Mr. Keenan was a guest at the Weston Town Meeting and felt it helpful to see the process firsthand. He will also attend Wayland's Town Meeting. The committee discussed anonymity in electronic voting and felt it would be interesting to see whether that impacts participation.

Mr. Carver presented the data collected from the Town Meeting survey. It was asked whether the Town-wide survey has been uploaded to the drive. Mr. King agreed to find it and share it with Mr. Pietal as he updated it after the last meeting. The discussion concluded with statements surrounding data analysis, interpretation, and utilizing the services of survey professionals. Mr. Rangarajan and Mr. Keenan spoke in defense of the data. Despite the committee not being experts in surveys, co-variant data analysis is taking place. It is understood that the Town Meeting survey data is limited, The larger town-wide survey should be more telling and if professional help can be attained quickly at a low cost, there was support for the committee to pursue those services. It was mentioned that MAPC may be able to help the committee in this area.

### Liaison updates

Mr. Pietal advised he will be meeting with the Water Management Advisory Committee on May 19.

Mr. King mentioned that he had a conversation with the Chair of the Natick Select Board who informed him that Natick is forming a governance study committee, in particular, to gauge interest in the development of a charter. He explained without a charter, it is felt that the community loses development to other communities as they cannot move quickly enough through vetting and permitting processes and a charter would help with that.

### Town meeting debrief

The committee discussed Town Meeting and the data collected from the survey. It was explained that there was a presentation at the start of Town Meeting honoring Bill Heitin's retirement from the Select Board. Mr. King expressed his frustration with the Indigenous People's Day article being abandoned at the last minute. He questioned whether due diligence was neglected to which Mr. Pietal responded. He explained he uncovered a process conflict with the Personnel bylaw shortly before Town Meeting which interfered with the legality of any Town Meeting action.

It was felt that it was a long meeting, particularly the Zoning presentation. The potential for challenges due to concerns surrounding adequate notice with the Zoning article was also discussed.

## Public forum planning

The committee discussed outreach for the public forum. A list of groups in Town was provided for the committee to review ahead of the meeting. If there are any other groups that should be contacted, committee members should add them. A draft of the letter inviting individuals to attend the forum was also provided.

Mr. Keenan mentioned that the public forum and survey were intended to happen simultaneously. Since it appears the survey is not yet ready, should the date of the public forum be adjusted? It was agreed that the proposed date of June 1 for the public forum might be too soon. The Committee discussed moving the date to June 15.

There was a discussion about holding the forum in person. Sharon TV will be consulted about hybrid options for the forum. It was also felt that holding the forum by Zoom rather than in person may increase the potential for participation. The committee also questioned whether capacity on Zoom could be an issue.

## Town website

Mr. Pietal reported that Mr. Rangarajan and Mr. Carver now have access to the GSC landing page on the Sharon website. He asked whether the committee had input or suggestions on updates to content.

## MAPC Update

Mr. Wluka explained that MAPC is putting together a contract package. They have been overloaded with work, thus the delay in engaging with Sharon until now. A more conclusive timeframe is expected after May 17.

Ms. Monahan asked whether MAPC may also be able to help with report writing. Mr. Wluka suggested that if any other questions should be asked of MAPC, please let him know before the 17th so he can bring them up.

## Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the April 27, 2022 meeting.

(Geller - King)

Wluka: Abstain

Carver: AYE

Geller: AYE

Goodman: AYE

Keenan: AYE

King: AYE

Monahan: AYE

Pietal: AYE

Rangarajan: Abstain

7-0-2 **PASSES**

## Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

The next meeting will take place at 7:30 pm on May 25.

Ms. Monahan explained that she received an email about ranked-choice voting by the Chair of the LMSC who asked whether the committee had considered discussing the topic. It was agreed that the subcommittee would discuss it before the report writing stage.

## Adjourn

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:22 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 8, 2022

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:35 pm by Vice-Chair Ganesh Rangarajan.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present	Carver: Present	Geller: Present	Goodman: Absent
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Monahan: Present	Pietal: Absent (arrived near end)
Rangarajan: Present	Wluka: Present		

### Subcommittee updates

Mr. Keenan provided an update on the last meeting of the Town Meeting subcommittee. Mr. Dave Bernstein was their guest. Mr. Bernstein serves as chair of the electronic voting subcommittee in Wayland. Mr. Bernstein advised that electronic voting hasn't affected attendance, but meetings are much quicker. Wayland traditionally has very long meetings. Electronic voting has cut down the time by about three hours, and meetings progress more smoothly.

Mr. King provided an update from the Boards subcommittee. They discussed the survey and reviewed the forum. It was questioned whether the opening of the forum would include framing the discussion at the start.

### General updates

#### *Public forum planning*

Mr. Carver questioned whether there needs to be clarification of terms with respect to governance and setting some ground rules about the subject matter to be discussed.

Mr. Geller mentioned he had received several calls regarding the public forum, one of which was from a woman who was suspicious of what the committee was doing. He explained that the committee is not making a decision, but rather preparing a recommendation to submit to the Select Board.

Mr. King asked whether the forum would be moderated and mentioned there would be a need for someone to manage the chat feature, and Mr. Wluka volunteered. Mr. Pietal was expecting to give an opening statement, then yield to the chairs of the subcommittees.

The committee further discussed who would keep meeting notes, the time limit imposed by the Community Center, and advertising. Mr. King has posted the invitation on Facebook and an email blast has been sent.

#### *Town Meeting survey comments summary*

Mr. Carver provided additional statistical information which he was able to glean in his analysis of the Town meeting survey responses. These were made available to the committee with tonight's meeting materials. Although there was a sense that Town Meeting attendees were regulars, it turns out only  $\frac{1}{3}$  responded that they always attend. He remarked that when finalizing the draft of the town-wide survey, from a data analysis perspective, it would be valuable for the town-wide survey to be consistent with the Town Meeting survey.

#### *Town-wide survey update*

Mr. Rangarajan explained that the same tool which was used for the Town Meeting paper survey will be used again. There is a web version of the town-wide survey. It has been formatted so that individuals can only take



the survey once. The committee discussed whether paper versions of the survey would be available for those with limited computer or internet access.

### **MAPC Update**

Mr. Wluka explained that an email had been received from MAPC and he shared the content with the committee. MAPC has received all background material. They will review the minutes of past meetings and complete their work within the timeline the committee has developed. Brian and Mark have outreach they'd like to do after the public forum.

### **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 9:22 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES

### Public Forum held at Sharon Community Center

June 14, 2022

The public forum of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

#### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present  
Keenan: Present  
Rangarajan: Present

Carver: Present  
King: Present  
Wluka: Present

Geller: Present  
Monahan: Present

Goodman: Present  
Pietal: Present

#### Opening Statements

Mr. Pietal introduced the committee members and briefly summarized the charge of the committee, laying out the three major areas that the Select Board has assigned to the committee. Reminded those present that this committee is a research and advisory body.

Mr. Keenan described the work of the Town Meeting subcommittee, explaining the three legislative options available under state law, and detailing the nature of research undertaken thus far. Described the work of the subcommittee to date.

Mr. King explained the work and background of the Committees subcommittee, reviewing the focus on the size of the Select Board and whether particular boards should be appointed or elected.

Mr. Pietal described the purpose of this public forum, seeking input from community members. Acknowledged presence of two representatives of the MAPC.

[as of 7:50 pm, there were 22 people on Zoom and 29 in the room]

#### Public Comments

Carol Abram (on Zoom) raised issue of lodging a complaint against an appointed official, or a process of removal of an appointed official. We have no current process to recall or remove an appointee. Believes that a 5-member Select Board would permit better oversight of an appointed official.

Joanne Michalek (on Zoom) asked about pros and cons we have come across in our research re: 3- vs 5-member select board. Mr. King summarized the issues in response.

Rob Maidman asked if our research discovered towns that changed the size of their select boards. Response by Mr. King – not aware of any towns reducing their board sizes, and a few have proposed enlarged.

Mr. Wluka referred to MAPC representatives in attendance, one of whom remarked that their research for Sharon is in early stages.

Xander Shapiro spoke in support of 5-member select board, citing several advantages. Comments that Open Meeting Law constrains a 3-member board from having subcommittees to do complex work. Also notes that 5 members would permit greater representation of the town's diversity.

Jennifer Illuzzi (Zoom) favors enlargement of Select Board, for better representation. Cites high barriers to participation in Open Town Meeting, finds printed town warrant difficult to comprehend. Believes that a RTM would be better, as would remote participation.

Donna West (Zoom) noted that RTM in her hometown was not representative. Argued for OTM as only remaining direct democratic body. Can do a better job of explaining warrant items.

Ben Feinberg (Zoom) Asked if any Sharon other town boards have 3 members? Under OML consultation outside of meeting is impossible with 3 member boards. Likes OTM but recognizes it as discriminatory because not everyone is able to attend. Perhaps add forums to allow for explanation, input, and voting. Also recommends new by-law re: meeting notifications to include web, social media.

Patty Keenan: really need to make town meeting more accessible to families with children at home. It is ironic that Sharon attracts resident who want to raise children here, but then cannot participate in OTM.

Joanne Michalek (Zoom): Would prefer to allow remote participation and remote voting.

Ellen Boardman: OTM works as well as it does now because of low participation; if there is a contentious issue that attracted all voters, it would not be viable. Newcomers to New England who aren't familiar with OTM and are disadvantaged.

Rob Maidman: Town Moderator has considerable power, which limits citizen opportunities to receive an answer to legitimate questions. Also notes that practice of calling the question disenfranchises many. Notes challenges of board sizes.

Sam Liao: supports Open Town Meeting. Allows people to participate when there are issues that move them. People value the right to participate. Suggests electronic voting on site; change date to start on a Tuesday. Transfer responsibility of maintenance of the library to the DPW from the Lib Trustees.

David Blazkowsky (Planning Board) Key issue for the Gov Study committee is to generate more interest, more participation in governance. Ombudsman function could be valuable.

Lajos Kamocsay – (DEI committee) biggest issue is access. Likes the model of separating discussions from voting. Suggests improving communications. Provide secretarial support to all committees. Keep Town Clerk an elected position. It is important to find better ways to increase participation on boards and committees. Planning board 5-year term is daunting. Doesn't think size of population should drive decision about size of select board.

Margie Mitlin – notes problem of town meeting attendance where people come for one issue then leave, and other important issues get decided by handful of voters. Cites an issue that arose in DEI committee to set values and expectations for members of town boards, to increase accountability.

Donna West (Zoom) Praises creative suggestions raised tonight. Encourages committee to continue search for creative improvements and ways to overcome the impediments to remote voting and participation. Pursue legislation to permit such things.

## **Wrapping up**

Mr. Pietal thanked everyone for suggestions and conversation. Many of the ideas raised have already been discussed in committee meetings, which is edifying, but it was helpful to hear some new ideas.

Ellen Boardman asked about findings from the ATM survey. Mr. Carver and Mr. Keenan provided some key findings.

## **Adjourn**

Mr. Pietal thanked everyone for participation and adjourned the meeting at 8:59 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

June 22, 2022

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal. Mr. Pietal observed a moment of silence in honor of the passing of Mr. Geller's son Jake.

### Member attendance

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

### Results of public forum

The committee discussed the results of the public forum. There were around 50 people who attended the meeting either in person or online. The committee was pleased with the feedback received. Some of the topics brought up were communication, which was discussed by the Select Board at their meeting last night, as well as the possibility of an informational meeting before Town Meeting and removal options/criterion for elected officials. Another interesting point brought up by Mr. Blaszkowsky was the concept of an ombudsman for answers to resident questions about Town business.

Mr. Pietal mentioned that perhaps the Boards Subcommittee may have an interest in having Bill Heitin attend a meeting to discuss the 3 or 5-member Select Board now that he is no longer a current member of that Board. Perhaps other former Select Board members as well like Norman Katz, Colleen Tuck, or Rich Powell.

### Subcommittee updates

There were no updates from subcommittees but there was a discussion about beginning deliberations. Ms. Monahan shared the timeline which was developed previously. The committee agreed that their next meeting would take place on July 20. In the meantime, the subcommittees would work to bring some deliberation to the full committee.

### Liaison updates

Ms. Arguimbau heard from the Planning Board who have returned a written document which will be uploaded to the drive for the committee to review. The members of the Board have commented that the absence of a newspaper in Town is a detriment.

### MAPC Update

MAPC sent slides that Mr. Pietal shared. These slides outlined a potential scope of work. Mr. Mark Fine and Mr. Brian Luther attended the meeting and, after hearing the post-mortem of the forum, feel that there are specific areas where they can put their focus such as removal and code of conduct, improving Town Meeting, and a possible new issue of a local voting option for non-citizen residents.

MAPC shared their project timeline. It was explained that this was developed before learning that the committee had developed one, but they can be flexible and work within the committee's timeline. The methods proposed would be interviews by MAPC with Town Officials, feedback on the survey, and a peer community review. Mr. Fine and Mr. Luther feel that they can enhance work already done by subcommittees.

MAPC will return on July 20 and report to the full committee based on the research they gathered tonight.

## **Finalize online survey**

Mr. Rangarajan provided an update on the status of the survey. He explained that the committee has control of a portion of the web address. The committee discussed when the survey will go live and how to broadcast it. The possibility of a process by which postcards are mailed to the postal customers was discussed as well as the budget implications of doing so. Mr. Rangarajan mentioned he would reach out to the moderators of the Sharon-based Facebook groups. An email will be drafted for distribution to the email addresses used in the last communication about the public forum. Paper copies of the survey will be collected at Town Hall, Community Center, Adult Center, and Library.

**MOTION:** To send a postcard to all Sharon residents, subject to Select Board funding approval.  
(Arguimbau- Geller)

Arguimbau: AYE  
Keenan: AYE  
8-0- **PASSES**

Carver: AYE  
King: AYE

Geller: AYE  
Rangarajan: AYE

Goodman: AYE  
Pietal: AYE

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

None

## **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Rangarajan adjourned the meeting at 9:34 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 20, 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: Present	Goodman: Present
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Michalek: Present	Monahan: Present
Pietal: Present	Rangarajan: Present	Wluka: Present	

Also present at the meeting was Mark Fine from MAPC

### New Member Introduction

Chair Pietal introduced Joanne Michalek as the newest member of the Committee. Other members introduced themselves to Ms. Michalek.

### Updates

#### MAPC

Mr. Fine supplied an overview of the research that MAPC has done at the Committee's request, having presented reports to each subcommittee. Details will be provided in a memo that MAPC will send to the committee. He highlighted key points, as follows:

- **Non-citizen voting** in local elections & town meeting: several municipalities have sent home rule petitions to the legislature, and there's been some discussion in the legislature more broadly. There seems to be growing interest across the Commonwealth, but the legislature has moved slowly. There is some proposed legislation currently, and Mr. Fine will include it in his memo.
- **Recall and removal from office:** Recall is a political process involving elected officials, where removal is about appointed roles. Some communities have such provisions in by-laws restricted to particular boards and committees, typically for non-attendance. Some communities create codes of conduct for certain boards, with specific and clear guidelines. For recall, typically there is required number of voters signing a petition. In response to a question, Mr. Fine noted that a recall and removal processes can take months.
- **Personnel Boards and Finance Committees:** MAPC looked at practices in 5 peer towns. Sharon's Finance Committee is larger than those in the comparable communities. Our process of selecting Fin Comm members is unusual, and our committee has a broader charge than other towns. Every community has nuanced aspects of the Fin Comm composition. One important question is whether the town views Fin Comm as a creature of the Legislature (TM) or the Executive (Select Board). Towns also vary in whether they have a Personnel Board or a Personnel ByLaw; Holliston, for example, replaced the Board with an HR professional. Some Personnel Boards are strictly advisory to the Town Manager or other professional in Town Hall.

In response to a question, he noted that some towns have either a Warrant or Finance Committee, but he knows of none with both.

In committee discussion, it was noted that early in our process we stepped back from a review of the Personnel By-Law, but should take up the broader concept of how we deal with Personnel, and whether this is a function that should be professionalized.

- **Information about Town Governance:** Mr. Fine observed that MAPC’s research revealed some good models of communication about how town governance works, and on-boarding new residents into the complexities of governance.
  - Mr. Pietal noted that the last item in our charge refers to the creation of a Charter, which might simplify and codify the basic principles and authority of local governance. Mr. Fine reminded the committee that a Charter can be a high-level codification, much less detailed than by-laws.
  - MAPC will look into which towns have recently adopted a charter.
  - In response to a question from Mr. Goodman, Mr. Fine explained that a charter, once approved by the state legislature, empowers a town to make governance changes without state approval.

## **Town-wide survey update**

Mr. Rangarajan reports that we have 765 responses to date, because of our outreach efforts. 95 of those respondents attended the 2022 Town Meeting. Additionally, we have received an unknown number of paper surveys.

Mr. Keenan reports that a postcard will go out town wide to promote the survey. We set a deadline of August 10. Mr. Pietal complimented Mr. Keenan on his efforts.

Mr. King inquired whether we have a way to track the number of responses in connection with promotional postings and mailings. In later discussion we concluded that we are able to do so in a limited way.

Ms. Monahan recommended that each of us circle back to our liaison assignments to remind them of the survey, and also make one more social media push. There was further discussion about use of social media thus far.

Mr. Goodman noted that he had reached out to the various organizations in our contact list, but saw little impact. The emails from Town Hall seem to have been far more effective.

Ms. Michalek asked if we have reached out to various civic groups, and volunteered to send the survey link with such groups.

## **Deliberation Process Planning**

Mr. Pietal asked Mr. Keenan to summarize what the Town Meeting subcommittee is doing to start deliberations. In one recent meeting, members shared their current thinking about the major decisions regarding selection of a legislative structure. After that, subcommittee members drafted motions related to scheduling, communications, and procedures. The subcommittee debated and voted on several of those motions and expects to complete the process in the next meeting. One specific vote is to retain OTM as the legislative form, with a number of changes.

Ms. Monahan asked if the subcommittee would be recommending improvements to OTM, and Mr. Keenan said yes.

Mr. King inquired which subcommittee Ms. Michalek will join, and the current intention is to join the Town Meeting subcommittee.

Mr. Pietal recommends that subcommittee votes be discussed and reviews by the full committee, and there was unanimous consent.

## **Planning Schedule Review**

The committee needs to complete work in December, with a report to the Select Board. We are slightly behind the draft schedule, and members discussed ways to adjust the schedule to both permit the subcommittees to do their deliberations and move towards closure. Discussion included the current agendas of the subcommittees.

Mr. Pietal asked Mr. King to take the lead on checking schedules, vacation plans, etc. for Boards and Committees.

There was further discussion about when the second Public Forum will happen. This is yet to be determined.

### Other Subcommittee Updates

Mr. King reported that the subcommittee discussed and voted that Town Clerk should remain an elected position.

### Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the June 8, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections.

(King - Geller)

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

8-0-3 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the June 14, 2022 Public Forum, with minor correction

(King - Michalek)

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

10-0-1 **PASSES**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the June 22, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections.

(King - Goodman)

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

9-0-2 **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 9:21 pm.



## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 17, 2022

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

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 were Brian Luther and Mark Fine from MAPC

### Correspondence

Committee received a handwritten note from Bertha Foster which has been saved to Committee's shared Google drive. She suggested open-ended questions on future surveys.

### Updates

#### MAPC

Luther and Fine referred to comparable towns with Charters. They are also looking into town manager/administrator position noting what is currently in by-laws and where Sharon could make changes. Wenham has made many changes over the last 5-10 years in this area. They will note how we can codify what the position does.

General discussion of ZBA terms and number of committee members. General discussion of recall provisions.

#### Town-wide Survey Results and Discussion

presentation by Rob Carver with assistance from Matt Keenan

See Town-wide Governance Study Draft Report August 17, 2022. 1231 respondents – 9.4% of registered voters. Survey responses skewed towards male (Sharon is generally 52/48 female to male with small number who classify as other. Select Board preference for 5 members 59% - 726 respondents. 43% (529 respondents) prefer Open Town Meeting. 57% (702 respondents) prefer noncitizen voting (this includes 99% of 64 noncitizens who took survey).

There are 13132 registered voters in Sharon as of May 2022.

Of respondents: 42% have attended Town Meeting within the last 4 years; 38% have never attended. 20% attended before 2019 but not since. Noted that more people said they attended Town Meeting than there were actual people who attended.

On the question of why people don't attend Town Meeting:

44% - scheduling conflicts

39% - town meeting too long

30% - concerned about Covid

28% - caregiving (general discussion of caregiving – if childcare is provided, can't keep children out after 9pm.

Preferred day of town meeting:

29% - Sunday afternoon

17% - Saturday night

Hybrid meetings:

60% - prefer hybrid meetings

Discussion of hybrid meetings - Covid meeting rules are currently in place until March 2023. Hybrid (participants can be in person and online simultaneously) meetings would go against state law; Sharon could have staffing and technology issues providing hybrid meetings. Possible solution/recommendation is to start with Select Board, Finance Committee, and School Committee with hybrid meeting. People learn about town government in many ways including friends/family, town warrant, social media, town website/emails, etc.

Form of Government: These are considered weak statistical results and not statistically significant.

Town Council – preferred by: residents of town <27 years; ages 48-59; have not attended Town Meeting within the last 4 years; reporting barriers to attendance; nonmembers of boards/committees.

Open Town Meeting – preferred by: people over age 60; residents of town >27 years; current and former members of boards/committees.

Matt Keenan noted listserv emails sent were helpful, and there were 500 survey responses after postcard mailing.

For anonymity IP addresses were not tracked and survey did not limit responses to 1 per IP address.

Discussion of number of members for Select Board and whether Sharon has enough qualified candidates. In the past 17 elections there have been 10 contested elections including 4 open seat elections that attracted 2, 2, 3, and 4 candidates.

#### **Subcommittee Updates:** Summary of tentative decisions to date

Town Meeting Subcommittee – Matt Keenan discussed document – Summary of Town Meeting Subcommittee Proposals and Votes August 17, 2022.

Boards and Committees Subcommittee – has had many recent guests; voted to replace Personnel Board with a human resources professional; discussing/researching recall and removal related to nonattendance; has not voted on Select Board due to not having full subcommittee in attendance; is not interested in pursuing term limits; voted in favor of training for committee/board members; voted in favor of orientation for new committee/board members; voted in favor of no changes to the Finance Committee.

### **Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the July 27, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections.

(Arguimbau - Geller)

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**

Next meetings August 31, 2022 7:30pm and September 7, 2022 7:30pm

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 9:33 pm.

**List of documents used at this meeting**

- Town-wide Governance Study Draft Report August 17, 2022
- Summary of Town Meeting Subcommittee Proposals and Votes August 17, 2022

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

August 30, 2021

The meeting of the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

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

### Introductions

Mr. Pietal asked and members responded in taking a few moments to introduce themselves, whether they have served or currently serve on other Boards/Committees/Commissions and explain a little about their interests of the work of the Governance Study Committee.

### Recommended Reading

Mr. Pietal explained that there were several documents of recommended reading provided to members in the Google drive including the Town's general bylaws, personnel bylaws, Master plan, and charter proposal. There is also a spreadsheet providing links to information on MA open meeting law, public records law, and ethics. Members should familiarize themselves with these documents.

### Areas of Interest – Sub Committees and Prioritization of Topics

The committee discussed the development of sub committees centering around the work of the Select Board's charge including: open or representative town meeting, selection of ATM/ATE dates, number of Select Board members, and home rule petition/charter. Discussions included priority and whether to tackle the Select Board's charge and initiatives in aggregate or to focus more on the "low hanging fruit." It was agreed that the members should take some time to read the information provided.

Mr. Geller had a question about open meeting law and how that pertains sub committees. Ms. Monahan explained that the subcommittee becomes a group unto itself and its own public body. Therefore, they would post their own agenda, prepare minutes, and report back to the Governance Study Committee.

Mr. Pietal recommended that members think about the topics they feel are important so that subcommittees can be established.

### Dates for next meeting

Doodle worked well in selecting the date for this meeting and it was suggested that Doodle continue to be used for availability with future meetings.

### Adjourn

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 7:54 pm  
(Pietal-Silverleib)

Arguimbau: AYE	Carver: AYE	Geller: AYE	Goodman: AYE
Keenan: AYE	King: AYE	Monahan: AYE	Pietal: AYE
Rangarajan: AYE	Silverleib: AYE	Wluka: AYE	

11-0-0 **PASSES/FAILS**

## 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

- a. 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)

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.

- a. 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 opinion. 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)

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.

- .Proposal to test on-site electronic voting at Town Meeting
- i.Proposal to support efforts enabling remote participation in Town Meeting
- ii.Proposal to prioritize town warrant on internet
- iii.Proposal on educating voters about Town Meeting warrant
- iv.Proposal on illustrations in town warrant
- v.Proposal that the town clerk and Select Board identify an appropriate Annual Town Meeting date
- vi.Proposal on multi-day sessions
- vii.Proposal on annual schedule
- viii.Proposal to minimize scheduling conflicts
- ix.Proposal on Town Meeting presentations
- x.Proposal on the order of the Town Meeting
- xi.Proposal regarding items removed from consideration at Town Meeting
- xii.Proposal to retain several practices
- xiii.Proposal on vote counting
- xiv.Proposal on educational videos
- xv.Proposal on internships
- xvi.Proposal to limit simultaneous service on boards and committees [Hold for later consideration]
- xvii.he Select Board should consider using a Human Resources employee or outside contractor to do the Personnel Board functions [Hold for later consideration]
- xviii.Recommendation to Select Board that they should not change the specific duties, fiscal oversight responsibilities, or the name of the Finance Committee
- xix.Recommend the Select Board consult with a board or committee experiencing a vacancy for input regarding preferred qualifications prior to filling said vacancy
- xx.Recommend that the Library Board of Trustees remain an elected Board [Tabled]
- xxi.Recommend that the Planning Board remain an elected Board [Hold for later consideration]
- xxii.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)

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)

- a. 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)

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)

b. 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)

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.

**SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*September 14, 2022*

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

**Member attendance**

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

**Subcommittee updates**

none

**Liaison updates**

none

**General updates**

Also in attendance was Mark Fine of MAPC.

**Correspondence** - Chair spoke of information provided by Mark Fine of MAPC regarding our concerns about Planning Board structure. Also information from Isaac Gerofsky from Sharon Cable regarding options for increasing and improving communication of information throughout town. Both documents in meeting folder on the drive.

**Planning for the Public Forum** - September 19, 2022. Chair led off with information – start time 7PM at the Recreation Center. The survey has been placed on the town’s home web page. Paul, Matt, Phil and Ganesh attended the Select Board meeting last night to give an update about the Committee’s activity. The Personnel Board will meet tomorrow night with the only agenda item being the topic of abandoning the Personnel Board and changing to a professional service.

Mark Fine from MAPC spoke briefly regarding Planning Board info he had put together from comparative towns – Holliston, Hopkinton, Wayland, Southboro and Acton – numbers of planning board members, length of terms and whether elected or appointed. State law (Chap.41 Sec. 81A) sets make-up and terms, can choose between appointed or elected. Sharon was not out of whack with 5 members being elected for 5 year terms being the norm. Most of the other towns had incumbents running much of the time (vs new people) as well. Some issues to consider:

1. Associate members who act when others are absent or cannot participate;
2. Appointment of a Town Planner done by the Planning Board or by the Town Administrator? Who does the planner report to?

Back to Public Forum – After welcome, which should include mention of the Committee’s charge, have a survey recap. Rob Carver could perhaps discuss the major points and a voting recap. Chair will also mention in a positive way the need to seek better availability of information as well as clarity and better communication between the Town boards and committees. Discussion regarding how the meeting should go – similar to Town Meeting? Best to let the meeting go more unstructured. Chair reviewed the topics to be discussed by sub-committee chairs or reps-

**BOARDS & COMMITTEES** -Select Board size ---- Finance Committee role --- Library Trustees and Planning Board elected vs. appointed (Explain Library Trustees HAVE to be elected and Planning board is still under consideration by the Committee)---Personnel Board change still under consideration.

**TOWN GOVERNMENT** – Form of government ---citizenship voting ----electronic voting and remote participation --- Day of Town Meeting (reference Consent Agenda mentioning town meeting improvements) Chair can decide who speaks about what. Members are free to go to the mic or speak to clarify a point. Last meeting’s beginning was a good example – Paul first then subcommittee chairs. That discussion got going topic by topic and some members thought that was getting too intricate for public forum. Discussed whether we



needed to start off with our survey questions or just see what questions come from the group. Survey gave us added info but not decisive. Best to get to public questions sooner than later. Also important to have numbers of total town voters ready when discussing the numbers that responded to the survey. Chair expressed complete confidence in those members dealing with numbers from our survey results- Rob, Ganesh and Matt. Important to allow plenty of time for public comment. If lots of new people, there will be more questions. We should be sure to allow for them to voice their concerns. Some may just be there to see where we are in the process. Keep the meeting moving.

Discussion of including and responding in our report to topics not within our charge – two examples; the train station parking issues and ranked choice voting. We have discussed neither. Most believed the train station was completely out of our charge. The ranked choice voting did pertain to governance, though was not a topic we had discussed at any meeting. The citizenship voting issue was not under our charge either, but we did take it up and eventually include it in our topics. It may be possible that we could take a position on ranked choice voting, though it is late in the process.

#### **Review of Recap for Public Forum –**

Opening – what we'll be talking about; topics one by one; bigger ones first then lesser topics. Paul will work with Phil and Matt to get that organized. Thoughts that we should have a timekeeper to keep folks from rambling as well as someone monitoring the “chat room”. Questions about wifi capability have been asked and addressed by the town so hopefully we will have better connection for this meeting than last.

Discussion of where we are in the process of getting out notification of the Public Forum date and time. Emails have gone out to all Boards and Committee. Ganesh has, and Phil will, get the notice out on social media as before. Paul will look into finding the spreadsheet list of community groups and request Melissa help get the notice that Ganesh put together out to those groups by email.

### **Minutes**

**Approval of minutes** - Minutes from September 7<sup>th</sup> will be voted on at the next full meeting.

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

Phil called attention to an article in the Globe pertaining to the idea of recall/remove possibilities being needed when people commit crimes. The Boards sub-committee needs to continue the recall/removal discussion at its next meeting.

Next meeting – Wednesday September 21, 2022 will be subcommittees. Town Meeting subcommittee will not meet. Chair reminded all that we need to begin thinking about the writing of the final report. Start that at the September 28th meeting. MAPC has indicated they would help, if needed, with that.

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Peg Arguimbau

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES OPEN FORUM

September 19, 2022

The Second Open Public Forum conducted by the Sharon Governance Study Committee was called to order at 7:04 pm by Chair Paul Pietal. This was a hybrid session, with people attending in person at the Sharon Community Center and on Zoom.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present (Zoom)	Carver: Present (SCC)	Geller: Absent	Goodman: Absent
Keenan: Present (SCC)	King: Present (SCC)	Monahan: Present (Zoom)	Pietal: Present (SCC)
Rangarajan: Present (SCC)	Wluka: Present (SCC)	Michalek: Present (SCC)	

### Opening Remarks

Mr. Pietal opened the meeting explaining that the purpose of the session is to invite public comment and input. He identified the members of the committee and reviewed the timeline of committee efforts to date.

Mr. Keenan summarized work of Town Meeting Subcommittee, noting the following:

- Explained reasons for and against retaining OTM, and reported 8-2 vote to retain Open Town Meeting
- Noncitizen voting: unanimous vote to recommend permitting noncitizen participation in Town Meeting and Town Elections, provided background and the necessary steps to implement
- Electronic voting: recommending adoption as part of a 3-year experiment
- Remote participation: cited state law and Wayland's efforts in that regard.

Mr. King similarly reported on the Boards and committee subcommittee:

- Select Board – interviewed prior Select Board members, did other research, reviewed survey responses. Voted 7-3 to expand to 5 members
- Personnel Board – leaning towards professionalizing
- The subcommittee has been reviewing committees in general, and recommending standardization of web sites and clear statements of roles, duties and responsibilities of each committee.
- Resignation or loss of a committee member; committees should communicate with the appointing authority as to the needs of the committee when appointing someone to fill the vacancy.

### Public Reaction and Input

During the open discussion, the following topics, concerns, questions and ideas were raised by Sharon residents in attendance in person and on Zoom.

- Questions from/about the Planning Board:
  - Currently has 5-year term, which is helpful for long-range planning and learning curve for new members, but discouraging for potential candidates. It is difficult to encourage people to run. The 5-year term reflects the time horizon for projects and is appropriate to the mission of the Board.
  - Should Planning Board be appointed or elected?
  - An unintended consequence of shorter planning board terms is that it could become difficult/costly/discouraging for developers to see a project through to completion due to turnover on the board.
  - Even with a shorter term, incumbents can always opt to run again.
- Comments about Communications
  - Have we considered publishing committee members/ town employee email addresses on the site. Resident notes that BOTS can scrape email addresses and this can create issues with spamming.

- o Upgrade our use of email and other direct communication with residents
- o Consider using Social Media such as Facebook groups to augment legally-required notifications.
- Comments related to Open Town Meeting
  - o ATM has become more efficient in recent years, but many residents are not aware of those changes (see Survey results). Hence, we should do more to publicize the improvements already in place
  - o Electronic voting at town meeting is a fantastic idea, and works well in other towns. Point of resistance in the past has been is the cost, but there may be grant money or less expensive technologies today.
  - o Some of our recommendations about OTM are to institutional practices that we already follow, but want to codify
- Comments related to size of Select Board and Town Administrator
  - o Should five members be elected at large or by precinct?
  - o Many towns with larger Select Boards have a Town Manager rather than Town Administrator or Executive Secretary. We may want to consider the implications of shifting responsibilities with a larger board.
- Discussion of other issues not yet fully discussed by the Gov Study Committee
  - o Potential creation of a recruitment/nominating committee to populate Boards and Committees. One resident noted that recruitment plans are the norm in the Human Resources function of private organizations.
  - o Sought citizen input on the practice of a Warrant Meeting prior to Annual Town Meeting. There was some comment that the meeting is useful, if poorly attended.

## **Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.

Mr. Carver and Mr. Rangarajan contributed notes to these minutes.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 28, 2022

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:34 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Absent	Carver: Present	Geller: Absent	Goodman: Present (arr 7:41)
Keenan: Present	King: Present	Michalek: Present	Monahan: Present
Pietal: Present	Rangarajan: Absent	Wluka: Present (arr 7:42)	

Also in attendance was Mark Fine of MAPC.

### Correspondence

None received.

### Addressing Remaining Open Items

a. Personnel Board restructuring or elimination

Mr. Pietal reviewed prior discussions and summarized discussions to date.

Reporting on a recent discussion within the Personnel Board, he explained that some current members of the Board cite the importance of citizen oversight in personnel matters. Workload and tasks have varied over the years. Members vary in background knowledge, and it has been challenging to recruit Board members who have relevant HR background. Training could compensate for gaps in knowledge.

Current members of the Board have expressed interest in having support from a Human Resources professional in Town Hall, analogous to the way the Conservation Commission works with the Town's Conservation Agent.

The Personnel Board reviews job descriptions and ratings, and reviews salaries for fairness for the management team in the town, but is not involved in negotiations for union contracts. The Board has been effective in enforcing rules and standards as part of that oversight role.

Mr. Turkington has engaged an attorney, Kevin Bresnahan of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey and Lehane of Quincy, to help review of Personnel By-Law. Mr. Turkington also asked Ms. Kelly and Mr. Pietal to confer with Mr. Bresnahan regarding potential changes to the Personnel By-Law.

Mr. Fine inquired about the function of the Secretary to the Personnel Board. This is a part-time support position. Discussion followed about periodic involvement of other town officials at Board meetings.

Further discussion focused on whether the functions of the Board are best carried out by an appointed volunteer board. Some towns have assigned the roles to professionals under a Town Manager with a citizen panel in an advisory or oversight capacity. Trend seems to be towards professionalizing, with oversight responsibilities assigned elsewhere.

**MOVED:** Sharon disband its Personnel Board and replace it with professional staff.

(Keenan – King)

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

**PASSED** (5-2-1)

b. Planning Board configuration

Mr. Pietal referenced the comments from Mr. Pannone, current Planning Board chair. Issues are length of term, appointed vs. elected board, and challenge of recruiting new members, as well as the time required to bring new members up to speed.

Discussion also touched on creation of a full-time Planner, possibly re-classifying a current DPW position.

Mr. Wluka spoke about flaws and lack of transparency in the current process that make permitting very time-consuming. These are not unique to Sharon, but occur across the state. The slow pace of the current process is one reason to retain a 5-year term rather than a 3-year term.

There was extended discussion about the functions of the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, as well as the kinds of issues that arise in the planning process.

**MOVED:** That the Planning Board remain an elected Board.

(Wluka – Carver)

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

**PASSED** (7-0-1)

The sense of the committee is that the questions of Board tenure and size warrant further study and discussion.

c. Simultaneous service on boards and committees

Mr. Keenan summarized the subcommittee discussion of this topic. The main idea was to limit individuals' ability to serve on multiple elected and appointed committees. The goal is to avoid possible conflicts of interest and overlapping responsibilities, to limit overreliance on a relatively small number of citizens, and to encourage wider recruitment of citizens.

Discussion focused on the extent to which such situations arise, and whether a new policy is called for. Voters can decide in the case of elected positions, and appointing authorities can use their discretion.

**MOVED:** That we limit simultaneous service on boards and committees: This proposal would limit residents from serving on more than two elected or appointed boards or committees at one time. The purpose of the proposal is to enable board members to avoid conflicts of interest (as could arise from serving on boards with overlapping or opposing mandates); to avoid the town's overreliance on a relative handful of citizen volunteers; and to encourage outreach to underrepresented communities and to promote diversity in town service.

(Keenan – Goodman)

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

**FAILED:** (2 -5-1)

- d. Address incumbent advantage on ballots  
Discussion around whether the order of names on ballots should be done by lot rather than listing incumbents first, and whether candidates for re-election should be identified as such. Agreed that incumbents who were appointed to fill a vacancy are not candidates for re-election.

**MOVED:** In future ballots, the names of candidates shall be ordered by lot, and that candidates for re-election be identified.

(Wluka – Keenan)

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

**PASSED** (8 -0 -0)

- e. Board/Committee recruitment process  
Recommendation from the Town Meeting subcommittee: “That the Town establish a Recruitment and Nominations Committee whose function is to recruit new volunteers for town boards, committees, and special projects. Members of this committee should be designees of the Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee and Planning Board. All nominations forwarded by this panel would be subject to the approval of the Select Board. The committee shall be charged with engaging previously under-involved residents and developing future civic volunteers and leaders.”

Discussion revolved around possible risks and practicalities, and whether this should be a standing committee or a temporary experimental group. There were also questions about the challenge of getting people to serve on this committee.

Suggestions were made to reframe this in terms of developing a marketing plan for the time.

Sense of the committee is that this concept warrants more attention, and that it belongs in our report. Given the lateness of the hour, we will defer this for further consideration during the writing process.

- f. Revision of Town Administrator Role pending move to 5 member Select Board

Mr. Wluka recommended that this committee should consult with Mr. Turkington regarding the potential changes in the relationship between the Town Administrator and a larger Select Board. There is concern that with a larger board, the division of responsibilities and dynamics of that relationship are likely to change.

Mr. Fine briefly characterized some of the experiences of other towns with larger Select Boards. Mr. Fine agreed to further research the responsibilities of Town Administrators, Town Managers, and Executive Secretaries in peer communities.

- g. Charter creation

Brief discussion about how to proceed on developing recommendations with respect to a town charter.

## **Report Writing Process and Assignments**

Mr. Pietal sketched out possible sections of a final report, suggesting that two people team up to write sections on committee background, major decisions, individuals writing up smaller portions on, for example, our consent agenda.

There was further discussion about other materials to include in the report, especially describing the committee process and documents prepared along the way.

Ms. Monahan agreed to lead the editorial effort to ensure that the document is concise and reflects a consistent tone. Mr. King, Mr. Keenan, and Mr. Pietal will collaborate on an outline and initial writing assignments.

We'll use the next two weeks to start writing and have our next full meeting on October 12.

### Minutes

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the September 7, 2022 meeting with minor corrections.

(King – Keenan)

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

8-0-0 **PASSED**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the September 14, 2022 meeting.

(King – Wluka)

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

7-0-1 **PASSED**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the September 19, 2022 Public Forum.

(King – Carver)

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

7 - 0 - 1 **PASSED**

### 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 10:08 pm.

## SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 19, 2022

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:33 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

### Member attendance

Arguimbau: Present	Carver: Present	Geller: Absent	Goodman: Present
Keenan: Present	King: Absent	Michalek: Present	Monahan: Present
Pietal: Present	Rangarajan: Present	Wluka: Present (arr 7:36)	

Also in attendance was Mark Fine of MAPC.

### Correspondence

Brian Luther (MAPC) wrote today with a summary of recall and removal policies, providing additional documents on the subject.

### Addressing Remaining Open Items

#### a. Non-elected Board/Committee member removal process for cause

Mr. Fine provided an example of a limited recall policy for elected officials in Wenham, illustrating one way that a town can formulate a policy that sets guidelines to prevent abuse and nuisance petitions.

Mr. Pietal proposed holding off on a decision until we all have had time to review the new materials.

Mr. Keenan reminded us of source materials that we received several months ago, suggesting that it is well worth reviewing.

Some Towns with recall provisions Hanson, Wenham, Acton, Stoughton.

Discussion continued with Mr. Fine answering questions about practicalities of recall, a political process that can be time-consuming, fraught, and costly.

The discussion then turned to removal of appointed board members. Mr. Fine characterized most such policies refer to a code of conduct, and provide procedures involving the appointing authority. The Boards Subcommittee did pass a motion on the subject. There was brief discussion about the value of adopting a code of conduct.

We agreed to defer action until our next meeting, when we can review the available information and motions can be developed and circulated.

#### b. Charter creation

Mr. Fine discussed the reasons for which a town might undertake the lengthy and complex process of creating a charter. Charters allow a method for significant extensive change and give a town considerable flexibility in making future changes without awaiting state approval and action. More modest changes of the kind we have been discussing can also be achieved through By-Law and Town Meeting votes or by a Special Act.

There was further discussion of whether the issues in Sharon are substantial enough to go through the Charter process. Members spoke to pros and cons of recommending that the Select Board initiate the process of electing a Charter Commission.



We decided to give the committee additional time to consider the arguments for and against a charter, and return to this at the next meeting.

### **Report Writing Process and Updates**

Ms. Monahan provided a progress update on drafting of the final report. All but two sections have had first drafts submitted, with a deadline of Friday, October 21. She also described the timeline for editorial work and review by committee members.

To allow time for compilation, editing, and review, we decided that our next meeting will take place on November 2.

### **Minutes**

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the October 12, 2022 meeting, with minor corrections. (Arguimbau – Wluka)

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

8-0-0 **PASSED** [\* was absent on 10/12]

### **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 8:40 pm.