

Objectives and Priorities for November 1, 2022 to October 31, 2023

At a meeting on October 25, 2022, the Select Board discussed and on November 15, 2022 approved the mission statement and set of policy goals and objectives for Town government through the fall of 2023 as outlined below. The Town Administrator is charged with planning, developing and organizing strategies with department directors and town employees and with facilitating and coordinating efforts of citizen committee members to achieve these objectives and priorities.

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Town of Sharon is to deliver the highest quality municipal services in a fiscally responsible and an operationally responsive manner to the citizens that it serves. The Town Administrator will maximize the potential for Sharon's volunteer boards and commissions and it's professional staff to respond effectively to community and individual citizen needs through the use of long-term strategic planning and enhanced communications with residents.

Fiscal Priorities and Strategies:

Develop responsible and responsive operating and capital budgets that seek to balance the demand for services against the variety of financial circumstances experienced by Sharon citizens and businesses. Manage Sharon's finances to mitigate dependence on property taxes by enhancing revenue from other sources. Seize opportunities to reduce long-term costs of town government operations and in the delivery of services.

- Conduct thorough review of operating budgets, reviewing opportunities to reduce costs through restructuring and reorganizing operations. Make recommendations for savings without compromising quality of services and identify areas that should be considered for service enhancements.
- Continue to explore opportunities to share services and create efficiencies with the School Department with goal of reducing operating costs and improving efficiency and quality of service delivery in the following areas: human resources, payroll, accounts payable and revolving funds; facilities management; and school nursing and public health services.
- Initiate discussions with comparable communities on opportunities for potential collaboration on service delivery, operations, contracted services and equipment purchases in functional areas.
- Continue to explore alternative revenue sources and report to Select Board with recommendations.
- Continue to explore property tax relief measures to assist Sharon's most vulnerable citizens and to help maintain socioeconomic diversity.
- Work collaboratively with School Committee and Finance Committee to explore funding strategies to provide for full-day kindergarten program.
- Complete negotiations for successor collective bargaining agreements within policy and financial goals established by the Select Board.

Review, and modify as appropriate, financial policies relative to undesignated fund balance, enterprise fund reserves, stabilization and capital funds, debt, overlay reserves, self-funded activities (health insurance), cash investments, and certified free cash.

- Consider increasing reserves through specific appropriations and/or active management.
- Utilize actuarial valuation to develop an effective funding strategy to address future OPEB liabilities that may include changing the balance of employer/employee contributions, reducing liabilities through changes in existing plan design, enhancing investment return utilizing OPEB trust option, and commit to allocating the amount designated for retirement plan contributions to OPEB liabilities when retirement plan reaches full funding in 2029.
- Monitor claims experience and follow market trends in order to make prudent recommendations to reduce costs for employee and retiree health insurance plans through permissible changes in plan design such as increased deductibles, implementing a high-deductible plan combined with health savings accounts, or changes in employee and retiree contribution levels.
- Appropriate ARPA funds for infrastructure projects (water filtration treatment for PFAS and iron and manganese, accelerated schedule of road/sidewalk construction, building projects).

Organizational Objectives:

Review service delivery models and develop strategies to improve operations.

- Continue to assure training and development opportunities for mid-level supervisors in public works, police and fire departments as part of succession and operations planning.
- Evaluate organizational structures as part of recruitment and selection processes for treasurer/collector, fire chief, and council on aging director.
- Provide continued support for police department certification and accreditation program.
- Plan for potential addition of middle school resource officer or social work professional and for additional police officers to provide effective public safety service delivery model.
- Explore expanding firefighter/paramedic staffing to eight per work team to maintain effective EMS response.
- Better coordinate delivery of public and mental services between Board of Health, Council on Aging, Schools, SSPARC and public safety departments.
- Implement comprehensive facilities management and operation plan for Town buildings, including appropriate organizational/staffing model and adequate budget resources to assure proper maintenance program.

Facilitate efforts to enhance Town infrastructure to meet community expectations and aspirations for services.

- Work with the Standing Building Committee, architect, and owner's project representative to address impacts of construction during high school and library building projects.
- Work with Recreation Advisory Committee and athletic organizations to advocate for athletic field development and maintenance to address identified recreational demands.
- Work with Transportation Advisory Committee to advocate for bicycle and pedestrian alternative travel modes. Review parking needs and fiscal impacts of changing work and commuting patterns on MBTA commuter rail parking revolving fund.
- Work with Library Reuse Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for 11 North Main Street site when vacated by 2024, including capital maintenance requirements, alternative uses, and form of ownership relationship if non-Town use.

Strengthen accountability of organization through professional development, evaluation and recognition of senior management team.

- Establish goals for departments under the jurisdiction of the Select Board consistent with the overall goals established for the Town Administrator.
- Reinforce policy priorities and improve coordination of service delivery through regular staff meetings and written communication; provide continuous feedback on performance to senior staff; and document accomplishments through performance evaluation process.
- Develop program to recognize and reward senior management team; address supplemental compensation for performance beyond limit of salary range; and provide effective support of professional development opportunities.

Community Priorities and Objectives:

Support citizen efforts to improve sustainability.

- Include modifications to solid waste and recycling program as part of competitive bidding process for new collection contract effective July 1, 2023. Stated goals are: increase recycling percentage as portion of total waste stream; incentivize composting of organic material; reduce carbon footprint of collection by return to bi-weekly recycling; consider full PAYT funding for tipping fee portion of quarterly fee.
- Support work of Energy Advisory Committee to lease additional parcels of Town land for solar energy generation projects and minimize impact of adjacent neighborhoods, implement municipal aggregation program, seek grant opportunities to advance net-zero emissions goal and develop climate action plan, and construct grant-funded electric vehicle charging stations at designated parking areas.
- Implement strategies to address MS4 stormwater permit mandate.
- Support the efforts of the Lake Massapoag Advisory and constituent committees to identify and implement methods to reduce use of nutrients that feed algal blooms and bacteria in Lake Massapoag, and accelerate transition to updated septic systems

Modify governance model to strengthen service delivery and enhance accountability.

- Continue to facilitate collaborative strategic financial planning process with leaders of key boards and committees – Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Outlay Committee - to develop long-term budget strategy to reflect anticipated revenue stream, capital projects commitments and additional operating costs associated with building projects, program enhancements, and employee legacy costs.
- Work with boards and committees to assure Imagine Sharon Master Plan's timely and comprehensive implementation, including updates to zoning by-law.
- Complete review, and update as appropriate, specific policies and procedures codified in the Select Board's Policies and Procedures manual.
- Review and update personnel by-law for submission to 2023 Annual Town Meeting.
- Review findings and recommendations of Governance Study Committee and submit articles for voter consideration at 2023 Annual Town Meeting as appropriate.

Improve and enhance communication with residents through public meetings, print media, and social media platforms.

- Continue to offer public comment period at Select Board meetings to offer residents a chance to express opinions; make selected use of public comment on specific agenda items in addition to required public hearings.
- Improve content of Town website and coordinate information sharing with Recreation, Commission on Disabilities, Police Department and other, individual social media pages.
- Improve information flow to citizens via social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Town website).
- Offer public safety and citizen academies.
- Provide content and support efforts to revitalize independent newspaper or electronic news.
- Consider hiring communications specialist or retain consultant to generate information to residents.

Address development proposals by seeking to assure net community benefit; mitigate potential negative consequences.

- Implement host community agreement with recreational marijuana facilities – retail, cultivation and delivery services. Address potential negative impacts leveraging dedicated revenue stream.
- Conduct negotiations for agreements, as needed, to secure businesses at Sharon Gallery; facilitate resolution of issues related to infrastructure improvements aligning Sharon Gallery and Sharon Marketplace on South Main Street.
- Conduct appropriate dialogue with applicants of proposed developments (commercial, 40B, 40R, and similar large projects). Coordinate review by various Town boards and commissions and professional staff.
- Study impact of 2020 US Census data on affordable housing (Chapter 40B or LIP projects) and governance (drawing of legislative districts, number of polling places, formula grants).
- Develop regulations in keeping with state law requiring by right housing adjacent to MBTA stations.

Promote engagement, inclusion and equity among traditionally underrepresented segments of Sharon residents through community conversations, policy review, and employee and committee training.

- Work with Select Board to broaden diversity of membership on town boards and committees.
- Conduct evaluation of programs and policies and address any concerns of implicit bias or structural impediments to inclusion and equity.
- Participate in strategic planning with and review recommendations regarding policies and practices from Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Committee and implement as appropriate.
- Work with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee to develop and provide training to employees and members of boards and committees.

Provide support for implementation of economic development initiatives and promote local businesses.

- Study wastewater treatment options for Route 1 and Post Office Square; conduct highest/best use evaluation of properties within commercial zones.

- Update Select Board policies with regard to liquor licenses (regulate marketing events and live entertainment) and evaluate whether to require permits and develop regulations to operate food trucks.
- Collaborate and support community events such as road races/triathlons, street art, Porchfest, and Sharon Day. Better coordinate Town and community events to maximize attendance and drive sustained success.
- Work with Economic Development Committee to develop a small business council or similar mechanism to provide forum for small businesses to articulate needs.