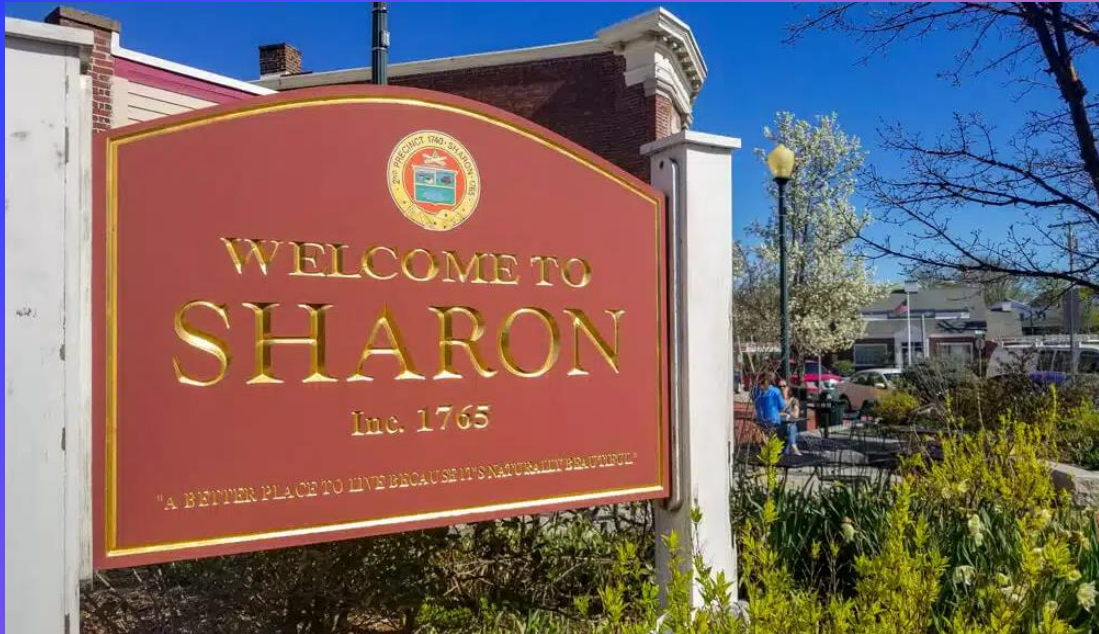




# INTRODUCTION TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT: TOWN ADMINISTRATION

Fred Turkington



# Agenda

- History of Sharon
- Town Overview
- Town Meeting
- Select Board
- Town Administration
- Bylaws and Regulations
- Boards and Committees

# History of Sharon

- The Native American Wampanoag tribe hunted and fished in this area for hundreds of years before European settlers arrived in 1637
- Around 1637, Sharon became settled by former residents of Dorchester looking for more fertile land
- Sharon was established as the 2nd Precinct of Stoughton in 1740
- It was incorporated as the Town of Stoughtonham in 1765
- The town was renamed Sharon in 1783






# What part did Sharon play in the Revolutionary War?

- First cannon cast in the war was from Stoughtonham Furnace (located at what is now Gavin's Pond)
- Iron ore from Lake Massapoag and Gavin Pond was used by Paul Revere and Colonel Richard Gridley to make cannon balls and other armaments
- Deborah Sampson is a famous and beloved local hero renowned for having disguised herself as a man to fight in the Continental Army.
  - She was one of a small number of women to serve during in the Revolutionary War.

# Town Overview

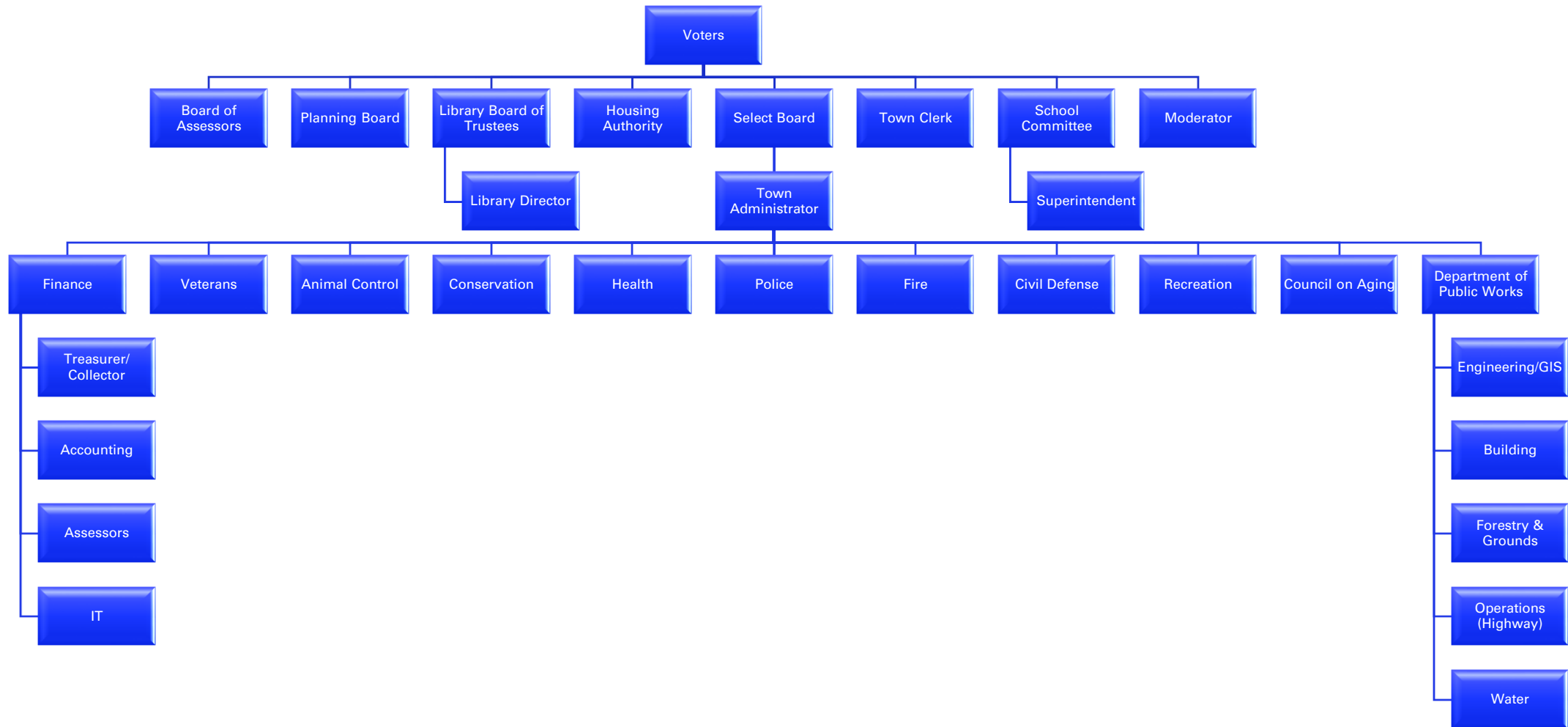
- Norfolk County
- Area: 24.2 square miles
- Population: 18,575
- Registered Voters: 13,245
- Founded: 1765
- Form of Government: Open Town Meeting
- Congressional District: 4<sup>th</sup>
- U.S. House: Jake Auchincloss
- Mass. Senate: Rep. Paul R. Feeney
- Mass. House: Rep. Ted Philips

# Sharon's Mission Statement

A decorative graphic in the upper right quadrant of the page. It features a central lightbulb with a glowing filament, surrounded by several thick, curved lines representing sun rays. The entire graphic is rendered in a light purple color. To the left of the sun graphic, there are three small white symbols: a plus sign (+), a solid dot (•), and an open circle (○), arranged vertically.

“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 its professional staff to respond effectively to community and individual citizen needs through the use of long-term strategic planning and enhanced communications with residents.”

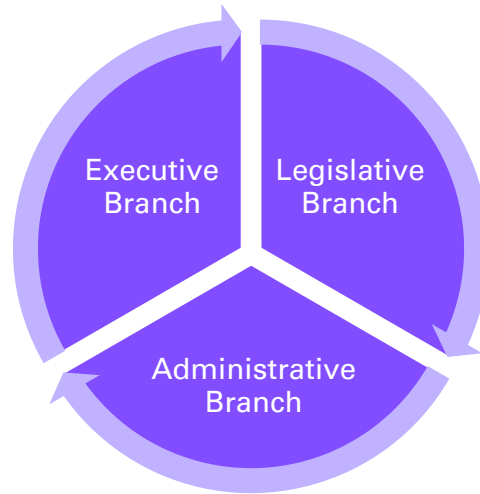
# Town of Sharon Organization



# Three Branches of Government

## Select Board

- Sets Policy
- Manages town operations (often delegated to Town Administrator)
- Appoints certain positions (including Town Administrator)
- Acts as licensing authority



## Town Meeting

- Approves operating and capital budgets, other appropriation of funds
- Approves amendments to By-Laws including zoning
- Approval of Classification and Pay Plan for government non-union personnel as well as government collective bargaining agreements
- Determines the salary of elected officials

## Town Administrator

- Chief Administrative Officer for the town, responsible to the Select Board for the administration, supervision and coordination of town affairs
- Responsible for day-to-day administration of the town (except schools) and achievement of policy objectives as determined by the Select Board
- Is charged with: Preparing the yearly budget, awarding contracts, negotiating with unions, appointing certain positions, etc.



# What is Town Meeting?

- Acts as the legislative body for towns in Massachusetts
- The Select Board has the authority to call a Town Meeting:
  - A town meeting is mandated yearly between the months of February and May
- If an additional meeting is necessary:
  - The Select Board can call for a special town meeting
  - The public can call for a special town meeting upon the request of 200 registered voters or 20% of the registered public (depending on which is smaller)
- The Select Board must publish a warrant in anticipation of a town meeting
  - A warrant lists a meeting's time, place and agenda
  - Must be made available at least 7 days before an annual meeting or at least 14 days before a special meeting
  - Both the Select Board and residents can "insert" articles into a warrant
- An elected moderator runs the meeting and declares the results of every vote

# Different Forms of Town Meeting

## Open Town Meeting

- A yearly event which gathers all the town's eligible voters
  - Every resident that attends can vote and speak on all matters during the meeting
  - Usually only a fraction of the populace shows up and participates

## Representative Town Meeting

- Town meeting representatives elected from every precinct to represent the public
  - There can be as few as 45 representatives or as many as 240
- Meetings are open for public participation but not everyone can vote
- Cannot be adopted in a town unless it has a population greater than 6,000

# Select Board

TOWN OF SHARON



**KIANA PIERRE-  
LOUIS**

Chair



**HANNA  
SWITLAKOWSKI**

Clerk



**EMILY E.  
SMITH-LEE**

Member



# Select Board: Roles and Responsibilities

Acts as chief executive body

Develop legislative and administrative policies

Hire Professional administrative staff and town counsel

Set fiscal guidelines for operating and capital budgets

Set tax, water and trash rates

Appoint officials and committee members (only for positions prescribed in the by-laws)

Administer Licenses (Alcohol, Auto Dealer, etc.) and Permits

Enforce town regulations and by-laws

Call for elections and Town Meetings

Hold public hearings on important town issues

# How Does the Select Board Operate?

- Select Board members are not elected by political party
- Elected by registered voters each spring for staggered, three-year terms
- Mainly a Volunteer Position
  - Receive a small stipend
- Open Meetings
  - Governed by the Open Meeting Law
    - All meetings of a "public body "are open to the public
  - Meetings must be posted 48 hours in advance
  - Currently conducted over Zoom on a bi-weekly basis (with some variability)

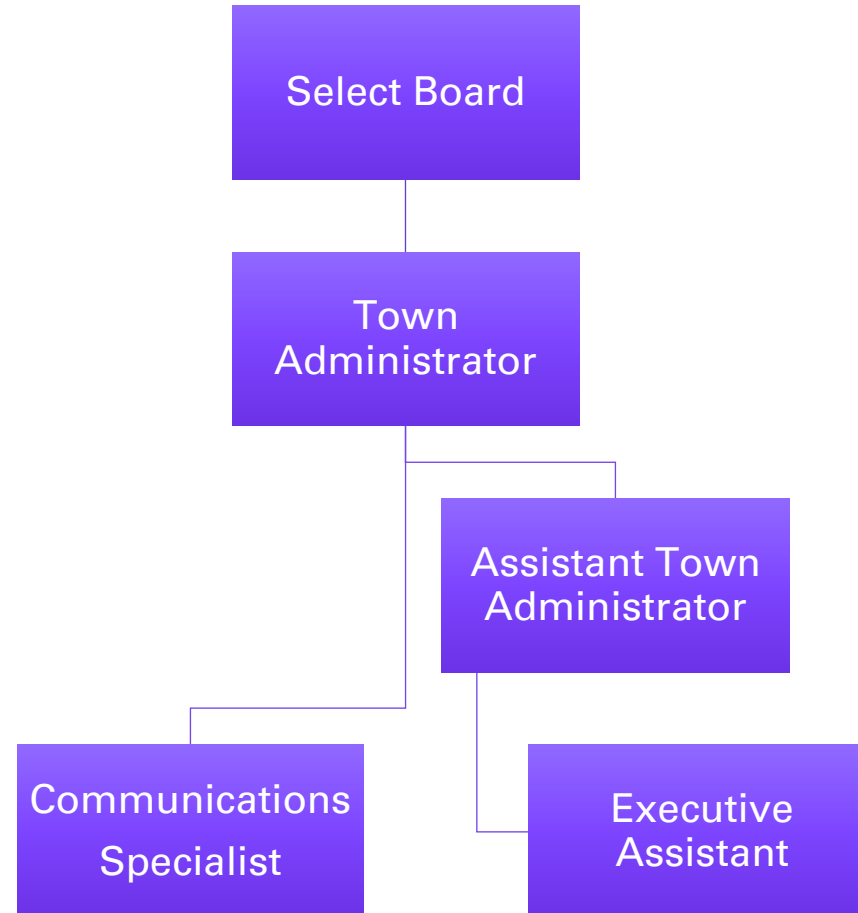
# Town Administrator's Office



- **FREDERIC TURKINGTON** – Town Administrator
- **LAUREN BARNES** – Assistant Town Administrator
- **MELISSA IMBARO** – Executive Assistant
- **DONNA WHITEHEAD** – Communications Specialist



# Office of the Town Administrator



TOWN OF SHARON



# Town Administrator

- Overseeing, directing and retaining responsibility for all department heads under their authority, including recommending appointments
- Attending all meetings of the Select Board and other meetings as so directed
- Attending all Annual and Special Town Meetings, having a voice but not a vote in all discussions
- Carrying out the votes and policies of the Select Board
- Keeping the Select Board informed in matters of financial and administrative concern
- Studying and recommending long-term strategic and capital planning programs as so directed by the Board
- Preparing the monthly Select Board meeting agenda and gathering information pertinent to matters coming before the Select Board for discussion and action
- Serving as public relations officer, processing inquiries and concerns of the public solving problems wherever possible
- Assisting the Select Board in negotiating all contracts and collective bargaining agreements





# By-Laws

- Local ordinances, regulations, and procedures
- Some municipalities are governed by a town charter, however, Sharon's form of government is set by a series of town by-laws
- Reviewed, updated and amended as needed (frequently)
- Changes must be approved by Town Meeting

# Case Study: By-Law Amendment

- In 2021, the Select Board, voted to establish the Governance Study Committee.
  - The mission of the Governance Study Committee is to review the current town bylaws and to recommend changes in governance to reflect best practices to assure effective and equitable processes for reaching decisions with regard to policies and the delivery of public services.
- The Governance Study Committee recently made a recommendation to expand the Select Board from 3 to 5 members
- This recommendation was proposed by town officials and approved by voters at the 2022 Town Meeting
- Currently, the change is being reviewed by the Attorney General's Office to assure it is in-line with state laws and norms
- Then, the amendment will be placed on the ballot during the annual town election to achieve final approval from the people



# Boards and Committees pt. 1

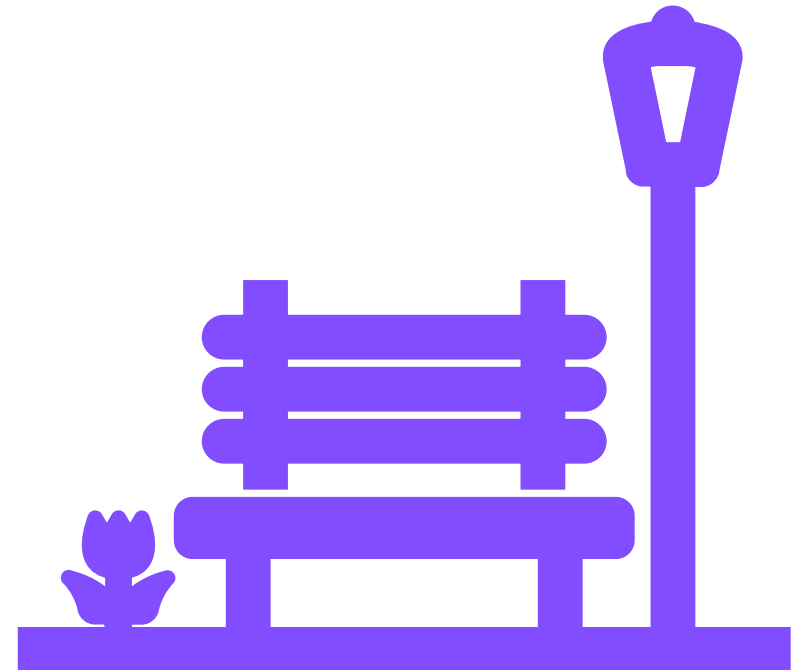


- Elected and appointed positions depending on role
- Critical role in oversight and governance process
- Specified purpose
- Provides an avenue for public service and participation
- 38 boards and committees

# Boards and Committees pt.2



- For example:
  - The Conservation Commission is responsible for the protection of land, water, and biological resources within the Town of Sharon.
  - The Finance Committee's mission reviews all matters that are the subject of, or relate to, discussion and voting at Town meeting, including the Town's budgets, for the purpose of providing information and making independent recommendations to residents.
  - The Board of Assessors is responsible for the fair and equitable valuation of all real and personal property in the Town.



# Elected Officials

Board of Assessors (3 members)

Housing Authority (5 members)

Board of Library Trustees (6 members)

Moderator (1 members)

Planning Board (5 members)

School Committee (7 members)

Select Board (3 members)

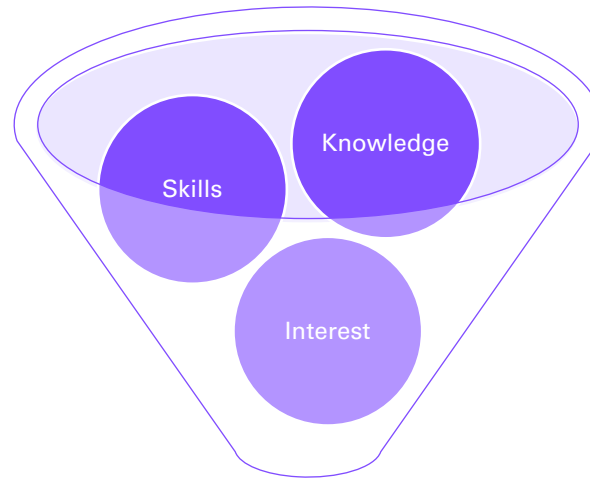
Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical School Representative (1 member)

Town Clerk (1 member)

# Appointed Officials

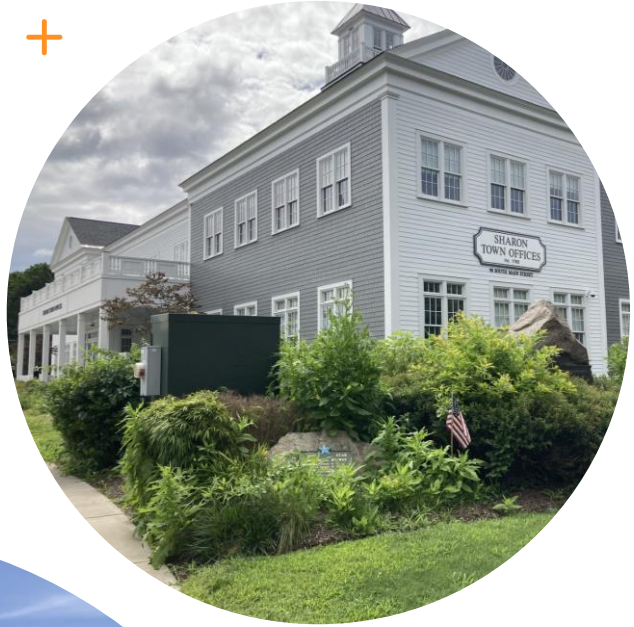
<b>Audit Committee (7 members)</b>	<b>Deputy Collector (1 member)</b>	<b>Lake Management Committee (6 members)</b>	<b>Registrar of Voters (4 members)</b>
<b>Board of Health (5 members)</b>	<b>Dorchester and Surplus Revenue Fund (3 members)</b>	<b>Library Reuse Committee (5 members)</b>	<b>Sharon Cultural Council (14 members)</b>
<b>Capital Outlay Committee (15 members)</b>	<b>Economic Development Committee (7 members)</b>	<b>MBTA Advisory Committee (1 member)</b>	<b>Sharon Independence Day Celebration Committee (9 members)</b>
<b>Civil Defense (2 members)</b>	<b>Edmund H. Talbot Fund (3 members)</b>	<b>Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (1 member)</b>	<b>Sharon Standing Building Committee (10 members)</b>
<b>Commission on Disabilities (9 members)</b>	<b>Energy Advisory Committee (5 members)</b>	<b>Municipal Solar Oversight Committee (6 members)</b>	<b>Sharon Standing Building Committee Selection Committee (6 members)</b>
<b>Community Preservation Committee (7 members)</b>	<b>Finance Committee (10 members)</b>	<b>Norfolk County Advisory Board ( 1 member)</b>	<b>Town Counsel (1 member)</b>
<b>Conservation Commission (8 members)</b>	<b>Finance Committee Nominating Committee (5 members)</b>	<b>Parking Officer (1 member)</b>	<b>Technology &amp; Telecommunications Advisory Committee (7 members)</b>
<b>Constables (5 members)</b>	<b>Health Agents (2 members)</b>	<b>Personnel Board (6 members)</b>	<b>Transportation Advisory Board (5 members)</b>
<b>Council on Aging Board (13 members)</b>	<b>Historical Commission Historical District Commission (8 members)</b>	<b>Priorities Committee (10 members)</b>	<b>Tree Warden (1 member)</b>
<b>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (7 members)</b>	<b>Inspectors (7 members)</b>	<b>Recreation Advisory Committee (10 members)</b>	<b>Water Management Advisory Committee (7 members)</b>
<b>Zoning Board of Appeals (6 members)</b>	<b>Staff Appointments (3 members)</b>		

# Residents Role in Local Government



**Informed Residents**

**Effective Town  
Government**



# THANK YOU

- Fred Turkington
- Contact us at [selectboard@townofsharon.org](mailto:selectboard@townofsharon.org)

