

**MINUTES**  
**SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
*June 6, 2017*

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00pm in the Town Hearing Room at the Sharon Community Center with Chairman John J. McGrath, Clerk William A. Heitin, Selectman Walter B. Roach and Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

**Recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance**

The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Sustainable Sharon Coalition presentation of petition regarding the 35-gallon smart cart trash and recycling program**

Cheryl Schnitzer of the Sustainable Sharon Coalition presented the Board with their 35-Gallon SMART Cart Trash Program petition. The petition contained 1,529 signatures and read as follows:

We, the undersigned, residents of Sharon, MA, support the Selectmen in adopting a 35-gallon SMART (Save Money And Reduce Trash) cart trash program and weekly recycling.

The advocacy group has spent the last two years educating the public about the program through outreach. They are confident that their proposal is fair and flexible and sends the right message. Research found that Sharon is in the top 20% of trash generators in the State. If things remain status quo the costs will rise significantly as the tipping fee at the incinerator has doubled.

The proposal includes weekly recycling pick-up and a 35-gallon trash cart which holds three tall kitchen bags. For families worried that the cart is not large enough; a second cart may be purchased. PAYT trash bags are also being considered for overage. Ms. Schnitzer said they have garnered tremendous public support. She thanked the Board for their consideration.

Selectman Roach has been asked by residents if smaller trash bags would be available for those that do not fill a large bag. Mr. Turkington responded that they are available and could be considered. Keevin Geller of 2 Canton Street asked if the town would be bringing back the recycling drop off near the Police Station. Chairman McGrath replied that could be addressed during the next agenda discussion. Victor Dubinsky of 8 Huntington Avenue talked with the Sustainable Sharon Coalition and has concerns about the statistics that suggest 80% of Sharon would benefit from the program. He is vigilant about recycling but is not convinced residents will fit their trash in the 35-gallon receptacle without overflow.

**Discussion regarding options for Municipal Solid Waste & Recycling Collection Program and Fee Changes**

Mr. Turkington explained that the Sustainable Sharon Coalition's petition effort coincided with the Town's effort for a new program with the contract coming up for renewal in December. The finances were reviewed with the Selectmen back in April. There has not been an increase in the trash fees since they set the quarterly fee at \$54 in July 2010. Since then, the tipping fee for solid waste has increased from \$35.52 per ton in 2010 to \$63.30 per ton in 2017. The cost of collection has increased \$148.50 per year in July 2012 to \$172.04 today. These two factors alone require a \$20 increase per quarter just to continue the program as-is and break even.

The Board authorized Mr. Turkington to negotiate with Republic in advance of competitive bidding to perhaps wring some savings out of the program. He had three separate sessions with Republic where basic logistics were discussed and the possibility for automation. It was found that no savings could be realized from modifying routes or collection times. However, automation could create savings as a result of reduced collection times and Worker's Compensation claims.

They looked into the following three options:

1. Continue existing program with no changes (negotiate contract extension)
2. Utilize SMART cart program at 35g size, with two-tier fee for households requesting weekly second barrel and PAYT bags for occasional overflow (new 5 year contract)
3. Utilize SMART cart program using 65g barrels and PAYT bags for overflow (new contract)

Mr. Turkington noted that the average home generates about 1,825 pounds per year or 35 pounds per week. Based on those statistics, he believes the 35 gallon cart is more than sufficient, yet realizes that some families may have overflow. The premise for developing a new program is whether to continue as-is or design a program that spreads the costs more equitably based on usage.

Mr. Turkington recommends the following changes to the solid waste and recycling program:

1. Recycling collection is to continue unchanged, with bi-weekly collection using Town-supplied 96 gallon containers. Approve offering second container to residents who consistently fill the container within the two-week period at direct cost. Data shows that less than 10% of the households fill the 96 gallon container often enough to justify the change and cost which adds \$60.00 to the fee per year
2. For municipal solid waste (MSW), approve establishment of a semi-automated collection system using 35g carts effective October 1, 2017. To implement the program, accept a state grant that provides \$30 per container for a single container for each of 5,255 household accounts. Purchased barrels would be delivered by the vendor on a weekday between September 12 and 22; barrel use by residents would begin with collection on Monday, October 1, 2017. The Town will apply to the DEP for a grant to offset the cost of the carts.
3. Create two levels of service for MSW collection to be chosen by each household. Approve a standard level of service that includes one 35g cart (residents would purchase overflow bags (known as pay-as-you-throw or PAYT option) for occasional extra trash, with the price of the bags covering both higher collection costs and the tipping fee for the tonnage generated). Approve a second service option that includes two 35g containers at a higher quarterly fee that would cover the cost of the second container and the increased collection and tipping fee (PAYT bags can be used for occasional additional overflow needs). Customers with consistently higher volumes of MSW would elect this service level by notifying Republic through a system to be determined during a window between mid-July and mid-August that allows for delivery of second barrel and setting up the higher fee in the billing system. The selection requires a commitment to the higher disposal level of service through September 20, 2018 and a \$40.00 payment to purchase the second container. Residents who determine they can use the standard service can opt out of the program for the October 2018 quarter.
4. Set the quarterly MSW/recycling program fee for all customers effective July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2018 at \$70 per quarter, up from the current \$54 per quarter. Set the quarterly fee for those households who elect the higher disposal level option at \$95 per quarter. The additional cost will cover the additional pick up time and weight of the trash.
5. Approve implementation of PAYT bags (33g) for overflow trash effective October 1, 2017 and set the fee at \$2.40 per bag. Bags will have the Sharon seal and be sold in bundles of 5 bags for \$12.00 beginning September 19, 2017. Industry standards suggest that residents use approximately 18 bags per year or have additional needs once every three weeks.

6. Approve addition of spring yard waste collection in paper bags to be added to the existing fall yard waste program. Collection will be held on the week that includes the fourth Monday of April and the week that includes the third Monday of May beginning in 2018.
7. Introduce a roll-off container with a fixed lid and slotted opening for resident drop off of cardboard effective July 19, 2017 at the parking lot adjacent to Deborah Sampson Park. Continuation of the service will be subject to evaluation on an annual basis.

During negotiations with Republic, the staff felt the automation savings weren't as great as could be expected. As an inducement, Republic agreed to a lower cost with the assumption that Sharon is going to improve its recycling percentages and therefore the volume of solid waste and built in a \$0.40 per bag fee to cover additional collection time for overflow bags. Mr. Turkington believes the final contract provides for a reasonable level of service for every resident by shifting costs to the heavier users rather than having it subsidized by smaller users. One of the advantages of the program is that you may purchase the second cart and return it after the first year if you decide you no longer need it. Mr. Turkington feels this feature accommodates those regularly in the higher need category.

Mr. Turkington noted that Sharon does a good job of recycling with percentages in the top quartile in the state. With only a few communities using the 35 gallon cart program, there is limited data, but recycling in those communities has increased on average 20-30%. For example, if Sharon's recycling rate increased from 28% to 35% it would save about \$50,000 in disposal of solid waste costs. The Town negotiated a cap on the fee Sharon will pay for the disposal of recycling and a market share for proceeds from recyclable sales. The sale of recyclable materials (newsprint, cardboard, glass, cans, etc.) fluctuates with the market, when the market is strong, Republic has agreed to share proceeds with the town 50/50.

If the Board approves this proposal, the goal would be to order barrels and have them delivered in the first two weeks of September and to have the bags delivered and available in stores two weeks before the program begins October 1, 2017. If the Board doesn't act by June 20, 2017, it will delay the implantation until April 2018. Mr. Turkington felt it was important to point out that the trash program fund is currently in deficit partly because they have not raised the fee and from rising costs. The total budget is roughly 1.5-1.6 million dollars.

Selectman Roach suggested that the Board allow some time for the public to review the proposal and send in feedback before the next meeting. Mr. Turkington suggested they post an executive summary of the proposal on the website and allow for time on the next agenda for public comment. Then the Board can decide at that point if they are ready to vote.

Mr. Turkington noted that a few items still need tweaking between now and October, such as solutions for the location of cardboard drop off and pick up/drop off of bulky items. He will also look into the small size PAYT bag option Selectman Roach inquired about noting they are typically only used in communities that strictly use the PAYT program for all waste disposal, not just overflow.

The Selectmen took questions and comments from the audience:

- Victor Dubinsky of 8 Huntington Avenue asked for clarification on the fees. Mr. Turkington replied that the fee is \$70.00 per quarter for the 35 gallon option and \$76.00 for the existing program and \$95.00 for two 35 gallon barrels. Mr. Dubinsky felt the difference between the 35 gallon and existing program was minimal. Mr. Turkington explained that collection rates are based on averages so new program is designed to re-shift some of the cost burden on heavier users. Mr. Dubinsky is concerned about the size of the container because he tends to have bulkier trash items. Mr. Turkington compared the program to water usage – if you use more water your bill will be higher, etc.

- Silas Fyler of 48 Highland Street inquired about cost associated with a second recycling bin. Mr. Turkington said the program is designed to promote recycling and is hopeful there will be no additional cost.
- Walter Suita of 37 Brook Road asked about data related to animal intrusion from leaving PAYT bags out overnight. Mr. Turkington explained no data had been gathered and suggested that the bags be placed into the waste barrels each household currently used to guard against animal intrusion.
- Cheryl Weinstein of 4 Coach Lane thanked the Board for looking into all the options available.
- Mindy Levine of 35 Cottage Street asked about subsidized composting costs. Mr. Turkington replied that there has been no discussion about compost.
- Hana Jenner, 20 Glendale Road thanked the Board for looking into all the options. She agreed with Mr. Turkington's comparison to water usage and feels that if you use more, you pay more. She noted that the Sustainable Sharon Coalition is a great resource for help with improving recycling.

Chairman McGrath would like to give an opportunity for the public to review the proposal before taking a vote. The proposal will be posted to the Town's website. Questions and comments will be accepted via email prior to the next meeting. Mr. Turkington assured residents that everything else about the trash program will remain the same other than what has been outlined this evening (related to fee, type of barrel & PAYT).

#### **Discussion and possible vote regarding Sharon Celebrates Diversity Banners**

Chairman McGrath explained that the Board had a request from Mr. Keevin Geller to take down the banner that displayed the Iranian national flag. After receiving an outstanding response by email (136 total emails), he is confident the Board is ready to make a decision. Chairman McGrath feels it's important for residents to speak up when they have a problem and believes it is an important part of free speech. He believes this issue is a matter of perception. Chairman McGrath noted that since the last meeting, Mr. Geller has received outrageous hateful emails calling him a bigot and Islamaphobe, which he felt was unfair and not a reflection of his character. Chairman McGrath wished to share the following email with the audience, noting that it was very representative of the letters received:

Dear Selectmen,

I have recently become aware of the controversy surrounding a banner with Iranian flag displayed in the Town center as part of 'Sharon Celebrates Diversity' Project, initiated by the Rotary Club of Sharon and the Sharon Lion's Club as part of their Centennial Celebrations. So far, there has been no objection to any of the other 88 flag banners representing the heritage of Sharon residents from around the world. I understand that this project has the approval and support of the Town of Sharon.

I appreciate the First Amendment greatly, for it is a privilege denied in many other societies from where the bulk of immigrants seeking better lives come from. I am also a firm believer in the power of dialogue as a means of reconciliation. I look forward to the town meeting on May 23<sup>rd</sup>, and sincerely hope we can all see this as an opportunity to learn from each other.

As a first generation immigrant, though not of Iranian origin, I have a perspective on this issue that I want to share with you.

To be clear, the depiction of flags on banners DOES NOT represent an acknowledgement or approval of the governments of these countries. The fact is, the policies of many of these governments are responsible for turning their citizens into emigrants in the first place, forcing them to leave the lands of their ancestors and suffer the ultimate heartache of separating from aging parents in order to safeguard their children's future.

Most of these governments have failed their people utterly and thoroughly, and they do not want to celebrate them at all.

What we do want to celebrate, however, are our roots. We want to celebrate the journeys that brought us here, and the lives we left behind. The flags are an integral part of our multi-hyphenated identities, like the ethnic foods we still cook from family recipes passed down generations of nurturing women, the artifacts we proudly display in our homes and the clothing we use on special occasions. The flags are a symbol of all that was good, all that we fought to change, and all the hope we still carry within our hearts for those we left behind. If we were to pretend our lives didn't exist before arriving here, we would be doing a great disservice to our future generations. Sanitizing history has never served anyone well in the long term. We must honor the sacrifices of our ancestors before we can dream for our future generations.

Fortunately, in this Land of the Free, we have the liberty to decide for ourselves whatever we want to choose as our heritage, and if the symbol of a flag is one of the many we choose to hold on to, we hope others who have not had an immigrant experience will try to understand our true intent, and work to discourage misinterpretation that sows discord in our midst.

I thank the both the organizations, and the Town, for celebrating all of its residents in such a meaningful way. May we continue to value our many backgrounds, our diverse national origins, and remain, "...one Nation, under God, indivisible, with justice and liberty for all".

Thank you

Chairman McGrath felt the representation of the banner was to reflect the origin of those that came here and took on hardships to live under the American Flag. Chairman made a motion to deny the request to remove the banner and to leave the banner with the flag as-is. Selectman Roach seconded the motion and feels that it was not the intention of the groups hosting the diversity events to support any particular government, but rather a celebration of heritage.

**MOTION:** That the Board deny the request to remove the banner that contains the Iranian flag and to leave the banner with that flag displayed as-is  
(Roach - McGrath) 3-0 **PASSES**

#### Discussion of potential Special Fall Town Meeting

Mr. Turkington explained that they had a series of options from the Town Clerk for Special Town Meeting dates positioned around conflicts in their office due to upcoming special elections. Mr. Turkington put together a schedule backfilling from the targeted meeting date of November 6 that provides adequate time for publication of warrant, distribution to households and hearings by various Boards. A date for the Three Board meeting is still being decided. Warrant articles to be considered:

- A law, as part of the Modernization Act, that would allow the town to use proceeds of bond premiums to reduce project costs
- Appropriation for Town Hall rehabilitation / replacement project
  - Project update targeted for next meeting to review updated plan and cost estimate
- High School Schematic Design Funds
  - Advised by Superintendent of Schools and SSBC Chairman that based on the timeline, approval for these funds would have to happen this fall
- Sharon Gallery

- Article will be modified to remove “housekeeping” language for other business districts and simply proposed additional uses.

### Consent Calendar

- I. Vote to approve regular session minutes of May 23, 2017
- II. Vote to appoint election workers for the period beginning September 1, 2017 at the request of Town Clerk Marlene B. Chused
- III. Vote to approve Net School Spending Agreement for end of year reporting between the Sharon School Committee and Town of Sharon
- IV. Vote to proclaim June 14, 2017 Flag Day
- V. Vote to appoint Walter B. Roach, Jr. to the Sharon Standing Building Selection Committee

**MOTION:** To approve the June 6, 2017 consent calendar, as read and understood  
(Heitin-Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

### Town Administrator's Report

Mr. Turkington reported the following:

- Received a quote for the survey work for the Gavin's Pond property. Waiting for the third bid, but low bid so far is \$9,000
- Collective Bargaining: a few groups have settled; others are waiting for votes from their membership
- Reminder for residents that are regular users of the commuter rail - the quarterly commuter parking passes go on sale this Thursday (June 8) at 7:00p.m, one week later than usual due to the Jewish holiday
- State Aid – MMA expects the House-Senate budget conference committee to review and revise revenue estimates, as state income tax collections are down over the last year and part of the Town's state aid is tied to the growth in estimated revenue. Finance Committee had requested that any additional revenue from the state be used to offset a portion of the 2.5% tax increase, so the anticipated amount may be smaller than previously expected
- Mr. Turkington handed out the implementation schedule from Waste Zero for the PAYT bag program
- Flag day activities are scheduled for Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Next meeting:

- Hope to have finalists for the Finance Director/Town Accountant to be present for interviews. Search Committee is meeting Thursday, June 15 to interview semi-finalists.
- Town Hall project update
- Continued discussion on changes to the trash and recycling collection program

### Topics not reasonably anticipated forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting

Announcements:

#### Flag Day, Wednesday, June 14, 2017

Selectman Heitin announced the Flag Day program events which will occur on Wednesday, June 14 at Sharon Veterans Memorial Park beginning at 6:50pm. Boy Scouts from Troop 95 will raise and lower the flag and explain the Protocol for folding the U.S. Flag. Students from Sharon Heights and Cottage Street Schools will perform songs. At 7:00pm the Pledge of Allegiance will be recited.

### Fire Department Thank You Notes

Chairman McGrath recognized the thank you notes received by the Sharon Fire Department. He took a moment to thank our public servants for their service.

### **Executive Session – 9:01pm**

**MOTION:** To enter into Executive Session to discuss collective bargaining and pending litigation, and at the end, to adjourn of the evening. Discussion of these items in open session would be detrimental to the bargaining position of the Town.

(Heitin - Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Roach: Aye

McGrath: Aye

Heitin: Aye

### **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 10:20 pm

(Heitin - Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

#### List of Documents:

- Sustainable Sharon Coalition - Trash & recyclable petition; Tonnage change & cost savings graph; Recycling Opportunities Beyond the Curb; Acceptable recyclables sheet; Comments from Wrentham after implantation
- Fred Turkington – May 31, 2017 Memorandum: Municipal Solid Waste & Recycling Collection Program
- FY 2018 Trash & Recycling Budget
- Republic Services 2017 collection fees
- Trash truck automated solutions
- Quotes for trash cars & PAYT trash bags
- Fred Turkington – April 11, 2017 Memorandum: Status of finances and service delivery options for solid waste recycling
- Allied Waste Services tonnage report and community program service descriptions
- Diversity Discussion – List of emails received
- Proposed Fall Special Town Meeting Schedule
- May 23, 2017 Board of Selectmen Minutes
- Marlene Chused – Letter requesting appointment of Election Workers
- Net School Spending Agreement for end of year reporting between the Sharon School Committee and Town of Sharon
- Veterans Agent Paul Bergeron – Flag Day Proclamation
- Report of the Town Administrator
- Contracts: Management Professional Employees Association; Tentative Agreement with AFSCME, AFL-CIO, Local 362
- Miscellaneous Correspondence