

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
March 23, 2022

The March 23, 2022 meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Select Board Chair William Heitin remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Hanna Switekowski and Emily Smith-Lee were in attendance as was Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. and Assistant Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearing – Water Rates

MOTION: To open the continued water rate hearing from last evening.
(Heitin - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Due to an unexpected conflict, all three members of the Select Board were unable to attend the meeting last evening. Therefore, the Public Hearing on water rates was continued to 7:00 pm this evening. There were no comments, concerns, or questions emailed to the Board as a result of the hearing being opened last evening.

Mr. Eric Hooper, DPW Superintendent began Recent past rate increases were in keeping with the approach adopted previously by the Water Management Advisory Committee of having regular, relatively small rate increases. It used to be that producing our water was very low cost. All we had to do was pump the water out of the ground and add some chemicals that were relatively inexpensive for pH and disinfection (bacterial control). The majority of departmental costs were in maintenance of the delivery and storage system of an essentially free resource. However, the current Commonwealth treatment mandates for newly identified constituents that we are regulated by has essentially changed this. With the requirement for treatment of virtually all the water that we provide, we will see a drastic increase in the actual cost of the water prior to delivery.

What is proposed is a rate increase that should result in an increase in overall revenues of about 15% from roughly \$4.8 million to \$5.5 million. The revenue increase will allow the Water Department to absorb the cost of Phase 1 of the permanent treatment program to remove PFAS and to continue its long-term infrastructure improvement program of water main replacement and implementation of other large capital projects. An additional similar increase may be required for Phase 2 depending on success achieved pursuing additional grants and lower interest funding.

This proposed increase was presented to the Water Management Advisory Committee for discussion in January and February and approved by the Committee for presentation to the Select Board.

The proposed changes include the following highlights:

1. Increased the fixed fee from \$60/quarter to \$85/quarter. Revenue collected through this fee is used to fund Phase 1 of PFAS treatment for Well #4 and to support the recent debt for water main replacement projects in the Heights, Massapoag Avenue and Pond Street as well as large capital projects such as the Emergency MWRA Connection, the Massapoag Avenue Tank replacement, and the meter replacement project. Note that \$85/quarter will be about two-thirds of the actual debt service.
2. A change to all consumption block rates and use categories, including “Other” which was not changed previously, but is being brought closer to residential winter rates and “Irrigation Only” to match residential summer rates.

3. Retain subsidized fee for income qualified residents using the criteria set for subsidized trash collection, i.e., waiving the base fee and charging for water used only.

Based on past use history, approximately 350 households (6%), will remain in the lowest, most subsidized block, and an additional 500 households will remain in the second block. These two blocks represent approximately 15% of accounts and are primarily 1 and 2 person households and elderly residents.

Also based on past use history, approximately 25% of Sharon households will have water use that will reach the top block rate.

To qualify for subsidized Capital Project Fee waiver, single income resident households may have a maximum annual income of \$24,980, multiple income households may earn a combined annual income of no more than \$33,820. Applications for subsidized fee waiver will be available at the Sharon Council on Aging Administrative offices at the Sharon Community Center. Residents who receive this subsidized rate must apply for the subsidy annually.

Proposed rates and block break points:

Capital Project Fee	Residential		Other*	Irrigation Only
	Spring/Summer	Fall/Winter		
0-4,000 gallons	\$5.50	\$4.75	\$5.00	\$10.50
4,000-7,000 gallons	\$8.75	\$7.75	\$6.50	\$10.50
7,000-17,500 gallons	\$11.50	\$10.25	\$7.50	\$11.50
17,500-27,000 gallons	\$13.50	\$12.75	\$8.00	\$13.50
>27,000 gallons	\$15.75	\$14.75	\$8.50	\$15.75

* Agriculture, commercial and industrial uses

Fall/Winter: October through March

Spring/Summer: April through September

Current Rates and Proposed Increase:

Capital Project Fee	Residential		Other*	Irrigation Only
	Spring/Summer	Fall/Winter		
0-4,000 gallons	\$5.25 + \$0.25	\$4.50 + \$0.25	\$4.00 + \$1.00	\$10.00 + \$0.50
4,000-7,000 gallons	\$8.00 + \$0.75	\$7.50 + \$0.25	\$4.50 + \$2.00	\$10.00 + \$0.50
7,000-17,500 gallons	\$11.00 + \$0.50	\$9.75 + \$0.50	\$5.00 + \$2.50	\$11.00 + \$0.50
17,500-27,000 gallons	\$13.00 + \$0.50	\$12.50 + \$0.25	\$5.50 + \$2.50	\$13.50
>27,000 gallons	\$15.50 + \$0.25	\$14.50 + \$0.25	\$6.00 + \$2.50	\$15.00 + \$0.75

MOTION: To close the water rate hearing.
(Smith-Lee- Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve the 2023 water rates as presented.
(Smith-Lee- Heitin)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: NO
Smith-Lee: AYE
2-1 **PASSES**

Water use restriction article

It was explained that this began as an irrigation bylaw. This would codify the equipment needed in irrigation systems in Sharon. It was realized that bylaws are different than rules and regulations. The creation of a bylaw will allow the Department to create rules and regulations. Public Works is not seeking to create an enforceable rule immediately, rather create a path forward for the creation of operating practices for outdoor water use in the summer.

Mr. Heitin explained that he asked to have this item held since Mr. Hooper and Mr. Crosby would be at the meeting this evening to discuss water rates.

<u>Article #</u>	<u>Article</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Vote</u>
18	Establish Outdoor Water Use Bylaw	WMAC	3-0 Support

Mountain Street lease of space for PF solar panels (former landfill site)

It was explained that this is a solar project which has been in the works for some time. Mr. Aronson of 329 Billings Street as well as the Energy Advisory and Municipal Solar Oversight Committees provided highlights of the projects so far. He explained that this process began with a procurement in 2019 and Town Meeting vote in November 2019. The process was structured so that the MSOC would work with abutters and stakeholders to develop a site plan. Extensive meetings were held with the developer and abutters.

At this point, the committee felt it important to document the progress and bring to the Select Board with several recommendations. Although the agreement is very close, it is still not complete. The abutter to the landfill site has requested another meeting with landscape architect. Mr. Aronson made clear that the Select Board is not being requested to approve the site plan at this time, rather the approval of the guidelines and a path forward to get to the site plan. This recommendation was voted unanimously by the Municipal Solar Oversight Committee on March 21, 2022. Town Counsel has reviewed the recommendation.

The Board acknowledged that a lot of work has gone into the preparation thus far and this seems like a sensible step toward finalization. The final plan and final contracts will be brought before the Select Board for consideration in the future.

MOTION: To approve the Municipal Solar Oversight recommendation as discussed and presented.
(Switekowski - Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Return to in-person meetings

The Board discussed the potential for a return to in-person meetings. There is uncertainty around the equipment and staffing required by Sharon TV for hybrid meetings. The Board expressed their desire to retain the public participation but understands the difficulty in doing so effectively without burdening Sharon TV. Mr. Turkington advised that this is just the beginning of the conversation. He will solicit additional information from Sharon TV and is hopeful for a return to some form of an in-person meeting for the May 10 meeting. The Board had no objection to other Boards/Committees/Commissions returning to in-person meetings in April.

Consent Calendar

Review and approve the consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the minutes of the March 8, 2022 meeting
- II. Vote to approve a one-day liquor license on March 26, 2022 for Indira Pisupati for a private event at the Sharon Community Center
- III. Vote to appoint Police Chief Stephen Coffey as Constable for a term expiring December 31, 2023
- IV. Vote to accept a donation of \$8,500 from the Sharon High School Class of 2021 for the purchase of a digital sign for the new High School building
- V. Vote to authorize helicopter landing at Gavins Pond fields by Norfolk County Mosquito Control during April vacation for annual larvicide application
- VI. Vote to approve SYBSA annual carnival dates of May 19-22, 2022 at Deborah Sampson park

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar.
(Smith-Lee - Switlekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switlekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Town Administrator's report

We received / exchanged approximately 9 pieces of correspondence between 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 4 and 9:00 a.m. on Monday, March 21. Topics included:

Alleged zoning violations at Cumberland Farms,
Community service projects for senior class,
Notices regarding invitation to SSC Sustainability Award presentation on April 23,
Invitation to Anti-Semitism virtual forum on March 28,
Follow-up on Juniper Road construction issues,
Invitation to Eagle Scout Court of Honor on March 26, and
Appearance by Sharon HS students on WGBH *High School Quiz Show* program on April 16.

The Finance Committee warrant hearing will be held on April 25 by Zoom.

Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting

There was a request for an additional warrant article yesterday for the Board to consider. The Sharon Gallery team has requested a simple easement which requires a Town Meeting vote. This easement would allow the sewer connection. The Board will vote their position at a future meeting.

Ms. Switekowski mentioned that her only concern centers around previous correspondence with residents and wishes to ensure that concerns of the neighborhood are addressed. She also would like to ensure they are aware it is happening. Mr. Turkington advised that they have been involved with draft of IMA. He will make sure that counsel for the homeowner's association is apprised. Repaving of the section of road at the connection site will also be addressed.

The Board clarified that their vote is only to include this on the warrant.

MOTION: To insert an article for the Sharon Gallery easement to the annual Town Meeting warrant.
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

MOTION: To approve out-of-state travel for Captain Solden and Firefighters Morrissey, Laracy, Keach, Sorafine, Bauer, Keefe, Gurfinkel, Taha, and Roskamp to attend command level operations and live fire training in Dayville, CT on April 2 and 3, 2022.
(Switekowski – Smith-Lee)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Ms. Switekowski shared that the DEI Committee is hosting a Shared Legacies event on April 5 with Temple Sinai at Sharon Community Center.

The also mentioned that the food pantry low on supplies, specifically donations of laundry detergent and other sundries.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:01 pm
(Smith-Lee - Switekowski)

Heitin: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
Smith-Lee: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Proposed water rates
- Hearing notice
- Draft of Annual Town Meeting warrant
- MSOC Recommendation
- Minutes
- Application
- Memorandum

- Town Administrator's report