

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
April 11, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Hanna R. Switekowski remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Emily Smith-Lee and Kiana Pierre-Louis (7:35 pm) were in attendance as was Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr. and Assistant Town Administrator, Lauren Barnes. The meeting commenced with the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment period

A resident submitted an email in lieu of attending in-person relaying opposition to a return to in-person meetings as well as electronic distribution of future Town Meeting warrants. The message was read verbatim by the Town Administrator. There being no other public comment, Ms. Switekowski proceeded with the meeting.

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the open session minutes of March 28, 2023
- II. Vote to approve the following banner request/requests:
 - a. Cottage Street PTO Fun Fair – May 8-15, 2023 in 2nd position
 - b. ICNE Sharon –Celebrating Eid – April 10-17, 2023 in 1st position
 - c. ICNE Sharon –Celebrating Eid – June 26 to July 3, 2023 in 2nd position
- III. Vote to approve temporary lawn signs for the Friends of the Sharon Public Library Book Sale to be located in Post Office Square and the Massapoag Ave rotary from May 17-21, 2023
- IV. Vote to approve a one-day liquor license for NRM Catering dba A Perfect Taste for a private event at the Sharon Community Center Ballroom from 1:00 to 4:00 pm on May 20, 2023
- V. Vote to approve closure of Edgewood Road between Valley Road and Walnut Street for a block party on Monday, May 29, 2023, from 12 noon to 10:00 pm contingent on approval by Sharon Police and Fire Departments
- VI. Vote to appoint Susan Olson Drisko to the Conservation Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2025
- VII. Vote to approve Sharon Lions Club White Cane Day fundraising event on Saturday April 29, 2023 from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm at the intersection of South Main, Chestnut, and East Chestnut Streets contingent on approval by the Sharon Police Department
- VIII. Vote to approve and sign the 2023 Annual Town Meeting warrant
- IX. Vote to award a contract to Karl Seidman Consulting Services in an amount not to exceed \$42,500 for the Community Planning Grant Program
- X. Vote to accept donations for Beech Tree Park totaling \$193 in honor of Joel Gopen
- XI. Vote to approve installation of a bench in memory of Ian Summerhayes at Gavins Pond

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

Smith-Lee: AYE
Switekowski: AYE

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

The final version of the Warrant was sent to the printer on March 30. It is expected to be delivered to the US Post Office on Thursday, April 13 for distribution on April 14-15. The Warrant will be posted online on April 10. The Moderator's review session and Finance Committee Warrant Hearing will be held via Zoom on Monday, April 24 beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Article 17 – library project financing will be discussed once construction bids have come in on April 13. The SSBC will review the bids and adjust, as needed, the project budget on Tuesday, April 18. The Select Board will review the proposed financing plan on Tuesday, April 25 and the Finance Committee will review and vote their recommendation on Wednesday, April 26. A one-page handout will be prepared and printed for distribution at ATM, with the text posted on the website by Thursday, April 27.

Staff will gather on April 11 to discuss ATM articles and logistics, filling staff vacancies (COA director, new communications specialists, COA administrative assistant), cybersecurity, training, and updates regarding finance procedures. The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 24 to review ATM article results, FY2024 budget implementation and FY2023 fiscal year close.

Thanks go out to Hana Jenner and a group of volunteers she organized to collect and dispose of litter around the train station, with plans to do more work on Moose Hill Road and South Walpole Street.

Town Meeting previously authorized \$15,000,000 to be borrowed and \$816,000 to be used from water retained earnings based on the assumed appropriation of ARPA funds previously discussed by the Select Board. The Town also received the Federal earmark in the amount of \$3,452,972 that will be used to offset anticipated borrowing and a \$150K state grant for the initial engineering assessment of alternative treatment methods. The application for Clean Water revolving funds is to a 0% to 2% interest loan program that would greatly reduce borrowing costs in the current rising interest rate environment. The net cost not covered by ARPA, Federal earmark and local sources is an estimated \$12.7M of the \$15M authorized amount; state CWF officials are seeking a certified vote appropriating the ARPA funds to this project.

We received / exchanged approximately 12 emails between Friday, March 24 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 6. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including Sharon Cultural Council newsletter, LMAC letter to residents regarding nutrient impacts on lake quality, MMA bulletin announcing Governor signing extension of remote meetings, announcement of blood drive at the Public Safety Building on May 5 sponsored by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community and invitation to Congressman Jake Auchincloss town hall on April 1.
- Email supporting Article 24 – elimination of personnel by-law;
- Email from Town Administrator of March 25 regarding Town Meeting logistics;
- Email from Town Administrator on March 30 advising of School Committee support for middle school solar project;
- Email from Fire Chief Michael Madden reporting on house fire at 41 Bayberry on March 31;
- Email from Police Chief Steve Coffey regarding “swatting” incident at Sharon HS on March 31; and,
- Email from Town Administrator of April 3 distributing ATM Warrant.

Future meeting agenda topics and tentative dates for discussion

- Discussion of proposed food truck regulations (April 11)
- Vote whether to offer additional COLA to retirees for calendar year 2023 (April 11)
- Discussion of remote vs. in-person meetings (April 11)
- Vote to designate ARPA funds and Federal earmark for water filtration facility (April 11)
- Discussion bids for solid waste/recycling collection (April 25)

Discussion and vote on Article 17 – library project funding (April 25)
Vote to approve updated HR policies regarding social media and technology (April 25)
Review and approve policy regarding public comment at committee meetings (April 25)
Discussion on South Main Street bike lane plan (May 9)

Fire Chief pinning – Chief Michael Madden

Town Clerk, Mark Hogan completed a swearing-in ceremony and Chief Michael Madden recited the oath of office. Chief Madden was pinned by his father. After receiving congratulations and a Citation from Representative Ted Phillips, Chief Madden offered some remarks. He stated that it is an honor to stand before the community as Fire Chief. He is committed to working tirelessly to ensure that the highest level of service continues to be provided to the residents of Sharon. Chief Madden took a moment to recognize his predecessors who have left a great legacy of excellence upon which he hopes to build. He is proud to be a member of the Sharon Fire Department and is eager to work together with his colleagues to uphold the tradition of excellence.

Firefighter pinning

Chief Madden explained that this is a special day for the newest members of the Sharon Fire Department; to celebrate their hard work and dedication to the community. He welcomed them to this noble and challenging profession. Firefighters put oneself in harm's way to help others. These individuals have completed rigorous training and Chief Madden offered his congratulations on this significant achievement. As they continue or start this new role, he encouraged them to remember the profession is about making a difference in people's lives; being counted upon when needed most and being part of a team to make the community a safer place.

Christian Cardinal was pinned by his father Steven. Jordan DeMello was pinned by his wife, Hillary, and their children, John Salema was pinned by his wife, Jill, and their children. Allannah Vargas was pinned by her fiancé, Heather.

State Representative Ted Phillips offered his congratulations and presented Chief Madden and pinned firefighters with citations.

Cost of Living Adjustment for retirees

On November 16, 2022, Governor Baker signed Chapter 269 of the Acts of 2022 into law. This act provides local retirement systems with a local option to increase the Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) for eligible retirees in fiscal year 2023 from 3% to 5%, retroactive to July 1, 2022. This additional COLA, which has been granted to retirees of the State and Teachers Retirement Systems already, is not a permanent change in the COLA percentage; it is only for fiscal year 2023.

The approval process for the additional 2% COLA is different than traditional COLA increases granted by the Advisory Council and Norfolk County Retirement Board (Retirement Board). To grant this special one-time COLA, the towns within Norfolk County Retirement System must vote.

As required, the approval process began with the Retirement Board's vote to grant the additional 2% COLA at its November 30, 2022 meeting. Followed by the County Commissioners' vote to grant the additional 2% COLA at its January 4, 2023 meeting. The final step is to have each town within Norfolk County Retirement System vote on whether to increase the COLA an additional 2% for fiscal year 2023 only. The approval in a town must be by the chief executive officer (likely the select board or council) as defined by G.L. c. 4, § 7. All votes must be acted on by the appropriate board/council during the fiscal year (until June 30, 2023) to qualify.

Two-thirds of the towns within Norfolk County Retirement System must grant the additional 2% COLA before the Retirement Board can provide this benefit to its retirees that were retired before July 1, 2021.

The COLA percentage is granted on a COLA base of \$18,000. An additional 2% for a retiree with an annual retirement allowance of \$18,000 or more will receive the maximum increase of \$360.00 per year or \$30 per

month. Retirees with lower annual retirement allowances will receive a prorated increase. The additional 2% COLA will not impact the fiscal year 2024 appropriation.

MOTION: To approve a 2 percent cost of living allowance increase for eligible retirees.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Food truck regulations

Mr. Turkington introduced Matt Dornemann. Matt has been hired as an Intern through the Town's partnership with Northeastern University. He explained that Matt has been working with staff on several projects, including developing regulations for expanding food trucks in Sharon.

Mr. Dornemann explained that his predecessor began this project with research on the practices of other Massachusetts communities. The draft regulation provided to the Board for their review came mostly from the Town of Needham as it was a good fit for Sharon. The regulations are based upon approval of vendors which will be tied to specific dates and locations. The six locations decided upon are Beach Street, Deborah Samson Park, Gavins Pond, Sharon Community Center, and Veteran's Memorial Park beach. These are common sense regulations which take sanitation codes, public right of way, alcohol, trash receptacles, the menu and pricing for food to be provided into consideration. This will be a two-pronged process. There will be a seasonal application issued by the Board of Health with a \$100 fee. A separate event application would be considered by the Select Board and would have a \$50 fee per event. It was explained that these fees are comparable to peer town data.

The Board questioned what the process looks like now. It was explained that Food Trucks are not presently allowed on Town Property, rather they can be invited to private property locations. These regulations were drafted around the thought that food trucks would be allowed at public events such as the July 3rd celebration and Sharon Day. The program could be expanded in the future to allow for participation at other locations. The Board expressed their concern that cost may prohibit vendor participation. The Board had a discussion on current fees and how the proposed fees would impact vendors. Mr. Turkington advised that this can be tweaked from time to time or at any point if needed after implementation. As it is not a bylaw, it would be within the Board's purview to change. There was a proposal to offer a sliding scale fee based on attendance. It was agreed that staff will continue to research and bring it back for the Board to consider at a future meeting.

Maryann Squillace of 115 Moose Hill Parkway was acknowledged by Ms. Switekowski. Ms. Squillace explained that she is the administrator of the Drop Everything and Eat Facebook group. She stated that there is a big call for Food Trucks. It has been a way to reacquaint folks with their neighbors. Because trucks are limited to private property, homeowners are afraid of liability issues. Food trucks want a guarantee of \$2000 in sales before committing to come. She felt it may be more prudent to increase the annual permit fee rather than charge per event. There is an appetite for this in the community, pun intended. The Board thanked the resident for her comments.

Affirm allocation of ARPA funds/Federal earmark for water treatment project

Town Meeting previously authorized \$15,000,000 to be borrowed and \$816,000 to be used from water retained earnings based on the assumed appropriation of ARPA funds previously discussed by the Select Board. The Town also received the Federal earmark in the amount of \$3,452,972 that will be used to offset anticipated borrowing and a \$150,000 state grant for the initial engineering assessment of alternative treatment methods. The application for Clean Water revolving funds is to a 0% to 2% interest loan program that would greatly reduce borrowing costs in the current rising interest rate environment. The net cost not covered by ARPA, Federal earmark and local sources is an estimated \$12.7M of the \$15M authorized amount; state CWF officials are seeking a certified vote appropriating the ARPA funds to this project.

MOTION: To authorize the submission of a SRF loan application based on an estimated design, construction, and total project cost of \$20.1M for the water treatment facility to address elevated PFAS levels and concentrations of iron and manganese (DEP Project Number DWSRF-12443/6942).

That \$1,983,455 in ARPA funds allocable to the Town and administered by the State and \$3,560,028 in ARPA funds allocable to the Town and administered by the County of Norfolk are hereby applied to PFAS water treatment plant projects (DEP Project Number DWSRF-12443/6942).”

That the Federal grant included in the omnibus FY2023 Federal budget entitled "Town of Sharon PFAS water treatment plant project" in the amount of \$3,452,972 is accepted and applied to fund project costs.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

In-person meetings

Mr. Turkington explained that the provisions for virtual meetings have been extended for two years, thus the Board can decide to return to in-person at their discretion. It was acknowledged that there is no provision to hold Town Meeting virtually. Currently, there are hybrid limitations as Sharon TV has no capability to do several boards at the same time. Staff have heard from some boards that prefer to meet live to review maps and plans. However, staffing at public buildings has changed.

The Board expressed that it was nice to hold the pinning ceremony in-person and it is great to see colleagues. Collectively, the Board liked the idea of a quarterly in-person meeting provided they will not be conducting business that may exclude people from participating. The Board also respects the fact that staff concerns should be considered. The Board said that they are happy to work with Boards that do prefer to return to in-person meetings.

Solar

The Board heard from Mr. Xander Shapiro of the Municipal Solar Oversight Committee. He explained that the Committee has performed outreach with abutters and has not heard any negative feedback. It is their position that this is a financially positive, environmentally positive project. The Board thanked Mr. Shapiro and the other members of the MSOC for their work and input this evening.

MOTION: To authorize the Town Administrator to execute the Letter of Intent for Sharon Middle School solar project.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Topics not reasonably anticipated within 48 hours in advance of the meeting

None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:53 pm.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE
Switekowski: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Minutes (2)
- Banner requests (3)
- Request letter (2)
- Application materials
- Block party request form
- Membership list
- Warrant signature page
- Memoranda (3)
- Notice of award form
- Town Administrator's report
- Correspondence
- Project evaluation form
- Proposed vote
- Letter of intent
- Power purchase agreement