

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
August 22, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Hanna R. Switekowski remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Kiana Pierre-Louis 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 recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public comment period

There being no public comment, Ms. Switekowski moved on with the meeting.

Public Hearing – Building, plumbing and gas, and electrical permit fees

MOTION: To open the public hearing at 7:02 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Mr. David Abbot, Sharon Building Inspector, explained that fees were streamlined, particularly the plumbing and gas, and electrical fees. They are now grouped to make calculating fees easier. Fees were increased marginally to keep within surrounding towns. Again, the plumbing and gas and electrical permit fees in particular, had not been adjusted in some time.

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 7:07 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To approve the building, plumbing and gas, and electrical permit fees effective October 1, 2023 as discussed.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Public Hearing – Pole location hearing

MOTION: To open the public hearing at 7:25 pm.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Don Voner from Verizon spoke on the request to relocate a pole owned jointly by Verizon and Eversource to accommodate the construction of two new homes on Bird Lane. A sketch was provided and the Board has the abutter notices with their meeting materials.

Ms. Switekowski read a statement into the record from a resident who could not be here this evening.

We are unable to attend the public hearing because we will be on a cruise ship between Reykjavik, Iceland and Boston at that time.

As we understand it, the party building the house across from our house at 7 Bird Lane, Sharon wants to relocate the utility pole on the street in front of their house - probably for aesthetic reasons, in other words - we don't want this pole in front of our house, put it in front of someone else's house.

We have no objections to this as long as the utility pole remains on the same side of the street; any connections from the utility pole to our house remain EXACTLY as they are. There must be no disruption to our utility services; and if the pole is moved any distance, the street light should be replaced where it currently resides as it is the only light on the street.

We absolutely object to moving the pole to a location in front of our house and will pursue whatever means necessary to ensure that. doesn't happen.

We are snowbirds and are very concerned that any major changes to the utilities could affect the heat in our unoccupied house during the winter. That would be disastrous.

Nancy Insuik and Eamon McColgan
7 Bird Ln, Sharon, MA 02067

The Board also heard from the residents of 3 Bird Lane, the Berkowitz family. They wished to know where exactly the pole would be relocated to. As said by Mr. McColgan, there is only one pole on the street providing light at night. They also expressed concerns about the temporary suspension of internet service. The sketch provided with the request for relocation shows the area and was displayed by means of screen sharing. It was explained that the existing pole is in front of 8 Bird Lane, directly opposite the property line between the homes at 3 and 7 Bird Lane. The proposed new pole will be at the property line between 8 and 10 Bird Lane, directly across from the midpoint of the frontage of 7 Bird. The pole will remain on the same side of the street. Replacement does not take long, generally an hour or less, so there should be minimal disruption of services to the nearby homes. With respect to the streetlight, concerns from the neighbors about it being very dark were expressed. Mr. Davis of Sharon Engineering Department stated that the Berkowitz's should contact DPW who can work with the neighbors to improve lighting.

The Board thanked all participants for their involvement in the hearing this evening.

MOTION: To close the public hearing at 7:38 pm.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To approve the pole locations as discussed.
(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Smith-Lee: AYE
Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE
3-0 **PASSES**

Board and Committee interviews – Library Reuse Committee

An interview with one final applicant for the Library Reuse Committee was scheduled for this meeting. Mr. Petr Favazza had technical issues and was unable to connect. The Board agreed to consider Mr. Favazza based on the answers he provided in writing.

Board and Committee appointments – Library Reuse Committee

Ms. Switekowski explained that the Library Reuse Committee composition is currently five members. Two members will be staying on, which would leave three vacancies. Considering there is such a large, diverse applicant pool, the Board can consider increasing the composition from five to seven members and appoint five candidates to the committee this evening. It was felt that a seven-member committee would not be unwieldy. Ms. Smith-Lee felt that there are many qualified candidates in the applicant pool from which to select new members for the committee. There was consensus that there seemed not to be any drawbacks to increasing the size of the committee.

MOTION: To increase the number of members of the Library Reuse Committee from five to seven.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

The Board deliberated on the candidates who had submitted applications and were interviewed at the last meeting. Each member of the Select Board gave their top three candidates to begin the process of selecting candidates to fill the now five vacant seats on the committee. The expertise needs of the committee center around architecture, structural engineering, real estate, and the adaptive reuse of historical buildings. Roni Thaler and James Popkin are the two members of the original, per-COVID iteration of the committee thus representing building and real estate expertise. The Board recognized the passion from the arts and culture community and wished to add an arts and culture perspective to the committee representation. It was clarified that the Board can appoint a non-resident to an advisory committee.

MOTION: To appoint Matthew Baldassari, Judy Crosby, Emunah Liberman Homa, Gail Ader, and Mridula Satyamurti to the Library Reuse Committee.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

MOTION: To amend the charge of the Library Reuse Committee to include the following language, “that the Library Reuse Committee should complete their work and report their findings to the Select Board by November 2024.”
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Update on Police accreditation, discuss and vote on Sharon Police Dept. leadership structure

Chief Coffey provided the Board with an overview and responsibilities of the four Lieutenants. Responsibilities of the former position of Deputy Chief were distributed between the four Lieutenant positions.

Having completed a substantial transition period since March of 2022 following the promotions of Scott Leonard and Brad Fitzhenry to Lieutenant and the filling of several vacancies in the patrol division, I hereby request authorization to promote one of the Lieutenants to Deputy Chief. Each Lieutenant has served in their respective roles since March of 2022. It is the intention to merge the positions of Accreditation Lieutenant and Administrative Lieutenant, so we have three Lieutenants.

DEPUTY CHIEF RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Direct oversight of Lieutenants, monitor the quality of work performed for adherence of acceptable policing standards.
- The Public Information Officer (PIO) would shift from Lieutenant to Deputy Chief. Maintain communication avenues with various news media, businesses, organizations, groups and individuals.
- Oversee all social media for the Sharon Police Department.
- Coordinate with all department personnel the recurring compliance paperwork for Accreditation.
- Conduct and oversee weekly, monthly, annual reporting such as NIBR's, Use of Force, Juvenile Arrests, Cruiser Pursuits, public log, etc.
- Oversee department records requests.
- Oversee the training needs of the department.
- Maintain oversight of payroll functions, details, and overtime.
- Assist and maintain sound union & management relations.
- Monitor and conduct internal affairs investigations and make recommendations to the Chief of Police.
- Oversee the recruitment process and promotional process.
- Oversee new initiatives and programs such as Advocates in-house clinician, body worn cameras, electronic complaint filing, electronic citations, grants, equipment, etc.
- Other duties as assigned by the Chief of Police.

The Sharon Police Department has hired 10 new officers since March 2022, with five being hired through the department exam and five laterally transferring. The department has also made several promotions, including George Demeris becoming a Sergeant, Chris Dumais becoming a temporary Sergeant, and Tony Cadogan temporarily filling in as School Resource Officer. Detective Brendan Pasco was recently selected for the new Detective position, and Detective Anthony Lucie has shown interest in the prosecutor position. Officer Giovanni Valmond has been chosen as the next School Resource Officer. The department is conducting leadership training for sergeants and will be recommending the promotion of Chris Dumais to permanent Sergeant. The department is also preparing for upcoming promotional exams for the Officer in Charge list. Additionally, the department is updating policies to meet the requirements of the sixth edition of Accreditation.

Chief Coffey went on to update the Board on the recommendation to promote Chris Dumais to the position of Sergeant. Chris Dumais is a five-year veteran of the Sharon Police Department. He served as the Community Services Officer for several years and has embraced the community policing concept with various programs such as "Summer Reading Kick-Off" with the Sharon Library, Outdoor Connections Camp, Bike Rodeos, Power Wheels Rodeo, became the famous Trunk or Treat Doctor, and much more. Chris is trained as a Field Training Officer, School Resource Officer, Mountain Bike certified, Mental Health First Aid, and Crisis Intervention Trained (CIT). He has filled in as a temporary Sergeant for the past ten months. Chris received a Letter of Commendation from Chief Ford on an arrest, a Letter of Recognition from Chief Ford on an arson case, a Letter of Recognition for his outstanding work in the community as the Community Services Officer, and several thank you's from the community.

MOTION: To promote Officer Chris Dumais to the position of Sergeant.

(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

The Board thanked all who applied and hopes that those not selected at this time, will continue to step forward to support the Sharon Community and remain engaged with Town Government.

Consider approval of a Class II auto dealer license – Elite East Cars

This topic was tabled by the Select Board at an earlier meeting. It was explained that this is a name change only. Mr. Turkington explained that the Board is considering a name change only. Mr. Ogunlade has held a Class II Auto Dealer license in the name of DC Auto Sales since 2017. The business offices are located at 210 North Main Street and no vehicles are stored at the office location. The present license for DC Auto expires on December 31, 2023. If the Board were to approve a license for the business Elite East Cars, said license would also expire on December 31, 2023.

Mr. Ogunlade discussed with the Board at a previous meeting that he became aware of someone using his business name, DC Auto Sales, to sell vehicles without his knowledge. Thus leading him to apply for a new license under the name of Elite East Cars.

Ms. Pierre-Louis commented that she was not comfortable with the answers provided by Mr. Ogunlade when this topic was discussed previously. Considering that the business can continue to operate as DC Auto Sales, Ms. Pierre-Louis feels that would be the best course of action.

Mr. Ogunlade explained that he has worked out the issue with both the Registry of Motor Vehicles as well as with the auction houses where he obtains his inventory. He feels now that he would like to withdraw his application to operate under the name Elite East Cars.

Ms. Smith-Lee stated that her comments are in line with those of Ms. Pierre-Louis. She is concerned that this feels like the papering over of an identity with a history of troublesome legal difficulties and customer complaints. Although she agrees that the license should continue under the name of DC Auto, she has serious misgivings about renewing the license in December.

Ms. Switekowski concurred with the comments made by her Board colleagues. Ms. Smith-Lee suggested that if it is Mr. Ogunlade's intention to withdraw his application for Elite East Cars, he should state so on the record or the Board should vote this evening. Mr. Ogunlade indeed confirmed and stated that he would like to withdraw said application.

Transportation Advisory Board presentation on railroad parking and potential change to charge

Mr. Fixler and Ms. Hager, co-chairs of the Transportation Advisory Board, presented a report to the Select Board regarding railroad station parking. The full text of the report was provided to the Board with their materials for this evening. Mr. Fixler explained that the Transportation Advisory Board or TAB has been researching and collecting data surrounding commuter habits over the past six months.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a change in both the commuting patterns and work schedules of Sharon residents and non-residents who take the MBTA commuter rail to Boston. The Sharon Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) conducted a survey with the help of DPW staff to understand the impact of the changed commuting pattern and received over 760 responses. The TAB recommends that the Boston side quarterly parking area be set up in a hybrid design. The DPW staff collected data on the current parking usage for the Boston Inbound and the Providence Outbound parking lots at the Station. The data shows that parking usage is slowly increasing due

to employer return to work employee directives. The highest usages are on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Non-resident daily spaces appear to be utilized more than quarterly lot spaces every day of the week.

Mr. Fixler provided the following recommendations:

- Set up a hybrid parking design for the Quarterly Lot. A hybrid design means removing all parking spot numbers from this area and allowing all Sharon residents to purchase a daily or a quarterly pass and park in any spot, giving all Sharon residents the option to either purchase a quarterly pass or a day pass.
- Research and determine the logistics as to how police, town officials, and the MBTA would handle having no numbered spots at the Station to align the parking charge process with the majority of the MBTA Commuter Rail station parking lots.
- Reduce the daily parking fee to \$2.70 per day per car for residents who obtain a sticker from the DPW. This fee is based on 20 days per month over four quarters ($\$162.00/60 \text{ days} = \2.70 per day) and will make the daily and quarterly costs equal, thereby providing residents with a choice that best suits their commuting schedule and needs. Over time the purchasing data will inform the town what is the best parking solution for the residents if the price is the same.
- Sharon Police should monitor the parking area during peak commuter parking hours to enforce pick-up and drop-off in the designated signed locations.
- Reduce parking penalties for daily parking to align with penalties incurred in similar commuter rail parking lots. The TAB agrees a higher penalty should only be charged for non-residents parking in resident designated parking spaces.

Ms. Hager commented about the Pay-by-Phone platform. Although the \$0.35 surcharge is understandable, it is the impetus for commuters choosing to park at Canton Junction.

The Board asked questions about TAB's position on numbers spaces, technology options, and next steps. TAB has recommended holding off on implementing any changes until the first quarter of 2024. What kind of research and analysis would take place next? Mr. Davis offered to liaise with the Police Department to discuss any concerns they may have. The Board would like to collect additional data from the quarterly pass holders.

Mr. Turkington provided a few thoughts. He stated that the survey was done before the stairs were out of commission so it is unclear whether the data involving who parks on what side is accurate, or reflects what is favorable. It seems the committee is trying to make it so there is no longer a price difference for daily or quarterly spots for Sharon residents. The next step would be to investigate what is possible and the costs of implementation. This will also affect enforcement. It would also require the Board to modify the penalty. The sale of passes for January is the first week in December so things would need to be in place by then in order to do it. The price was adjusted a year ago so the quarterly pass was equal to going three times for the convenience if you went three times or if you went a little bit less not to have to fumble with the pay as you throw phone app that pays the \$0.35.

Mr. Fixler asked for the Board's input on updating the Transportation Advisory Board charge. Considering the late hour, perhaps the liaison could discuss this with TAB at a future meeting.

The Board thanked the members of the Transportation Advisory Board for all of their hard work in researching and preparing this report and presenting their findings.

Vehicle traffic safety restrictions on School Street for Library construction project

The proposed traffic plan was provided to the Board with their meeting materials. These changes would be in effect for the duration of the library construction project. This would be a temporary closure of School Street. Residents will retain access to their driveways.

MOTION: To approve the vehicle traffic safety restrictions on School Street for the duration of the library construction project as presented.

(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

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

Select Board reorganization

MOTION: To appoint Hanna Switekowski as the Select Board Clerk effective September 1, 2023.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

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

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes
 - a. July 11, 2023 open session
- II. Vote to approve the following special one-day liquor licenses:
 - a. Ward's Berry Farm, Saturdays and Sundays between August 26 and October 29, 2023 and Monday, October 9, 2023 from 12 noon to 6pm (21 total)
 - b. Liquor World Sharon Grand Tasting event, Saturday September 9, 2023, 12:30 to 4:30
 - c. Cork and Hitch LLC, September 23, 2023, 3:30 to 10:30 pm for a private event at Camp Everwood
- III. Vote to amend the appointment term for Jill Dougherty of the Sharon Cultural Council through June, 2026
- IV. Vote to approve the request by the Sharon Garden Club to re-plant the oval roundabout at the railroad station due to overgrowth
- V. Vote to approve the Knights of Columbus Tootsie Roll drive fundraiser in Post Office Square on Saturday, September 30 from 8 am to 1pm at the Billings/North Main and Billings/Pond intersections subject to approval by Police and Fire
 - a. Request letter
- VI. Vote to approve the recommendations of the Board of Registrars:
 - a. To appoint Ester Anastasia, 23 Mountain Street; Christopher Paul Pimentel, 43 Clarke Street; Andrea D. Fennell, 27 Frances Road; and Gordon P. Hatcher, 6 Tamarack, the Democratic Town Committee submissions to Election Officer Positions for a one-year term beginning September 1, 2023 and concluding August 31, 2024
 - b. To appoint all who are included on the General Election Officials List provided by the Board of Registrars for a one-year term beginning September 1, 2023 and concluding August 31, 2024
 1. Board of Registrars minutes of June 27, 2023 with list of General Election Officials
- VII. Vote to award the following contracts:
 - a. Scituate Concrete Products in the amount of \$147,688 for drainage structures and components
 - b. Ferguson Waterworks in the amount of \$37,094.63 for South Main Street water infrastructure components

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar, items I through VII.
(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington provided the following update.

A Somerville-based charity that owns a 20-acre parcel at 174 Lakeview Street is entertaining offers for the property. It is zoned so that 8 or 9 single-family homes could be constructed. The lots have the highest land values in Sharon due to proximity to the lake. I have had discussions with a developer of senior housing looking for more information about potential options using the overlay district for senior housing. More information to come as the situation develops.

The 18-month effort by MAPC to study the feasibility of creating a regional housing services office in towns south and southwest of Boston has culminated in commitments from Hopkinton, Medfield, Norwood, Randolph and Milton. Funds are included in the Planning Board budget to support Sharon's \$20K purchase of consulting.

Schools & Town recycling coordinator Eve Carey has announced her plan to leave the part-time position effective August 25 to accept a full-time recycling position in her hometown. We will work with the school leadership team to fill the position. While investigation of PAYT, cardboard drop-off and food composting will be delayed, I expect staff to complete the assigned task by the December deadline voted last week.

On September 18, the Town will conduct a major upgrade of the MUNIS financial management software. IT Director Don Hillegass and Finance Director Krishan Gupta are spearheading this effort.

We anticipate receiving a report from the Water Management Advisory Committee on September 12 formally recommending the site for the water treatment facility, with detailed cost estimates for the project (and for sites considered but not chosen). It is possible that the estimated price will exceed the May 2022 ATM borrowing authorization, so a Special Town Meeting vote may be required in late fall to meet grant funding deadlines for the state's Clean Water Fund (0% to 2% Federal loan vs. local borrowing).

We have interviewed several candidates and have two others to speak with next week for the vacant employee benefits administrator position in the Treasurer's office. We increased the advertised salary at the OC-2a salary level following approval of an updated job description by the Personnel Board on July 20. The COA outreach/social worker has resigned to take a similar position in Rehoboth and we have interviewed three candidates for that vacancy. Earlier this week, we selected a candidate to conduct parking enforcement activities on a weekday part-time basis in the RR station lot and HS parking lots now that the crossing guards have given up those duties. The administrative assistant position supporting the Personnel Board has been filled by Sharon resident Sara Fox.

We reached a tentative agreement in negotiations with AFSCME representing DPW/Water laborers and equipment operators on July 25. Local ratification vote is expected to occur by August 17; should that occur prior to the meeting, Board approval on the consent calendar is requested.

We have received a request from Sharon firefighters to commence bargaining 6 months ahead of the normal negotiation period for their contract that expires June 30, 2024. Despite bringing our department to parity with

peer and neighboring departments in the last contract, I'm anticipating a difficult negotiation with high expectations from the younger members now leading the union who are active in the state organization.

Select Board Correspondence/Announcements

We received / exchanged approximately 31 pieces of correspondence between Friday, July 7 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 27. Topics included:

- Notices and invitations including: notice of August recreation programs, Sharon Cultural Council newsletter, notice of LMAC lake resource tours on August 2, 9 and 16, letter to library project abutters advising of pre-construction meeting on Sunday, August 6 at 3PM, notice from MMA of state legislative approval and Governor Healey signing of the FY2024 budget, notice of inclusion of two earmarks in state budget, notice of Boston MPO elections in October, invitation to Sustainable Sharon Coalition program on e-bikes on Sunday, August 13 at 10A, invitation to HS ribbon-cutting on Friday, August 25 at 2P; applications for appointment to committees from Favazza (Library Reuse);
- Email opposing the welcome mural project placement on the brick wall at Sharon Market;
- Emails and response from Police Chief concerning officer seen in Liquor World using 24/7 assigned vehicle;
- Email expressing concern for potential liability if minors use e-bikes;
- Email suggesting the School Committee post notices of meetings on Town website for wider distribution of meeting agendas;
- Email and response regarding the Library Trustees plan to return to all in-person meetings;
- Email from Judy Crosby following up on her interview for appointment to library reuse committee;
- Email recommending the Board consider traffic calming measures for intersection of Pond and Ames Streets;
- Email from Eamon McColgan, 7 Bird Lane, regarding proposed pole relocation;
- Email from Sharon firefighters local seeking early bargaining for collective bargaining agreement expiring June 30, 2024;
- Email from former DPW employee appealing denial of reimbursement of clothing expenses made less than a week prior to his resignation;
- Emails and responses from Water Superintendent and Town Administrator regarding siting decision timeline and cost estimates for water treatment facility; and,
- Email from Phillip King regarding the timeline for work of the Governance Study Committee.

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

None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:23pm

(Smith-Lee – Pierre-Louis)

(Pierre-Louis – Smith-Lee)

Switlekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Hearing notices (2)
- Schedule of current and proposed permit fees
- Memoranda (2)
- Pole petition
- Order for joint or identical pole location
- Map

- Board/Committee application
- List of applicants
- List of current members
- Charge
- Biography and recommendation
- Organizational chart
- Auto Dealer license application materials
- TAB report and recommendation
- Minutes
- One day liquor license applications (23)
- MA Cultural Council guidelines
- Appointment letter
- Request letter (2)
- Design plan
- Board of Registrar minutes of 06 27 2023
- Contract documents (2)
- Draft agreement
- Town Administrator's report