

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
October 10, 2023

The meeting of the Sharon Select Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chair Kiana Pierre-Louis remotely via Zoom. Select Board members Emily Smith-Lee and Hanna Switekowski 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.

A moment of silence was held for the incident that took place over the weekend. Ms. Pierre-Louis read the following statement on behalf of the Board:

The recent heinous attacks by Hamas on Israel have caused deep sorrow, anger, and fear. As war now ravages Gaza and Israel, we mourn for the thousands of innocent lives that have been lost. To the many members of our community directly affected by these horrific events, you have our utmost solidarity and support.

Antisemitism has no place in our community or in society as a whole and we acknowledge the pain and anguish experienced by these tragic events and we extend our utmost solidarity and support to our Jewish community members. Discrimination and hatred against any group are unacceptable, and we stand firmly against any form of prejudice.

Furthermore, we want to emphasize our support for the Palestinian and Muslim communities who are also grappling with the repercussions of this conflict. We stand with all those who yearn for peace, justice, and the right to live free from fear and violence.

We understand that the toll of war is not limited to physical harm but extends to emotional and psychological well-being as well. In these trying times, let us remember the importance of empathy, compassion, and dialogue as we navigate this complex and deeply painful situation.

Please know that our thoughts are with all those affected, and we are here to provide support and assistance to those in need.

Ms. Pierre-Louis thanked Sharon Police for their extra patrols around town, and to the community for their outpouring of support on behalf of their fellow community members. Ms. Switekowski announced that a vigil will be held in support of Israel at 5:15pm on Wednesday, October 11 at the bandstand at Veterans' Memorial Park Beach, and the community is invited to attend.

Public comment period

Ms. Laura Nelson of Edge Hill Road spoke about the posting of agendas and when they are posted on the website/mailed to subscribers, questioned when the Board's goals and objectives were posted to the website and commented that she feels there isn't enough time for the public to weigh in on the zoning change. Both Ms. Pierre-Louis and Mr. Turkington explained that the agendas are posted on the website more than 48 hours before the Select Board meeting, and it was noted that the goals have been on the Select Board's page for some time.

There being no further comments, Ms. Pierre-Louis moved on with the meeting.

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the following minutes
 - a. August 22, 2023 - open session
 - b. September 12, 2023 – open session
 - c. September 23, 2023 – water treatment site tour

- II. Vote to schedule a joint meeting with the Library Reuse Committee on November 2, 2023
- III. Vote to appoint Deborah Utter and Brendan Brown to the Sharon Cultural Council with term expirations of June 30, 2026
- IV. Vote to approve the 2024 Select Board meeting schedule
- V. Vote to insert article into the 2023 Special Town Meeting Warrant for an amendment to Business District D of the zoning bylaw to correct an error in recodification
- VI. Vote to insert article into the 2023 Special Town Meeting Warrant, requesting to increase the spending limit for the Health Department Revolving Fund from \$40,000 to \$100,000

MOTION: To approve the consent calendar with the exception of item #2
(Switekowski - Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Ms. Pierre-Louis noted that the Library Reuse Committee may not have a quorum for that meeting. They are meeting next week and will advise their availability for a joint meeting.

Order articles for Special Town Meeting warrant

Ms. Pierre-Louis reviewed each of the Special Town Meeting warrant articles. Ms. Pierre-Louis asked if the Board members had any comments about the order of the articles. The members felt it would be desirable to have articles that will generate the most interest grouped more closely together.

The Board discussed and Ms. Switekowski is comfortable with the articles, as presented. Ms. Smith-Lee would like to see the articles that will generate the most interest grouped more closely together. She suggests moving the 2/3 ones at the beginning. A conversation ensued between the Board members

ARTICLE	ORDER
Additional Appropriation for Water Treatment Facility	1
Long-Term Lease Authorization for Well No. 5 Solar Project	2
Accept Weyman Lane and Atherton Lane as public roadways	3
Petition General Court to extend statutory limit of 25 years for intermunicipal agreements	4
Amend Business District D Zoning	5
Amend General By-Law: Set Deadline for Mailing Town Meeting Warrants	6
Amend Expenditure Limit for Solid Waste and Recycling Revolving Fund	7
Amend Expenditure Limit for Health Department Revolving Fund	8

MOTION: To approve the order of articles as discussed.
(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

Switekowski: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Interviews for annual reappointment – Water Management Advisory Committee

Ms. Anne Carney and Mr. Rory McGregor were present. Both are current members of the Water Management Advisory Committee and are being interviewed as part of the board's policy to interview sitting board/committee

members after they have served two or more terms. Ms. Carney and Mr. McGregor both spoke about their backgrounds, work experiences, involvement in Sharon and noted that the committee members work hard and do their homework. There is a collegial environment on the committee, and they try to be inclusive of everyone and listen to everyone's concerns. They would like to see some younger and/or newer residents consider joining the Water Management Advisory Committee in the future.

Ms. Smith-Lee noted that bringing in veteran members was to increase transparency and it helps residents see the depth of experience and commitment on the boards and committees. Ms. Pierre-Louis agreed with Ms. Smith-Lee's sentiments and added that the Select Board will be making reappointments in the short term.

Review status of Select Board objectives and priorities

The Board and Mr. Turkington spent considerable time reviewing the Board's objective and priorities for November 1, 2022 – October 31, 2023. The Town Administrator is charged with planning, developing and organizing strategies with department directors and town employees and with facilitating and coordinating efforts of citizen committee members to achieve these objectives and priorities.

Mission Statement:

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.

Fiscal Priorities and Strategies:

Develop responsible and responsive operating and capital budgets that seek to balance the demand for services against the variety of financial circumstances experienced by Sharon citizens and businesses. Manage Sharon's finances to mitigate dependence on property taxes by enhancing revenue from other sources. Seize opportunities to reduce long-term costs of town government operations and in the delivery of services.

- Conduct thorough review of operating budgets, reviewing opportunities to reduce costs through restructuring and reorganizing operations. Make recommendations for savings without compromising quality of services and identify areas that should be considered for service enhancements.
- Continue to explore opportunities to share services and create efficiencies with the School Department with goal of reducing operating costs and improving efficiency and quality of service delivery in the following areas: human resources, payroll, accounts payable and revolving funds; facilities management; and school nursing and public health services.
- Initiate discussions with comparable communities on opportunities for potential collaboration on service delivery, operations, contracted services and equipment purchases in functional areas.
- Continue to explore alternative revenue sources and report to Select Board with recommendations.
- Continue to explore property tax relief measures to assist Sharon's most vulnerable citizens and to help maintain socioeconomic diversity.
- Work collaboratively with School Committee and Finance Committee to explore funding strategies to provide for full-day kindergarten program.
- Complete negotiations for successor collective bargaining agreements within policy and financial goals established by the Select Board.

Review, and modify as appropriate, financial policies relative to undesignated fund balance, enterprise fund reserves, stabilization and capital funds, debt, overlay reserves, self-funded activities (health insurance), cash investments, and certified free cash.

- Consider increasing reserves through specific appropriations and/or active management.
- Utilize actuarial valuation to develop an effective funding strategy to address future OPEB liabilities that may include changing the balance of employer/employee contributions, reducing liabilities through changes in existing plan design, enhancing investment return utilizing OPEB trust option, and commit

to allocating the amount designated for retirement plan contributions to OPEB liabilities when retirement plan reaches full funding in 2029.

- Monitor claims experience and follow market trends in order to make prudent recommendations to reduce costs for employee and retiree health insurance plans through permissible changes in plan design such as increased deductibles, implementing a high-deductible plan combined with health savings accounts, or changes in employee and retiree contribution levels.
- Appropriate ARPA funds for infrastructure projects (water filtration treatment for PFAS and iron and manganese, accelerated schedule of road/sidewalk construction, building projects).

Organizational Objectives:

Review service delivery models and develop strategies to improve operations.

- Continue to assure training and development opportunities for mid-level supervisors in public works, police and fire departments as part of succession and operations planning.
- Evaluate organizational structures as part of recruitment and selection processes for treasurer/collector, fire chief, and council on aging director.
- Provide continued support for police department certification and accreditation program.
- Plan for potential addition of middle school resource officer or social work professional and for additional police officers to provide effective public safety service delivery model.
- Explore expanding firefighter/paramedic staffing to eight per work team to maintain effective EMS response.
- Better coordinate delivery of public and mental services between Board of Health, Council on Aging, Schools, SSPARC and public safety departments.
- Implement comprehensive facilities management and operation plan for Town buildings, including appropriate organizational/staffing model and adequate budget resources to assure proper maintenance program.

Facilitate efforts to enhance Town infrastructure to meet community expectations and aspirations for services.

- Work with the Standing Building Committee, architect, and owner's project representative to address impacts of construction during high school and library building projects.
- Work with Recreation Advisory Committee and athletic organizations to advocate for athletic field development and maintenance to address identified recreational demands.
- Work with Transportation Advisory Committee to advocate for bicycle and pedestrian alternative travel modes. Review parking needs and fiscal impacts of changing work and commuting patterns on MBTA commuter rail parking revolving fund.
- Work with Library Reuse Advisory Committee to develop recommendations for 11 North Main Street site when vacated by 2024, including capital maintenance requirements, alternative uses, and form of ownership relationship if non-Town use.

Strengthen accountability of organization through professional development, evaluation and recognition of senior management team.

- Establish goals for departments under the jurisdiction of the Select Board consistent with the overall goals established for the Town Administrator.
- Reinforce policy priorities and improve coordination of service delivery through regular staff meetings and written communication; provide continuous feedback on performance to senior staff; and document accomplishments through performance evaluation process.
- Develop program to recognize and reward senior management team; address supplemental compensation for performance beyond limit of salary range; and provide effective support of professional development opportunities.

Community Priorities and Objectives:

Support citizen efforts to improve sustainability.

- Include modifications to solid waste and recycling program as part of competitive bidding process for new collection contract effective July 1, 2023. Stated goals are: increase recycling percentage as portion

of total waste stream; incentivize composting of organic material; reduce carbon footprint of collection by return to bi-weekly recycling; consider full PAYT funding for tipping fee portion of quarterly fee.

- Support work of Energy Advisory Committee to lease additional parcels of Town land for solar energy generation projects and minimize impact of adjacent neighborhoods, implement municipal aggregation program, seek grant opportunities to advance net-zero emissions goal and develop climate action plan, and construct grant-funded electric vehicle charging stations at designated parking areas.
- Implement strategies to address MS4 stormwater permit mandate.
- Support the efforts of the Lake Massapoag Advisory and constituent committees to identify and implement methods to reduce use of nutrients that feed algal blooms and bacteria in Lake Massapoag, and accelerate transition to updated septic systems

Modify governance model to strengthen service delivery and enhance accountability.

- Continue to facilitate collaborative strategic financial planning process with leaders of key boards and committees – Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Outlay Committee - to develop long-term budget strategy to reflect anticipated revenue stream, capital projects commitments and additional operating costs associated with building projects, program enhancements, and employee legacy costs.
- Work with boards and committees to assure Imagine Sharon Master Plan's timely and comprehensive implementation, including updates to zoning by-law.
- Complete review, and update as appropriate, specific policies and procedures codified in the Select Board's Policies and Procedures manual.
- Review and update personnel by-law for submission to 2023 Annual Town Meeting.
- Review findings and recommendations of Governance Study Committee and submit articles for voter consideration at 2023 Annual Town Meeting as appropriate.

Improve and enhance communication with residents through public meetings, print media, and social media platforms.

- Continue to offer public comment period at Select Board meetings to offer residents a chance to express opinions; make selected use of public comment on specific agenda items in addition to required public hearings.
- Improve content of Town website and coordinate information sharing with Recreation, Commission on Disabilities, Police Department and other, individual social media pages.
- Improve information flow to citizens via social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Town website).
- Offer public safety and citizen academies.
- Provide content and support efforts to revitalize independent newspaper or electronic news.
- Consider hiring communications specialist or retain consultant to generate information to residents.

Address development proposals by seeking to assure net community benefit; mitigate potential negative consequences.

- Implement host community agreement with recreational marijuana facilities – retail, cultivation and delivery services. Address potential negative impacts leveraging dedicated revenue stream.
- Conduct negotiations for agreements, as needed, to secure businesses at Sharon Gallery; facilitate resolution of issues related to infrastructure improvements aligning Sharon Gallery and Sharon Marketplace on South Main Street.
- Conduct appropriate dialogue with applicants of proposed developments (commercial, 40B, 40R, and similar large projects). Coordinate review by various Town boards and commissions and professional staff.
- Study impact of 2020 US Census data on affordable housing (Chapter 40B or LIP projects) and governance (drawing of legislative districts, number of polling places, formula grants).
- Develop regulations in keeping with state law requiring by right housing adjacent to MBTA stations.

Promote engagement, inclusion and equity among traditionally underrepresented segments of Sharon residents through community conversations, policy review, and employee and committee training.

- Work with Select Board to broaden diversity of membership on town boards and committees.
- Conduct evaluation of programs and policies and address any concerns of implicit bias or structural impediments to inclusion and equity.

- Participate in strategic planning with and review recommendations regarding policies and practices from Diversity, Inclusion & Equity Committee and implement as appropriate.
- Work with Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee to develop and provide training to employees and members of boards and committees.

Provide support for implementation of economic development initiatives and promote local businesses.

- Study wastewater treatment options for Route 1 and Post Office Square; conduct highest/best use evaluation of properties within commercial zones.
- Update Select Board policies with regard to liquor licenses (regulate marketing events and live entertainment) and evaluate whether to require permits and develop regulations to operate food trucks.
- Collaborate and support community events such as road races/triathlons, street art, Porchfest, and Sharon Day. Better coordinate Town and community events to maximize attendance and drive sustained success.
- Work with Economic Development Committee to develop a small business council or similar mechanism to provide forum for small businesses to articulate needs.

Fred noted that some are multi-year endeavors and Ms. Smith-Lee suggested separating goals versus the ongoing objectives. Ms. Switekowski would like to communicate more with the public about development projects. Mr. Turkington commented that he would like to communicate more information if there is more to share, and developers tend to keep information for business purposes. Ms. Smith-Lee noted that it's not the town's role to share information that is not intended to be public. Over the course of the discussion, the Board communicated several updates/changes to Mr. Turkington for inclusion in the 2023-2024 document. Mr. Turkington will take comments from this discussion and revise the document for the next meeting.

Town Administrator's report

Ms. Smith-Lee had a question about correspondence. She received correspondence personally and wanted to know, and wanted the public to know, who receives emails to the selectboard@townofsharon.org. Mr. Turkington responded that all three board members, he, Melissa, and Lauren receive the email. It was pointed out that emails to the old email address, selectmen@townofsharon.org also still go to the Board.

We received / exchanged approximately 42 pieces of correspondence between Friday, September 22 and 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 5. Topics included library parking; the installation of an electric vehicle charging station at Town offices; a resident concerned about the state housing migrant families at the Econo Lodge; the resignation of Meredith Avery from the Conservation Commission; and concerns from neighbors about parking on School and Pleasant Streets during the library ground-breaking. Mr. Turkington spoke about the upcoming Capital Outlay process and meeting schedule and spoke about the efforts the town will be undertaking to assist the migrant families that have been placed here in Sharon by the state.

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

Ms. Switekowski noted that some other communities across the country are issuing statements in response to what is happening in Israel, and believes we, as a community, need to show support and solidarity. She found a statement from a community in California, and would like to prepare something similar, and read a draft statement based on a statement she found online from West Hollywood, CA. A thoughtful conversation followed. Ms. Pierre-Louis noted that we are the select board for all residents, and if there is something terrible happening to another group, then we would need to be consistent and be supportive to all, and then issue a statement. She added that we are in a world with so much horror and we need to have a conversation about what to do, moving forward. Mr. Turkington offered some comments. He thought that the chair's statement at the beginning of the meeting statement set the right tone. There have been other instances where the Board did not issue statements (e.g. the Russian invasion of Ukraine). Ms. Smith-Lee felt the Board should not make a political statement, as it is not their place. She trusts the chair to navigate and make a statement on behalf of the Board. All three Board members will be at the vigil and will share in the reading of the statement. Ms. Switekowski feels the Board at the vigil, standing together, will be impactful. She thanked town staff for their help in ensuring the vigil could take place in a timely manner.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 8:51pm
Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

List of Documents

- Minutes
- Application materials
- Draft meeting schedule
- Memorandum
- List of articles
- Board/Committee applications (2)
- Select Board objectives & strategies for November 2022 through October 2023