

**MINUTES**  
**SHARON BOARD OF SELECTMEN**  
*January 5, 2016*

The meeting of the Sharon Board of Selectmen was called to order in the Town Hearing Room at the Community Center at 7:01pm with Chairman William A. Heitin, Clerk Walter B. Roach, Selectman John J. McGrath, and Town Administrator Frederic E. Turkington, Jr.

**Historical Preservation Award Presentation**

David Martin and Bobby Hutton, on behalf of the Sharon Historical Commission presented the Historical Preservation Award to Malcolm and MaryBeth Smuts for their home at 247 South Main Street. Mr. Martin described the restoration of their beautiful home and Mr. Hutton presented the award to the Smuts'. The Board congratulated the Smuts' on their dedication to restoring their home.

**POSTPONED: FY17 Budget Review - Information Technology**

This agenda item has been postponed to a future meeting.

**FY17 Budget Review - Police**

Police Chief Tilden Kaufman appeared before the Board. Chairman Heitin asked Chief Kaufman to speak a little bit about the budget. Chief Kaufman noted that is primarily a level service budget, with the exception of an increase in the salary line item to fund collective bargaining agreements. He explained that the Police Department will fund some of the IT personnel's time as they transition to the new public safety building. Chief Kaufman spoke about the new records management system he is asking for from the Capital Outlay Committee. He announced that Sergeant Cameron is retiring, which will open up a sergeant position. The department presently has a lieutenant opening, which Chief Kaufman hopes to fill with a sergeant and then fill Sergeant Cameron's spot. Chief Kaufman expressed the desire to get back to 31 members of the department. They are beginning a five-year strategic plan, and are working with the Fire Department and will be working with other departments, community groups, etc.

Selectman Roach noted that the Police Department just signed the last piece of steel for the new public safety building. Chairman Heitin said that the FY17 budget request for the Police Department is \$3.563 million.

The Board thanked Chief Kaufman for his work in developing his first budget.

**FY17 Budget Review - Fire**

Fire Chief Jim Wright appeared before the Board.

Chairman Heitin asked Chief Wright to provide an update and highlights within the department. They have a number of long-term staff outages, due to IOD, illness, FMLA, etc. The estimated shortfall in the budget is significant in overtime costs. They are making cost savings wherever possible to help with the shortage. There are 2 2/3 FTEs presently not working. Mr. Turkington noted that the Finance Committee has a reserve fund that we may need to explore.

With respect to the FY17 budget, it is a level services budget. The salary increases are predominantly contractual; with respect to expenses, the Holbrook dispatch agreement has increased to \$150,000, but the cost

to the Town of Sharon would be even greater if we were to take on those duties. He added additional funding to the apparatus and ambulance supplies budgets to a level of where the historical expenses have been.

Chairman Heitin noted that the Fire Department's FY17 budget is approximately \$3.15 million. Selectman Roach asked Chief Wright if he could give the Capital Outlay Committee a quick overview of the new public safety building project while they are on their annual tour.

The Board thanked Chief Wright for his time.

Before moving on to the next agenda item, Chairman Heitin spoke briefly about tax bills and the appearance of an increase in resident's tax bills. Because residents are billed quarterly, the first two bills are estimates, and the final two bills are the "true ups", which for many is higher than what they paid in their first two bills. For FY16, the increase was 5%; 3% for the public safety building and the other 2% was for the general budget. An example and an explanation will be posted on the town's website.

### **One School Street Property Disposition Discussion**

Chairman Heitin stated that the One School Street building most recently served as the school administration building. The building was used for meeting rooms and Selectman McGrath has been operating a police and fire museum in the building since. The Board of Selectmen now has oversight of the building and the Board needs to determine the best use of the building. Chairman Heitin said that Sharon has let some buildings lag, such as the Wilber School, but we don't want to do that with this building.

Mr. Turkington noted that the 2016 Town Meeting will officially formalize the transfer of the building to the Board of Selectmen. He then reviewed potential options for the building:

- Improve parking lot & increase number of spaces for the train station
- Formalize the lease with the police and fire museum
- DPW has proposed a series of capital investments into the building
- Work with a private developer to create office space/apartments in a ground lease agreement
- Demolish it and expand parking for the train station
- The Library Study Committee is looking for alternate sites for their building, and they are interested in the property

Mr. Turkington pointed out to the Board that the town is hitting a point where the town needs to make some decisions shortly.

Selectman Roach said that he has heard that the library officials are looking at the property next door to the One School Street building, and he wants to hear directly from the Trustees about what their intentions are and where they are headed. Mr. Turkington said that the library officials have a lot of work to do as they navigate their grant process. He noted that we need to look at all of these building changes in a holistic fashion.

Selectman McGrath is looking at this issue from a historical perspective. It was built in 1892 and an early schoolhouse and has a value to the center of the town, as we have lost some historical buildings in the area, such as the old Town Hall. It is an architecturally-pleasing building. The building was deemed to be structurally satisfactory and a lot of work has been done inside. The roof withstood after last year's winter. He would hate to see the town make a mistake by poor planning. We have a current need for municipal office space. It would be foolish to demolish building for train station parking or sell it to a developer. He believes that the town should be using capital funds to further maintain the building. Selectman McGrath spoke at

length about the police and fire museum and they have brought money into the community by out-of-towners coming to visit and then dining at local establishments. If the town decides to use the building for municipal office space, he will understand that the museum can no longer operate at that location.

Chairman Heitin said that he doesn't think anyone on the Board wants to tear the building down. He said that he would like to see the town getting money from a lease between the museum and the town, to help offset the utilities. Selectman McGrath said that a lease was not entered into because of the uncertainty of the future, but if it will be some time before the building is reused, he will enter into an agreement with the town.

Mr. Turkington said that he will have the report that Selectman McGrath references sent to DPW Facilities Supervisor Matt Baldassari for his review and comparison against the capital requests.

Chairman Heitin does not believe that municipal employees be further spread out around town. He does not want to lose the property; he would consider doing a ground lease similar to the Wilber School, but doesn't want to make it a drain financially on the town.

Selectman McGrath believes that everything hinges on what is decided with the Town Hall. Chairman Heitin pointed out that we need to decide on the Town Hall situation quickly.

Gordon Gladstone, chairman of the Sharon Standing Building Committee and member of the Finance Committee, has toured the museum but does not feel that the town should be offering financial support to it. He would rather use funds to renovate Town Hall and put departments back together. Between Town Hall and the existing Fire Station, there is a lot of opportunity there to create space for town departments. He spoke about how One School Street wasn't worthy of maintaining (according to the school department) but now the town wants to put it to use. He does not see pouring money into this building for any reason.

Selectman McGrath said that he has not advocated for renovating the building for the museum but rather for its historical significance. Deputy Chief Ford has spent a lot of time in the building and commented that the building has outlasted a lot of newer buildings – the building is a piece of Sharon history.

Chairman Heitin believes we can make it a non-financial impact to the town and perhaps even a money maker.

#### **Fall 2016 Special Town Meeting Date Discussion**

Chairman Heitin said that the Board received several dates from the Town Clerk for potential dates for the 2016 Special Town Meeting. Mr. Turkington said that the dates are later than usual, but this year is a presidential election and time is needed.

Mr. Turkington said that we have not identified any issues that require a fall town meeting. The Board reviewed the dates and agreed not to hold a Special Town Meeting too late into December, due to the holidays.

**MOTION:** To designate November 28, 2016 as the Special Town Meeting placeholder date, with the pre-Town Meeting meeting on November 22, 2016  
(Heitin – Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

#### **Consent Calendar**

- I. Vote to approve regular and executive session minutes of December 15, 2015 and December 24, 2015
- II. Vote to authorize the Chairman to support Mosquito Control funding for Fiscal Year 2017

- III. Vote to approve the banner request of the Council on Aging for their Lakeside Gallery Exhibit for January 19-25, 2016 in first position and authorize a fee waiver
- IV. Vote to approve the banner request of the SHS PTSO for their Annual Auction for March 7-14, 2016 in first position
- V. Vote to open the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting, effective Wednesday, January 6 at 8:30am and close it on Thursday, January 28 at 4:30pm
- VI. Vote to approve and sign the 2016 common victualler license for Carriage House Pizzeria

**MOTION:** To approve the January 5, 2016 consent calendar  
(McGrath -Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

#### **Town Administrator's Report**

The Town Administrator reported the following:

- Budget reviews continue at the Board's next meeting, with COA, Veterans and DPW.
- There could be several retirements in the next six months among several departments. Recreation Director Amanda Levasseur will be leaving for a new opportunity at the end of January and the search is underway for her replacement.
- Birch Hill Road subdivision attorney will be attending the next meeting
- Final development agreement for Old Post Road should be finalized for the next meeting.
- Mr. Turkington reviewed the potential budget adjustments that may need tweaking (utility budget for the public safety building, snow & ice, etc.).
- Performance reviews for department heads continue but informed the Board that the Open Meeting Law impacts the discussion with the department heads.
- Capital Outlay tour is this Saturday morning.

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

None

#### **Executive Session - 8:11pm**

**MOTION:** To enter into Executive Session at 8:11pm to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and at the end, to adjourn for the evening. Discussion of this item in open session would be detrimental to the Town.

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

Heitin: Aye  
McGrath: Aye  
Roach: Aye

#### **Adjournment**

**MOTION:** To adjourn at 8:40pm  
(Heitin -Roach) 3-0 **PASSES**

Heitin: Aye  
McGrath: Aye  
Roach: Aye