

MINUTES
SHARON SELECT BOARD
March 12, 2024

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.

Public comment period

The Board began the meeting with public comment. Ms. Pierre-Louis advised that she would accept limited public comment on topics six, seven, and eight of the agenda. Otherwise, the public should avail themselves of the opportunity to comment at this point in the meeting.

Mr. Ira Miller of the Finance Committee asked whether the article for the moderator will feature any other specifics on the responsibilities of the moderator. Mr. Turkington advised that the version for the warrant will indicate that the role of moderator is a three-year term, and the main responsibility is to facilitate Town Meeting.

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

Board/Committee interview: Adara Meyers, Candidate for Cultural Council

Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that the Board asks the following standard questions of each Board or Committee candidate.

Please tell us about your personal background, education, employment, things you like to do for fun, etc. and how/if it relates to the committee for which you seek appointment.

Why are you interested in appointment to the particular committee? What goals do you have for your service?

We often have more interested citizens who step forward to serve. If not chosen for the particular committee to which you have applied, would you consider a different assignment?

How can we ensure the work of your committee reflects the breadth of thought that reflects Sharon's diverse community?

The Board met with Adara Meyers, candidate for Cultural Council. Ms. Meyers introduced herself and advised that she has lived in Sharon for the past ten years. In answering the Board's interview questions, she indicated that she has been involved in the arts for many years. She holds an undergraduate degree English from Wheaton College and a master's in fine arts from Goddard College in Vermont. Her professional experience involves education, theater, copyediting, copywriting, and grant writing. She has self-produced plays in the Providence, RI area. For fun, she enjoys antiques and live music.

The Board thanked Ms. Meyers for her interest in serving on a Sharon Board or Committee and for her time meeting with the Select Board this evening. Ms. Pierre-Louis explained that it is the Board's policy to make appointments at the meeting following interviews.

Discussion with Personnel Board

The Board held a discussion with the members of the Personnel Board. Mr. Liao has rejoined the board to help with a quorum problem. He had resigned from the Personnel Board about a year and a half ago to create a vacancy for another person. Since then, three people resigned unexpectedly from the board, creating more

vacancies. Mr. Liao emphasized that he is only rejoining to help the board and the town, not of his own choice. This is to address the quorum problem the board was facing. The board now has four members and Sam is officially a full member of the committee.

During the meeting, the board discussed several issues, including governance, executive salary increases, best practices, and the review of job descriptions. They also discussed the difference between the board being advisory or having autonomy and checks and balances while maintaining transparency. The members also mentioned the importance of communication, transparency, and collaboration between the two boards.

Regarding the executive salary increases, they planned to vote to concur with the salary increases and with the range increases. However, there was a question about one member's salary increase being much higher than the others, so they agreed to further discuss it before making a decision.

As for the governance issues, the board discussed the difference between being advisory and having autonomy with checks and balances. They emphasized the importance of transparency and communication between the two boards, as well as the need for town meeting to decide on certain issues if there are disagreements between the boards. They also mentioned the importance of having a collaborative and transparent relationship.

Overall, the meeting focused on addressing the board's current status, discussing governance and transparency issues, and making decisions regarding salary increases and best practices. The members emphasized the need for effective communication, transparency, and collaboration between the two boards.

MOTION: To move forward with a warrant article that reflects the changes in best practices and agreement tonight on the list of positions of which the hiring process will include involvement by the Personnel Board.
(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Sharon Gallery Development Agreement

Mr. Turkington explained that the agreement before the Board this evening has had several previous iterations. There are some differences highlighted in the redline version, which is the latest version of the agreement. All other parties to the agreement have approved; Sharon is the last signatory. This moves the Sharon Gallery project one step closer to be finalized.

MOTION: To approve the Sharon Gallery Development Agreement as presented and authorize signature on behalf of the Town of Sharon.
(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Ballot question expanding Select Board

Town Counsel has prepared the following summary for consideration.

Acceptance of this Act by a majority of votes at the next annual town election will increase the members of the Select Board from the current three to five. The increase will occur following such acceptance by, in addition to the election of persons to fill expiring terms, the election of one

additional member to serve for a two-year term and one additional member to serve for a three-year term.

The Board asked for clarification on the language. Ms. Barnes provided the language from the bill which states, “shall an act passed by the General Court entitled, an act expanding the Select Board of the Town of Sharon be accepted. This was the language included in the Home Rule petition. This is the text of the ballot question whereas the language provided by Town Counsel is a summary.

MOTION: To approve the ballot question expanding the Select Board from three to five members.
(Switlekowski– Smith-Lee)

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

Positions for Annual Town Meeting articles

Agenda Topic		Board Action	
1	Act on Reports	Support	3-0-0
2	Sharon Friends School Fund Records and Appointments	Support	3-0-0
3	Approve Changes to Compensation Plan in Personnel By-Law	Support	3-0-0
4	Property Tax Exemptions	Support	3-0-0
5	Revolving Fund Authorizations	Support	3-0-0
6	Amend the General By-Laws to Establish an Electric Vehicle Charging Stations Revolving Fund	Support	3-0-0
12	Amend General By-Law to codify role and authority of Moderator	Support	3-0-0
13	Amend Personnel By-Law to Reflect Changes in Law and Modernize Practices	Support	3-0-0
17	Accept MGL c. 64G, sec. 3D (a) and (b) to Validate Community Impact Fee in Short-Term Rental Zoning By-Law	Support	3-0-0
18	Accept Lily Lane and Juniper Road as Public Ways	Support	3-0-0
24	Petition General Court to Allow Posting of Legal Notices on Websites	Support	3-0-0

MOTION: To support Annual Town Meeting articles 1-6, 12, 13, 17, 18, and 24.
(Switlekowski– Smith-Lee)

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

Proposed fiscal year 2025 Select Board sector budget

Mr. Turkington updated the budget report given to the Board last month, working down to a 3.1227 percent increase over fiscal year 2024. The first three pages of the submission is a narrative explaining any variations in current services and what adjustments were made since review in February. There are two pages that give a high level view of each of the town departments. There is a budget detail for each department. If the Board has any specific questions or wishes to see any background documentation, Mr. Turkington will be happy to circulate it. An electronic version of the budget book will be distributed to the Finance Committee tomorrow for their review

on Monday night. Any support that the Board wishes to give at the Finance Committee meeting would be appreciated. A bound copy of the budget report will be made available for the Board. After it has been finalized by the Finance Committee, bound copies of the budget will be left at the Library and the Town Clerk's office for easy, accessible public viewing.

The Board thanked Mr. Turkington for the three-page budget memo. They found the submission to be easy to follow. Ms. Pierre-Louis wished to add that Priorities Committee updated the allocation to 3.1227 percent. All sectors are required to meet that 3.1227 percent figure.

MOTION: To approve the fiscal year 2025 Select Board sector budget.
(Switekowski– Smith-Lee)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

ARPA allocation

Finance Director Krishan Gupta provided some background on the COVID relief and ARPA funding received. He explained that the Town of Sharon received \$1.7 million in COVID relief funding. As part of the ARPA bill, the Town received nearly \$2 million directly from the federal government and Norfolk County was awarded \$137 million. Of the funds awarded to Norfolk County, \$3.6 million was allocated to Sharon. All ARPA funds must be allocated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. The Board previously approved allocation of nearly \$2 million in funding for the water treatment project. If the Board were to approve this matter this evening, the action will reduce borrowed funds for the Library construction project at 5% interest while increasing the funds borrowed at 0% interest for the water treatment facility. Doing so will save the town nearly \$1.8 million in interest over the 20-year borrowing term.

MOTION: To rescind any prior vote taken to allocate Town ARPA funds to the Water Treatment project and to allocate the Town ARPA funds in the amount of \$1,977,712.34 and any accrued interest to the library project, said funds to reduce previous authorized but unissued debt to finance the library project.
(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

Smith-Lee: AYE

Pierre-Louis: AYE

3-0 **PASSES**

Library facility management Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Turkington explained that there were discussions with the Library Trustees regarding utility and maintenance expectations for the new building. This agreement has been balanced between the facilities management division while allowing the Library Trustees to maintain the control needed for reporting and management requirements of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The Board asked about how this may impact budgeting. Mr. Turkington advised that heat and electric expenses have been moved from the Library budget to the DPW budget. Expenses related to cleaning and cleaning services have also been moved from Library to DPW. This is similar to what is done with in-kind services between the Town and Sharon Schools.

MOTION: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town of Sharon Department of Public Works and the Sharon Public Library Board of Trustees for library facility management.
(Smith-Lee – Switekowski)

Switekowski: AYE

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

Consent calendar

- I. Vote to approve the Executive session minutes of February 7, 2024
- II. Vote to approve the following banner request:
 - a. Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee Love Our Lake – April 22-29, 2024 in 2nd position
 - b. Indian American Association of Sharon Holi Festival Wishes – March 18-25, 2024 in 1st position
- III. Vote to award bid for delivery of the 2023 Annual Town Report to the Boy Scouts of America, Troop 95, in the amount of \$1,200
- IV. Vote to approve heavy commercial truck restriction for South Walpole Street, Pine Street, and Old Post Road and incorporate into the traffic rules and regulations
- V. Vote to authorize out-of-state travel for Officer Then and K9 Benny to attend certification training in Merrimack, New Hampshire on April 8 and May 17-19, 2024
- VI. Vote to approve the filing of a Determination of Applicability (RDA) for a sand replacement project on the east side of Veterans' Memorial Beach by the Recreation Department
- VII. Vote to approve the following requests by the Recreation Advisory Committee
 - a. Allow SYBSA to hold the annual carnival May 2 through May 5, 2024 at Deborah Sampson park
 - b. Allow the Lake Massapoag Advisory Committee to hang two banners, one by the rotary in the spring, and one at the Gunhouse entrance for spring/summer
 - c. Allow the Sharon Recreation Department to post an Invitation to Bid to host the 2024 Beer Garden at the Lakeside Concert series.
 - d. Approve request for Food Trucks at the following Lakeside Concert series dates as submitted, pending submission of satisfactory applications to the Select Board
 - e. Approve display of SYBSA sponsorship banners for the 2024 spring/fall seasons

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

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

Report of the Town Administrator

Mr. Turkington reminded the Board that the Select Board sector budget proposal would be presented to the Finance Committee on Monday, March 18. The Personnel Board recommendation on executive salaries and the personnel bylaw updates will be generated and circulated to the Board. Good progress is being made on the articles with the Finance Committee.

The School Department presented their budget to the Finance Committee last night, including a separate request for funding curriculum. The School Department had unexpended capital funds that were being

turned back. It was thought that they could use those funds toward the curriculum. As it turns out, the funds being turned back were borrowed originally for the Heights parking lot project. This means that those funds cannot be readily used on any project that does not have a similar duration of a 20 year borrowing. They will be turning back about \$320,000 to the Capital Outlay Committee which will be used to reduce borrowing in the coming year's budget. Separately, the School Committee is determined to bring it through the Capital Outlay process and have asked for a meeting of the Capital Outlay Committee next Tuesday evening. A quorum is being sought and if can be achieved, an agenda will be prepared.

Ms. Smith-Lee wished to comment on the School Committee's presentation to the Finance Committee last evening due to there being no other opportunity for the Select Board to deliberate before the proposed Capital Outlay meeting on Tuesday evening. Ms. Smith-Lee expressed her unhappiness with the situation. When the town allocates capital, whether through borrowing or cash, it does not then belong to the department it was appropriated to. She stated that this feels like an end run around the town's open and transparent budgeting and planning processes and worries that there is little accountability. In any of the three of the last School Committee budget meetings, not a word was mentioned about a \$365,000 expense that was going to somehow get through capital process but had not yet been presented to the Capital Outlay Committee.

Ms. Smith-Lee emphasized that her remarks should not be misconstrued as hindering the much-needed curriculum for the students, who are not responsible for the missteps of the School Department or School Committee. The Select Board's input is limited to participating in the Priorities and Capital Outlay Committees, and Ms. Smith-Lee feels that this situation bypasses both processes.

Ms. Pierre-Louis asked a procedural question about the Board's roles as part of the Capital Outlay Committee, particularly whether Emily's designation as an alternate might prohibit her from speaking at the Capital Outlay meeting. Mr. Turkington advised that she could, indeed, speak to the topic as an alternate.

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

None.

Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 9:14 pm.
(Switlekowski – Smith-Lee)

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

List of Documents

- Board/Committee application
- Proposed development agreement
- Summary of ballot question
- Article list
- Proposed budget
- ARPA fund balance
- ARPA description
- Proposed memorandum of understanding
- Executive session minutes
- Banner request forms (2)
- Proposed letter to MassDOT
- Request memoranda (3)