

SHARON BOARD OF FINANCE  
Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

A special meeting of the Sharon BOF was held on March 31, 2020 at 6PM via Zoom. Present were regular members Dignacco, Duncan, Robertson, Bancroft, Fowler and Bartram (6:50); alternates O'Kelly and Ensign; the three Selectmen, Doug Cahill, Gretchen Hachmeister, Matt Andrulis Mette, Barbara Prindle, Mandy Thompson, Donna Christensen, Marshall Miles taping for Channel 6 and the secretary.

Chairman Dignacco called the meeting to order at 6PM.

Donna Christensen (Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Committee) and Matt Andrulis Mette (Director) were present to answer questions that the BOF members had on the budget requests under their purview. Mrs. Christensen explained their budget process and the line item increases requested. Each BOF member asked questions on the budgets. The separate request for up to \$40,000 in the 20/21 fiscal year for the new playground at Veterans' Field was discussed. With all questions answered, the Board thanked Donna and Matt for their input.

Gretchen Hachmeister, Executive Director for The Hotchkiss Library of Sharon, was present to answer questions that the BOF members had on their budget request but mostly on the separate request for a capital grant for masonry repairs to two chimneys. The revised amount is \$12,000. With all questions answered, the Board thanked Gretchen for her input.

No one was present to address the Sharon Historical Society's request for \$20,000 for roof replacement. Board members discussed aspects of the project: the work proposed; any bidding done; what portion of the total cost would the Town be paying for; and should the Town pay the bills directly to the contractor or have the Historical Society pay the bills then the Town reimburse them.

Next there was a lengthy discussion on how to handle the special appropriation requests and should they be put in the budget and if so where. It was the consensus of the Board that the items be placed in the budget with the other associated line item, i.e. the Library request under the Library line item. This would track the expenditures historically. All members felt that this is not the year for a tax increase. If these appropriations were placed in the budget, a line item could be added on the receipts page taking the total amount out of the Undesignated Fund to offset the expenditure. Mr. Colley offered that the Highway Road Repair line item could be reduced and the additional \$75,000 for the Equipment Fund is not necessary in the 20/21 fiscal year.

The Board next discussed the budgets themselves. On the Education Budget, Mrs. Dignacco reminded the Board that they cannot tell the Board of Ed where to make changes but can only tell them to increase or decrease an amount. Ms. Fowler made a motion that the proposed BOE budget be approved to hearing as presented, seconded by Mr. Bartram, with all in favor – motion carried. On the Selectmen's Budget, the wage increases were discussed. The BOF discussed any wage increase for the Board of Selectmen. The BOS feels that with the 4% across the board increase, except the Road Crew, this will place our employees in a place of parity with other towns' comparable positions, although no town has the exact positions. The Board will discuss in the future, salary/wage range for positions. In order to finalize the BOS proposed budget, the separate allocation requests were discussed first: New playground at Veterans' Field – Ms. Fowler made a motion to fund the project in the next fiscal year, seconded by Mrs. Robertson. The Board discussed if this was really needed in the next budget year. Each member offered their opinion. Vote taken on motion – in favor – none; opposed – Dignacco,

Bartram, Robertson, Fowler, Duncan and Bancroft – motion not approved. Hotchkiss Library – Mr. Bartram made a motion to approve the \$12,000 request for masonry repair, seconded by Ms. Fowler. The Board discussed if this was really needed in the next budget year. Vote taken on motion – in favor – none; opposed – Dignacco, Robertson, Fowler, Duncan and Bancroft; Bartram abstained – motion not approved. Sharon Historical Society – Ms. Fowler made a motion to grant the \$20,000 request for a new roof, seconded by Mrs. Robertson. In the discussion, it was noted that the materials in this building are very important to Sharon's history. If approved, where in the budget should the allocation be placed – as there already is a line item for the Historical Society (32g) this is where it could be placed. Ms. Fowler and Mrs. Robertson agreed to amend their motion to place the \$20,000 in line item 32g. Vote taken on motion – all in favor – motion approved. Sharon Connect Task Force – Ms. Fowler made a motion to approve the request for \$2,775 for the one-time funding for the internet and cell phone survey, seconded by Mr. Bancroft. In the discussion, it was noted that reliable high-speed internet and cell phone coverage is becoming more essential for our residents. Where to place this in the budget was discussed as well as what to name the line. Ms. Fowler and Mr. Bancroft agreed to amend their motion to place the \$2,775 as a new line item 41m – Miscellaneous – Sharon Connect Task Force. Vote taken on motion – all in favor – motion approved. Equipment Fund – Mr. Bartram made a motion to fund the Equipment Fund by the additional \$75,000, seconded by Mr. Bancroft. In the discussion, Mr. Colley expressed that in reviewing the anticipated expenditures for the 20/21 fiscal year, this allocation would not be necessary. Vote taken on motion – in favor – none; opposed – Dignacco, Bartram, Robertson, Fowler, Duncan and Bancroft – motion not approved. Next the BOS proposed budget was reviewed page by page with areas discussed: the Board agreed on 4% wage increase across the Board including the Board of Selectmen; Town Hall new map copier – the members wanted more information – take out of budget for now - get a list of questions to the Recording Secretary and she will give them to the Town Clerk (who has been researching this) and at the hearing if all questions are answered, the BOS can add this into the budget; reducing the Road Repair line item; Recreation – back stop; and the Parks & Recreation Capital Improvements Line. After some discussion, Mr. Bartram made a motion that the proposed BOS budget be approved to hearing as amended to: include a 4% wage increase for the Board of Selectmen; delete the Town Hall map copier line item 14n \$13,731; reduce the Highway Road Repair line item 26q by \$100,000; reduce Recreation Veterans' Field line item 36a Repairs/Maintenance for the backstop by \$6,000; reduce Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement line item 38a by \$25,000; add \$20,000 to Sharon Historical Society line item 32g; and add new line item Miscellaneous 41m \$2,775 Sharon Connect Task Force, seconded by Ms. Fowler, with all in favor – motion approved.

As it was getting late, Mrs. Dignacco offered that the Board hold a special meeting to discuss the budget procedure time line and George Sinnamon's response re: the Sharon Housing Authority funding and assistance in light of the COVID-19 situation. Ms. Fowler made a motion that the Board hold a Zoom special meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020 at 6:30PM for these two items, seconded by Mrs. Robertson, with all in favor – motion carried.

With nothing further, Mrs. Robertson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Bancroft, with all in favor – motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 9:14.

Respectfully submitted,



Tina Pitcher, Recording Secretary

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SHARON TOWN CLERK