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*By Linda Amerighi at 10:28 am, Apr 06, 2023*

BOARD OF FINANCE

Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

A special meeting of the Sharon BOF was held on April 4, 2023 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall. Present were regular members Bartram, O'Kelly, Fowler, Duncan, Robertson and Flaton (via telephone); alternates Ensign and Whelan; Steve Szalewicz, Jamie Casey, Linda Amerighi, reporters Hawken and Epstein and the secretary.

Chairman Bartram called the meeting to order at 6:30.

Steve Szalewicz, Chairman of the Sewer & Water Commission, was present to request the BOF approve to a Town Meeting the Sewer & Water Commission applying for a 1.3 million dollar loan from the USDA. The funds are to be used to replace the water lines under Main Street, New Street and possibly Route 4. There is a possibility that they may be awarded a 35% grant but that is not known at this time. The balance will be a 40 year loan with a low interest rate. The interest rate will not be known until the application is established. They have been told that if the Town approves the submitting of the application by the end of May the interest rate will be better. Salisbury Bank would give them a loan at 4.75% interest for 40 years. His Commission would like to get this work done before the Green curbing is done, the sidewalks replaced and the State paves Main Street. Town Meeting has to approve the whole dollar amount as the Town is responsible if the Sewer & Water Commission goes defunct. With all questions answered, Mr. O'Kelly made a motion to approve the application for allocating up to 1.3 million dollars to Town Meeting for the Sewer & Water Commission infrastructure project, seconded by Ms. Fowler. Vote on motion = in favor 5 (Bartram, O'Kelly, Fowler, Duncan and Robertson): abstaining – Flaton. Motion carried.

The Board continued their discussion on the proposed 2023-2024 budgets. Revised BOE & BOS budgets had been received. The Board reviewed Draft 5 of the BOE budget first. There was lengthy discussion on the information received from the State on the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR) – it doesn't coincide with what is believed – the budget can be reduced if operating costs are reduced. It was felt that the Board needs to have someone from the State Board of Education come to a meeting to explain the MBR – the online data doesn't reflect dollar amounts known to the BOF. It was noted that in this information, there could be an efficiency deduction which has never been looked at by the BOE. There was also a question as to why there is a 9.34% increase in teacher salaries while the contract was for a 3.97% increase for the 23-24 year. The BOF would like an explanation on this. Other areas of the budget with a list of questions for the BOE were discussed as well. It was agreed that Mr. O'Kelly will draft a letter that asking for a meeting with the State BOE, our BOE and the BOF, with an answer deadline of 4/17/23. The letter will be reviewed by Mr. Bartram and Ms. Fowler before it is sent. No action taken on the proposed budget.

The BOS revised budget was reviewed next. The only changes to the budget with the 4% wage increases were to the Social Security & Medicare Line Item and the Interest Earned – with the Net Budget having a 6.498% increase. It was commented that the ARPA Committee agreed to send to the BOS the recommendation that funds be earmarked for Town Technology Improvements – this would allow for funds to be used towards the COMCAST contract. Under Parks & Recreation there were questions on the tennis court replacement, which Mr. Flanagan addressed and the job description for the Youth Director/mowing-maintenance position. A copy of the job description will be obtained. Mr. Duncan pointed out that the big increase in this budget is for infrastructure and highway equipment. This Board's biggest challenge is with the BOE budget. The draft Mil Rate sheet was reviewed. Mr. O'Kelly

made a motion that the BOF approves to public hearing the BOS proposed 23-24 budget with a Net Budget increase of 6.498%, seconded by Ms. Flaton, with all in favor.

The next meeting is April 18, 2023 at 6:30PM. This is a regular meeting.

The Five Year Capital Improvement Plan approved by the BOS was reviewed. There was a question as to why the Hilltop Road Speed Humps was listed as 2023/2024. Mr. Flanagan offered that this originally was in the proposed budget but as this project would fall under LoCIP funds, it had to be listed in the Plan in order for the expenditure to be approved by the State. It was also noted that the Community Center Update is still on the Plan as the BOS/Town has not yet decided what to do with this building. The Board would like approximate dollar amounts noted for Projects A – F. Mr. Flanagan will work on this. This will be on the next meeting agenda. Mr. Bartram commented that the BOF now has its' own email address: [sharonbof@sharon-ct.org](mailto:sharonbof@sharon-ct.org)

With nothing further, Ms. Fowler made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mrs. Robertson, with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Pitcher, Recording Secretary