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By Linda Amerighi at 3:10 pm, Apr 11, 2024

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

A special meeting of the Sharon BOF was held on April 10, 2024 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall. Present were regular members Bartram, Flaton, Fowler, Hecht and Duncan; alternates Clare and Pastre. Also in attendance were: First Selectman Flanagan, Selectman Brett, reporters Hawken and Epstein; and the secretary.

Chairman Bartram called the meeting to order at 6:30. Mrs. Robertson has designated Mrs. Pastre to vote in her place.

The began the discussion on the proposed 2024-2025 budgets:

The Board of Education has not made any changes since their Fifth Draft.

The changes in the Board of Selectmen's budget were reviewed. Line Item 26a – Highway Wages – three-year contract calls for a wage adjustment based on position in addition to a cost-of-living increase (the adjustment is in year one and two, then an across the board increase in year three). The adjustment is an attempt to get more competitive with the wages and neighboring towns – retain current crew and encourage applicants when there is a vacancy. The Board asked Mr. Flanagan to look into: do other town's employees contribute to their benefits and are there job evaluations for the crew members. Line Items 17a & 17c – Social Security & Medi Care and Pension amounts were adjusted based on these wages. Parks & Recreation Committee had requested a reduction in Line Item 37 c – Youth Services Special Travel down to \$6,400 due to the availability of a matching State grant through the NW Transit.

Line Items in the BOS budget for discussion: Line Item 41i - Removal Dead Trees – after discussing the use of State Aid for Roads Funds VS LoCIP, it was agreed to lower this line item to \$85,000 with the understanding that \$45,000 of State Funds would be used. Line Item 38a – Parks & Recreation Capital Improvements – after discussing the use of LoCIP funds (\$71,914), funds in the Capital Non-recurring Account earmarked Parks & Recreation, it was agreed to lower this line item to \$75,000. This item will need to be added to the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan.

The Board took no action on adding funds for the Board of Education capital projects. The Recording Secretary pointed out that per the LoCIP guidelines, there are three allowable school-related projects of which sidewalks and pavement improvements are included. Ms. Flaton briefly reviewed data showing the average budget increases over the last 15 years. Nothing was out of order.

Ms. Flaton made a motion to send the Fifth Draft of the Board of Education budget and the General Government (Board of Selectmen's) budget as amended tonight to hearing on April 26, 2024, seconded by Mr. Hecht. In the discussion, Ms. Flaton commented that this is her third Board of Education budget and the BOF has asked the BOE various questions on the costs with no answers to the questions. Mr. Bartram commented there the BOE does have a committee looking into the various costs. Vote taken on motion – in favor 5 (Bartram, Fowler, Hecht, Duncan and Pastre); opposed 1 (Flaton) motion carried.

As the Board is proposing to use LoCIP funds for the tennis court replacement, Ms. Fowler made a motion to approve to Town Meeting the expenditure of \$71,914 from LoCIP for this project and that this item be added to the Five-Year Capital Plan, seconded by Mr. Duncan, with all in favor.

The BOS and the Parks & Recreation Committee have submitted a request for an additional \$1,000 be added to the 23/24 Line Item 37 a – Youth Services Special Travel in order to take advantage of a state

matching fund program with NW Transit to be used for bus trips. Ms. Flaton made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Mrs. Pastre, with all in favor.

Ms. Fowler and Mrs. Pastre reviewed what they have been doing as the contract sub-committee. They have met twice and are getting close to the end of this process. The BOS have been helpful and a list of items has been sent to the Town Attorney for comment. His comments have been received but they need to review them. The main point of this exercise was to avoid problems or perceived problems concerning financial impact to the town. With this, Mr. Flanagan told the Board that the BOS has received a revised Option to Lease for 99 North Main Street with the Sharon Housing Trust, which they need to review. A real estate attorney with Cramer & Anderson has been involved with this document. Does the whole BOF want to review this document – it was agreed to have the document passed on to the Chairman, who will pass it along to the Vice Chair as he is a member of the Housing Trust, for review of any financial implication for the Town – if none, the document can proceed without BOF action.

Ms. Flaton reported on the ZOOM meeting with the CT Green Bank. A list of questions was sent ahead of the meeting, some which were answered and some that she is waiting for information on. Once this is received, she will report back to the Board.

It was agreed to cancel Tuesday's scheduled meeting (April 16, 2024) and then call a special meeting if needed.

The Board was reminded of their special meeting to be held following the budget hearing to take final action on the budgets to Town Meeting, which is May 10, 2024. There are other items that will be dealt with also at this meeting – agenda to follow.

With nothing further, Mr. Duncan made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Hecht, with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:06.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Pitcher, Recording Secretary

BUDGET HEARING: APRIL 26 7:00PM with special meeting to follow

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING: May 10 (time to be determined by BOS) with special meeting to follow to set mil rate

NEXT REGULAR MEETING: MAY 21 6:30PM