

**RECEIVED**

*By Linda Amerighi at 11:19 am, Oct 28, 2021*

BOARD OF FINANCE

Draft until approved at the next regular meeting

A special meeting of the Sharon BOF was held on October 26, 2021 at 7:00PM In-person and remotely at the Sharon Center School. Present were regular members Bartram, O'Kelly, Robertson, Duncan and Bancroft; alternates Flaton and Ensign; invited Board of Education members Cahill, Rathbun, Visconti, Thompson and Petkov; Dr. Manning, Principal; Lisa Carter, Superintendent; Selectman Flanagan, Eliza Klose and the secretary.

Interim Chair Bartram called the meeting to order at 7:01. Ms. Fowler designated Ms. Flaton to vote in her place.

The agenda for this meeting was generated by concerns of BOF members for consideration in general discussion over budgets. The BOF hardly gets involved with the BOE expenditures. Both Boards appreciate this meeting.

Mr. Bartram turned the meeting over to BOE Chairman Cahill. Mr. Cahill began a slide presentation by saying that a task force has been created to look at enrollment. The slide presentation (copy attached) was done according to the agenda. There were a lot of questions regarding Sharon's per pupil cost VS others in the state and our teacher-student ratio. Other discussions focused on: keeping the BOE budget level and the expenditure of funds to maintain the building (budget funds for a certain project but once that project is done, those funds are not removed from the next budget); and an only operating budget vs a budget that is for operating and capital expenditures. Another area of discussion was – why don't Sharon kids go the Sharon Center School? There are various factors for this and hopefully the task force will draw them all out.

The BOE doesn't have a five-year capital plan. The BOF explained that they are asking all major players of funding in budgets to develop a plan. The plan does not need to be done by a professional. Common knowledge of what is needed can be pulled together by a Board or Commission members. The BOE doesn't see any financial risks or issues at this time.

Both Boards felt that this was a worthwhile meeting and that they should meet again. Mr. Bartram commented that the BOF is trying to do more pre-budget planning. For a future meeting, BOF members are to submit a list of what they would want to see along with the budget. These lists are to be submitted to Mr. Bartram who will compile them and get them to the BOE. Any communication beforehand will be helpful. This will help with budgeting for the future and let the BOE know what the BOF is looking at.

With nothing further, Mrs. Robertson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Flaton, with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Pitcher, Recording Secretary

SPECIAL BOF MEETING: THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4 4:30

NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING: DECEMBER 14 7PM

# **Sharon Center School Planning Discussion**

**Board of Education**

**Board of Finance**

**October 2021**

# Agenda

1. **Call to order**
2. Sharon BOE budget process
3. Oct. 1, 2021 Blackline Report – Sharon Center School, 96 Students, K-8
4. Current state of the facility
5. Plans, if any, in place regarding the decline in enrollment the thresholds for implementation of these plans
6. An update on the 5 year capital plan
7. Financial risks – any foreseen
8. Discussion of and planning for future joint meetings
9. Adjourn

# Welcome – Purpose of Discussion

- Why are we here:
  - Build collaborative relationships
  - Capitalize on positive relationships
  - Budget process
  - Current enrollment
  - Building Projects – long range plan
- Understand roles and responsibilities
  - All: Residents of Sharon
    - children, parents, taxpayers, voters
  - BOE: State Department of Education
    - To provide the best possible education for every student in a fiscally responsible manner

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# CT DOE Challenges

- Mandates (most unfunded)
- More than 70 categories of State education mandates
- Most consume resources/have an impact on the budget
  - ✓Testing
    - i.e. administer State Mastery Tests (3-8)
  - ✓Mandated Costs
    - i.e. residents receiving special education outside of our district
  - ✓Training
    - i.e. Children – substance abuse; Teachers – restraint
  - ✓Reporting
    - i.e. lunch program, health issues (asthma), testing results

## **Current – SCS at a Glance**

- Salaries and Benefits are 72% of budget
  - Increases are variable
- 2021-22 budget = \$6,569,933
- 43% students are free (29)/reduced lunch (11) status
- 23% students participate in Special Education (22)

# Current – Budget Process

- **BOE:**
    - Monitor current spending across the year
    - Reviews building condition for current needs and future projections
    - Negotiates compensation for certified and classified staff members
    - Contacts current vendors to determine costs for upcoming year, considers alternatives and needs
    - Reviews the need to continue with all non-essential programs and staff members.
  
  - **Region One:**
    - Transportation, Electricity, Fuel, Heating fuel, Diesel fuel
    - Student accident insurance
    - Health, dental, life insurance for staff
    - Determines cost for high school, pupil services, and central office
  
  - **Town:**
    - Multi Peril Insurance, Workers Comp Insurance
- ✓ Town Hearing - Town Vote - Region One Vote



# Historical – SCS Budget

Historical Sharon Board of Education Spending Plans							
Actual Budgets		Potential Budgets if CPI Applied Annually			Difference from Actual vs CPI Applied Annually		
Total - Actual \$	Actual %	Total - with CPI	*CPI	Variance			
2021	\$6,569,933	0.37%	2021	\$7,308,400	**3.82%	\$738,467	2021
2020	\$6,545,877	0.00%	2020	\$7,219,599	1.23%	\$727,953	2020
2019	\$6,546,019	-2.21%	2019	\$7,091,248	1.81%	\$545,229	2019
2018	\$6,668,145	-0.27%	2018	\$6,922,343	2.44%	\$254,198	2018
2017	\$6,624,516	-0.10%	2017	\$6,777,972	2.13%	\$153,456	2017
2016	\$6,693,632	2.70%	2016	\$6,693,632	1.26%	\$0	2016

\*CPI - BLS - CPI-U (All Urban Consumers) 1913-2021

\*\*Estimate

## Summary:

Over the past 6 years, our Board of Education (BOE) and Administration have worked hard to keep our BOE budgets as low as able, while ensuring our stakeholders are satisfied. Our children are getting a quality education, our staff are receiving fair salary and benefits, our building is being attended to in a proactive manner. This has been our focus, while staying sensitive to the needs of our taxpayers and those who act on their behalf. With declining enrollment, we have reduced staff by 10.2 FTE's, however operating costs due to inflation are still a annual budgetary factor.

In the worksheet above, if our BOE annual budget increased by the Consumer Price index (CPI) on an annual basis, Sharon taxpayers might be looking at a total budget that is \$738,467 more than it is today. The Sharon BOE is proud of this accomplishment and wanted to highlight this with the 2021-2022 budget.

## **Current – SCS Staffing**

- 94 Students
- 20 Certified Staff
- 1 In-house Substitute
- 4 Teaching Assistants (2 classroom, technology, library)
- 1 Principal
- 1 Nurse
- 3 Custodians
- 2 Cafeteria Staff
- 2 Administrative Assistants
- 1 Board Clerk (part time)

# What have we done?

## SCS

- Reduced 10.2 teachers since 2004-2005
  - Through attrition to avoid unemployment/legal \$
- Considered reducing Music and Library - not realized
- Considered cutting Spanish - parental pushback
- Currently provide students with a comprehensive experience:
  - Academics, Art, Music, Computer, Library, PE, World Language, Lunch
- Energy Savings
  - Lights, windows, weather stripping, cleaned radiators, digital controls. Remain open to solar discussions

# What have we done?

## Regionalization

- Regional Programs
- Regional Services
- Special Education
- Central Office
- Regional Sports
- Regional Purchases
  - i.e. fuel, electric, transportation, insurances

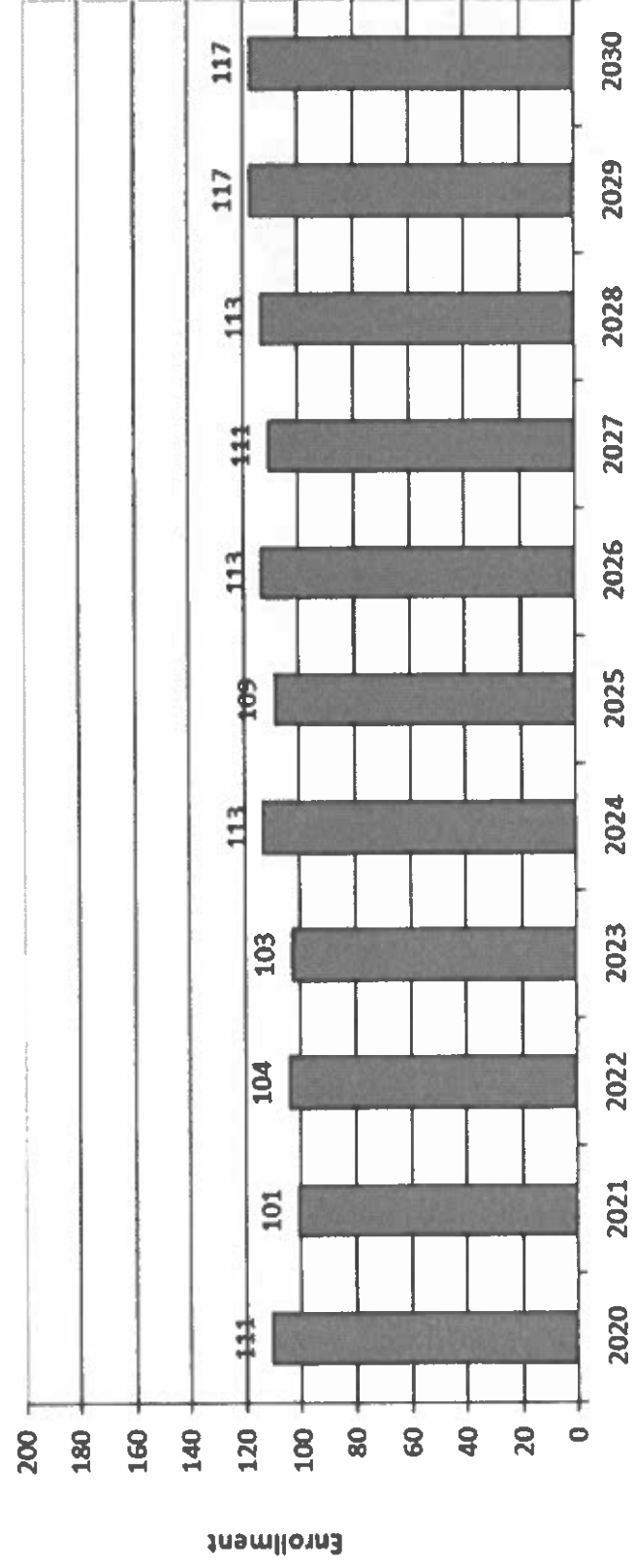
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# Where are we now?

## Enrollment

K-8 To 2030 Based On Data Through School Year 2020-21



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# What are our building needs?

2015 Jacunski Humes proposed \$3,735,241, highlighted to be done:

- Site work:
  - Driveway, parking lot
  - Sidewalks, concrete stairs
  - Basketball courts
  - Exterior wall repairs
  - Masonry repairs/sealant
  - Wood soffits/cornice
- Building:
  - Paint gym, new padding for walls
  - Kitchen renovation
    - Range
    - Seal floor
  - Redo old tech room
  - Interior counter top cabinet replacement
  - Hallway flooring
  - Toilet partitions, shades, whiteboards
  - Clock system paging system
  - Hot water heater
  - HVAC upgrade - in progress
- Priority for 2022 2023
  - Sidewalks, stairs
- Next Steps? Consider new architectural/engineering report for 2022?



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# Where are we going?

- Enrollment projected to remain stable through 2030
- Will continue to monitor programs annually
- Will continue to manage staffing
  - Every vacant position will be analyzed by the following means:
    - Do we have to replace?
    - Can we restructure role?
    - Can we replace at a lower cost (degree, certs, experience)?
    - Can the position be reduced (i.e. - .8, .6, or .4 fte)?
      - has been a challenge to attract and retain part time

# What are our options?

## Internal

1. Internal Consolidation
  - Combine Grades
    - Local Decision
2. Reduce Programs/Eliminate Staff
  - Consider “essentials” to comply with State Regulations
    - Local Decision
      - meeting student needs
      - staff morale

# What are our options?

## External

1. External Consolidation
  - Bring in students from neighboring towns
  - Merge with neighboring town
    - Town(s) vote, State involvement
2. Further Regionalization
  - Create “middle school” at HVRHS
  - i.e. grades 6-8
    - Town(s) vote, State involvement

## **What are our options?**

- We know our enrollment projections are approximately 100 students for the next ten years
- Is it time to engage in conversations with town officials about alternatives to educating the Town's elementary students at Sharon Center School?
  - If so, possible first steps?

## Action Steps

- How do we attract more families to Sharon?
  - Target families considering relocating here and promoting school as a viable alternative to private education due to comprehensive programming
    - Marketing Sharon Center School – 111 Group
  - Increase Affordable Housing
  - Improve Town Amenities
  - Improve connectivity
  - Increase Employment opportunities
  - Additional