

RECEIVED

By Linda Amerighi at 8:44 am, Mar 11, 2024

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

A budget workshop of the Sharon BOS was held March 7, 2024 in person and via ZOOM. Present were the three Selectmen, Carol Flaton, John Hecht, the secretary, Jill Drew and Matt Andrulis-Mette via ZOOM.

First Selectman Flanagan opened the session at 10AM.

Thalia MacMillan, Captain of the Sharon Ambulance Squad, was invited to this session to explain their budget request in the amount of \$130,000. The Squad is seeking to have two paid staff members during the day, Monday – Friday 6AM to 6PM, in order to maintain EMS coverage as the squad has less volunteers than they previously had. Volunteers would still assist if they were available and the volunteers would cover night time and weekends. The \$130,000 covers the personnel costs, AED supplies, and a new billing service. The billing service would submit a bill to the patients' insurance company, which would then pay funds to the Ambulance Squad to offset additional costs of supplies and paid personnel. It was commented that once the billing starts, the Squad does not feel that their fundraising would be affected as they fundraise for a particular piece of equipment or specific need. The town would be billed monthly for the paid staff. Ms. MacMillan stressed that the Squad is not looking forward to this option, but they feel it is needed for the community and ensuring that emergency care can continuously be provided.

Jennifer Dubray, Assessor, was invited to explain her budget request. The revaluation increased the grand list by 46%. The Board of Assessment Appeals have 15 appeals. For the current fiscal year, the office has not had a clerical assistant. The proposed budget includes a request for a part-time assistant as it would be helpful to have a third person. The hope is to attract someone to come into the office who would be interested in continuing their education in the assessing field and become certified. The process of being certified was explained. Mr. Flanagan would like to work on a long-term plan for this office. There was discussion on the timing of advertising for such a position and the possible need to update the job description. Keeping this line item flat for the 24-25 fiscal year was discussed. The budget request had a \$10,000 insurance cost sharing line item. The idea was to have the three towns where Mrs. Dubray is the Assessor each contribute the same amount – this has been discussed only amongst the three First Selectmen, where Mr. Flanagan stated that they have not been able to come to any agreement. She works 10 hours a week in each town with more hours depending on the time of year. Sharon's insurance plan requires working 30 hours a week. Currently she is on North Canaan's plan paying the whole amount of the premium. The Assessor pool is limited as one needs to be certified. Mr. Flanagan offered that a goal to work towards for next year would be a formal written agreement on this issue.

Donna Christensen and Matt Andrulis Mette were invited to this session to review the Parks & Recreation Committee's various budget requests. Beach Budget – The plan is to extend the hours that the beach is open to 10AM – 8PM the first week in July through the second week in August. Otherwise, the hours are 10AM to 7PM, although Little Rascals is open at 7:30. The staffing requirements were explained. The maintenance line item includes the second half of the cost to replace the roof on the changing building (half is in the current budget). The number of times for the weed harvesting is planned to be increased. Recreation Budget – the use of the soccer fields and the lower fields was discussed. Mr. Flanagan offered that he appreciates the Committee's willingness to welcome other

groups to use the fields. There may be an effort for the outside groups to donate to keep the fields in good shape. Youth Services Budget – the Special Travel line item includes Matt’s extra needed mileage (getting parts or supplies) and \$10,000 to rent a bus for adult trips. Sharon Center School says they would take advantage of the Summer Jobs – kids working with the janitor during the summer. Little Rascals was discussed. The Sharon Day Care is not interested in taking this over. The BOS agreed that this service is needed but the issue is – is the town willing to absorb any loss – this depends on the number of children attending. The Board asked for additional information. With a new director and assistant director, this is a good opportunity for the program to grow. With this change, after this year the program will be evaluated – doing a survey at the end the summer would be helpful. Various issues were discussed. In order to fill the needed positions in a timely manner, it was agreed that the advertising etc. should proceed as normal. The BOS wants to support this service but the numbers need to be clarified to them and to the Board of Finance. Capital Improvements Line Item - the tennis court replacement and funding discussed – budget, funds in Reserve Account and Undesignated Fund. Some of the amount requested it for future projects.

Ms. Flaton made various comments on items that she feels will help the Board of Finance.

Another budget workshop is needed as the BOS has not discussed the entire budget yet. A workshop was set for Tuesday, March 12, 2024 at 9AM. Along with this, the regular scheduled for Tuesday, March 12 was canceled and a special meeting was set for Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 2PM at which meeting the BOS will make their final decision on the budget to present to the Board of Finance.

The session was closed at 12:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Tina Pitcher, Town Secretary