

## **Sharon Historical Society Board Meeting, Aug. 14, 2021**

A special meeting of the Board was held by Zoom on Saturday afternoon, Aug. 14, at 2:00 PM

Present: Brad Larson (president), Don Williams (vice president), Carolyn Weeks (treasurer), Beth McGregor (secretary), Maria Anderson (nominating Committee chair), Jimmie Keating, Paul Lauenstein, Shirley Schofield, and Meg Winikates

Brad called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

Maria and Beth reviewed the various proposed options for the Sept. 30 annual meeting, along with the legal requirements and limitations that need to be met. The legal limitations included the expiration of the temporary Massachusetts state Covid exception to allow non-profit associations to hold meetings remotely rather than in person, and the opinion of the Attorney General's office mail-in voting is not legally permitted unless specifically authorized in the association's bylaws, which it's not in ours.

There was discussion about the additional logistical problems of managing mail-in ballots in a secure and timely way, and Marlene's concerns about mailing them out unsolicited. Brad felt that while people might be able to request a ballot by email, it would have to be returned by regular mail or some sort of personal dedicated link.

Beth suggested that mailed-in absentee votes might be OK to be counted if the in-person meeting first took the action of voting to admit them, and they were tallied separately just in case of challenge.

Meg said she was aware of some electronic voting systems that might be available at little cost, but didn't have any detailed knowledge of them.

Maria suggested that with the many complications facing us we should stick with the status quo of an in-person meeting as has always been held, with only those present able to take part in the business and vote. That would answer all the legal issues, as well as save a lot of work and reduce the problem of a short timeline between the newsletter announcement and the meeting. We would still keep a tight rein on checking in members, issuing ballots, and counting them under Marlene's supervision, so that people could feel assured that the process was valid.

Paul and Shirley both agreed with the status quo solution. Shirley felt that we would get good interest and attendance. Beth agreed that it was our best and most assuredly legal one, and agreed with Shirley on the good attendance prospects as long as we did our best to make people feel safe. Those who didn't want to attend in person could still watch and listen to the meeting online.

Beth and Meg both expressed regret that we couldn't do more this year, after all the effort we'd put in trying to figure out how to improve inclusivity and participation while maintaining security and ensuring the validity of the vote. Meg suggested that this was a good incentive to get to work on revised bylaws.

We reviewed how to run the meeting safely and how to accommodate those who wanted to vote but were concerned about spending time in the meeting room. We agreed that they could be met at the door, checked in as present and eligible, given a ballot to fill out, turn it in on the spot, then leave, and could watch the rest of the meeting remotely if they wanted. Also, we'll follow all the Covid protocols in effect at the time and have masks available for anyone who didn't bring one.

Moved (Don), seconded (Maria) and voted unanimously, 9-0, to hold our annual meeting and elections in person, including the exception allowing for drop-in voting.

The meeting closed with reminders of the newsletter deadline, and expressions of the sense that we'd tried valiantly and repeatedly to come up with viable alternatives, only to come full circle to the status quo. Don and Brad praised Maria and the Nominating Committee for their diligence, thoughtfulness and effort over several months.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:53 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Elisabeth McGregor, Secretary