

**SHARON SELECTBOARD
EMERGENCY MEETING
Minutes (DRAFT)
FRIDAY October 18, 2019**

Board Members Attending: Joe Ronan (via telephone), Kevin Gish, Mary Gavin
Staff Present: Margy Becker (taking minutes)
Members of the public: none

Joe Ronan called the emergency meeting to order at 1:00PM.

Re: Participation in Opioid Litigation: Joe Ronan explained he has heard from attorneys on the Bennington case that the drug companies are moving quickly to settle. The Town has been informed that it needs to indicate immediately should it wish to join the suit. A 'retainer agreement' has been sent to the Selectboard on behalf of Sanford Heisler Sharp, LLP and The Cicala Law Firm, PLLC.

Attorneys representing the plaintiffs are advancing all out-of-pocket costs and expenses. They will recover their costs through division of any financial award or settlement. Joe Ronan noted attorneys' contingency fees appear to be 25% with a cap of 30%.

Joe Ronan suspects this will still be a long drawn out process and parties will challenge whatever settlements occur. Selectmen briefly discussed the various avenues towns and cities are taking to sue the drug companies, some of which may be redundant. Joe Ronan also noted that the Town just received notice that it is covered in a class action suit on this issue. The Selectboard has until later in November to consider withdrawing from the class.

The Bennington case goes after several manufacturers and distributors of opioids, including Purdue Pharma, Mallinckrodt (largest seller of opioids in Vermont), CVS Health; Walgreens Boots Alliance, Inc. etc. in connection with "defendants' manufacture, marketing, sale, and distribution of prescription opioid products and the harm created therefrom..."

It is unknown at this time what the burden might be on town staff to produce discovery materials. There is also uncertainty as to how large the settlement might be, and what the Town of Sharon could expect for 'cost recovery'. Joe Ronan guessed a range of \$50,000 - \$100,000. It is also uncertain whether settlement money would be obligated to affected families. Joe Ronan suggested at the very least the Town could increase funding for Sharon Health Initiative for public outreach on the opioid issue.

A motion was made by Kevin Gish that the Town of Sharon join the multi-district litigation in Ohio against opioid manufacturers and distributors and to authorize the Chair to sign the agreement. Roll call vote: Ronan (yes), Gavin (yes), Gish (yes). The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment: Kevin Gish made the motion to adjourn at 1:15PM. Mary Gavin seconded. The motion carried.