

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, February 12, 2024 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Robert Fedell, Jonathan Sylbert

Participants: Lynn Rubenstein, Ron Pachulski, Tegan Abear, Willard Platt, Barbara Cormier (remote), Carl Nett (remote)

1. Call to order: Note that the meeting is being recorded

2. Joint meeting with Cemetery Committee

• Discuss Cemetery Plot Fees

Lynn Rubenstien clarifies that a plot is for the burial of one person and a lot consists of four plots. It's noted that Sandisfield plots are one of the largest in Berkshire County, measuring 7'x10'. Lynn gathered a comparison of the costs of a plot in Sandisfield versus surrounding Towns. Sandisfield is one of the lowest at \$125.00 per plot. Sheffield public cemetery and Great Barrington for non-taxpayers are the highest at \$1,400 per plot. Lynn reports that when their Cemetery Superintendent sells a plot, he gets \$100.00, so the Town only makes \$25.00, half of which goes into Perpetual Care. Lynn suggests the Select Board consider creating two separate fee prices; one for taxpayers and a higher one for non-taxpayers. The Town could also choose not to permit non-taxpayers from being buried in Sandisfield. There is hesitation towards this idea, as this may prevent someone from being buried with their family. After some discussion, the Select Board supports only permitting tax-payers to be buried in Sandisfield. However, should a non-taxpayer already have family members buried in Sandisfield, they will be given special permission. The Select Board asks the Cemetery Committee to propose a new fee for lots.

• Discuss Cemetery Rules & Regulations

The Cemetery Committee is proposing a few new rules

- No in-ground plantings of any kind. Plantings will not be required to be removed at an already established plot.
- No plastic containers shall be left at a plot, as they often blow away in the wind and get hit by landscaping equipment causing litter.
- Size restrictions for headstones were added per plot, as they were previously only specified per lot.

The Select Board agree and support these changes.

• Discuss Green Burials

It's noted that should the Select Board permit green burials, a section of the cemetery would need to be designated for them, as they can cause shifts in the ground which could ultimately affect surrounding plots. The Cemetery Committee does not support green burials in Sandisfield at this time, as there are too many potential issues that come with them. Issues may include contamination to the ground and waterway, disturbance of the buried body, and designation of an area in the cemetery. Jonathan will determine whether the Town can legally prohibit green burials.

Cemetery Committee adjourns meeting.

3. Review Conservation Commission Enforcement Letter

The Town received a cease and desist from the Conservation Commission for culvert installation done on Dodd Rd. The Town will need to apply for an NOI. The Town is currently in the process of getting a blanket NOI. Once the blanket NOI is received, the Conservation Commission will have to confirm whether this portion of Dodd Rd falls under the blanket.

4. Chief Procurement Officer Appointment

Janey Beardsley completed her Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official (MCPPO) training and has officially been designated.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Janey Beardsley as Chief Procurement Officer

Steve Seddon	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

5. Yanner Park Appointment

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Lauren Paul to the Yanner Park Committee

Steve Seddon	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

6. Sign Presidential Primary & Caucus Warrant

The Select Board sign the warrants.

7. Budget Discussion

The School revised their budget to include a 1.61% increase; this is the only significant change to the overall Town budget since the Board's last discussion. There is about \$9,000 to be designated before the budget surpasses the Select Board's goal of no

more than \$150,000 increase. Steve suggests asking the larger budgets, including Fire, Police, and Highway to see if they can save 10% somewhere in their budgets, as they are all mostly level-funded.

8. Town Manager Updates/Project List

All the data has been collected for the EMS Study. Jonathan mentions the possibility of creating an Ambulance Enterprise Fund, which will have a significant impact on the budget.

There will be weekly inspections for compliance at Jenifer Pilbin's property on West Hubbard Rd through the end of February and a final court hearing on March 6th in Pittsfield. Jonathan estimates it has cost the Town tens of thousands of dollars dealing with Pilbin and there is no means to reap compensation for those expenses. Steve notes that any neighbors who have had issues or complaints against Pilbin should attend the hearing and voice their complaints. Jonathan confirms signed affidavits from neighbors are the best way to make the judge understand the severity of the situation. Leslie Garwood would like guidance from Town Counsel on what type of information would be valuable to bring to the hearing.

9. Select Board Updates

10. Future Agenda Items

- Performance Evaluation of Town Manager

11. Topics Not Anticipated

12. Public Comment

13. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve 1/29 work session minutes and 1/29 meeting minutes

Steve Seddon Aye

Robert Fedell Aye

14. Review and sign purchase orders, warrants, and mail

15. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 7:48pm

Steve Seddon

Robert Fedell