

Town of Sandisfield
Select Board
Minutes of meeting June 21, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman. Mark Newman excused.

Called to order at 7:00pm

Remote participation information provided to the public.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings

Reviewed and signed purchase orders.

3. Discuss how to proceed with the following open positions: Town Manager, Town Clerk, Asst. Town Clerk, Admin. Asst. to the Select Board, Web Master, DPW Worker, DPW Secretary.

George Riley states that of these positions, the most time sensitive is Town Clerk due to their handling of a lot of info in a specific time frame. Mary Kronholm has been determined to be a candidate. Candidate was referred through inquiries among people who have previously served as or know Town Clerks. George spoke with Mary by phone and she indicated that she could step in as interim after July 12

George circulated copies of her resume and read highlights: Town Clerk 14 years, excellent computer skills and has good state contacts, has experience in stepping in for 2 other towns to help transition. She's willing to work 12 hrs/wk at \$25/hr (no benefits). We should hire an assistant Town Clerk that she would train.

George states Select Board has authority to appoint interim Town Clerk to fulfill the remainder of the term (2 more years).

Alex asks about past discussion to change Town Clerk from elected to appointed. Process would have to be town meeting and an additional ballot requirement.

Barbara Cormier suggests this could happen via Special Town Meeting to avoid waiting two years for a fulltime Town Clerk.

Alex asks what is the period of part time that you foresee? Also should the admin assistant be separated from the Town Clerk position? George reported that Dolores mentioned it should be 2 separate positions.

Alex asks are there enough people who would be willing to do a role for 10hrs a week? Does the market exist for that type of position. George suggests advertising the position and seeing what happens. Sandisfield is at a disadvantage in being "out of the way."

Alex asks if we are looking for both positions at the same time (part time and full time). George states by next May an assistant Town Clerk should be hired, who has an interest in becoming full time Town Clerk.

Alex asks if Mary is set at 12hrs or can be flexible about the hours. George explains hours are not fixed and is up for negotiation, which should come after she is interviewed. The Town Manager position is usually a much longer process. The town likely won't have one for at least several months. Select Board wants to get someone experienced in the position as soon as possible.

George states the position can be posted immediately. Town Clerk job is statutory. Clearly set by MA law.

George's intention is that Town Clerk position should be changed from elected to hired. The position takes specific skills and shouldn't be left up to an election.

Carl Nett believes it seems unlikely that we would find someone else to fill this in the time period we need, urging the Select Board to move forward with the candidate. George agrees and will move forward immediately by setting up an interview.

Alex states if town hires an experienced person, they can train a local person to take over, instead of having to hire outside the town. George agrees the ideal situation is to find someone in Sandisfield to be trained by Mary to become Town Clerk.

Carl asks about 25/hr rate, and mentions the limiting of hours to save money. Is 25/hr set or flexible? George explains 25/hr is going rate. Carl reminds Town Clerk is a contract role with no benefits.

George says that we need a systems overhaul and this candidate could help put those in place. Town has one year to make a transition to prepare for broadband and put more online.

Alex expresses concern in the town's ability to delegate to get things done after losing Town Manager and Assistant. These positions need to be filled asap.

George explains administrative assistant to Select Board is a critical role and takes time.

George explains the Town Manager position should be published on a platform called Beacon.

Carl asked if we can ensure that all these positions are proficient at Microsoft Suite? George suggests a work session be conducted later in the week to get into details.

Discussion on how to get proper job posting together and know the duties and requirements of positions, especially Town Manager and Select Board assistant.

Barabara Cormier suggests committee to see what town boards need. Alex agrees long term we need that, but short term we need people to get it to run smoothly.

Alex expresses need for defined job descriptions. George states they are in personnel folders.

Carl states a need to reflect on what goes beyond job description. The Town Manager needs direction on priorities from the full Select Board as a group or they need full power to set those priorities. Applies to Hwy Dept as well.

Alex explains Select Board sets priorities and gives power to Town Manager and Hwy dept. to execute. Need to create a structure for each department to understand their plans and can execute fully.

George will ask Dolores to post next week and will start groundwork for that. Joanne Grybosh willing to help. Follow-up to determine other places to post.

Working session is set for 3:30p on Thursday June 24.

Alex claims we shouldn't need a dedicated webmaster if the website is easier to manage. Been discussing with a vendor who does Williamstown and Stockbridge.

George explored this back in Feb. Joanne posted on Town Manager forum to ask who other towns used and the budget. Most towns use Civics Plus or a version of Virtual Town Hall. Stockbridge has a hybrid model and uses a vendor. Email is not tied to our web platform. May need to budget 15-20K and come up with scope of work.

Alex thinks we don't need 15-20K. We only need something simple. Suggest a hold on webmaster and move forward on DPW worker and DPW sec. George agreed. He received a model job description from Brad Curry that can be used as a posting. Clarified that DPW lost both a worker and admin assist. Suggests leaving discussion for now as it's already on June 28 agenda to continue.

4. Set a date for the Union Contract Negotiations

George determined a date, but Mr. Santiago unable to come. New date must be scheduled. Talked to Dolores about reaching out to him and has yet to hear back.

Alex questions whether this should be an agenda item. George states it does not. However, it needs to be this month as the contract is up. Decides to wait until Dolores is back.

George states the meeting is usually conducted in person. Last one was 3 years ago and there were a lot of changes to the contract. This time we are not proposing any major changes and are hoping it can be done in one meeting.

5. Consideration and vote to appoint Anina Carr to the Recreation Committee

George Riley makes a motion to vote to accept Anina Carr as a member of the Rec Com. Alex seconds. Passes unanimously.

6. Reviewed and signed Cemetery Deed

7. Future agenda items

George states the agenda for next Monday has already been posted. Anyone who needs an item next week can come and bring it up under "Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair"

Alex requests AV equipment at future meetings. George states that would be part of the technology budget and one of the items in the current tech budget is an IT assessment. We need a wide ranging IT assessment.

Alex believes it would be helpful if people on Zoom could hear everyone as clearly as if they were in person. There's tech that can make that happen. Need to get in the habit of making meetings more accessible to anyone who is not able to attend.

George states we should anticipate that in the foreseeable future all meetings will be hybrid. He is unaware of what the current tech budget is, and if we can start utilizing it immediately. Suggests looking at expense accounts.

Lynn R asks if it could be acquired from money granted for COVID? George will look into this.

8. Review mail

9. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair

Bill Price asked what the topic of the meetings tomorrow night is? George explains it is a finance meeting with Tom Scanlon at 4pm and Special Permit Hearing for SAMA at 6pm. The Community Outreach Meeting was postponed because there was an error notifying abutters, so now we are in the strange position of the SPH happening before COM.

Barbara explains the committee for the school has almost reached its conclusion. What can they expect from the Select Board? Will they review it with us as a committee? Committee would like to have an open meeting with the Select Board and then have a community outreach to let them hear our results.

Alex requests the committee provide the Select Board with materials beforehand so they can review with the committee. Barbara states a document can be distributed.

Carl states when this committee was founded, it was for the Town Manager, and so we were not subject to OML, instead the Town Manager was supposed to take the information to the Select Board but now that we have no Town Manager, we need to check and ensure that we can still present our results directly to Select Board without a violation.

George explains the committee is still under mandate of the Town Manager and can be private. The presentation to Select Board has to be open.

Carl updates the Select Board that the Farmington River school district underspent FY21 by \$400k. Most of the places where they ran under had nothing that had to do with COVID. Question is what to do with that money. Many proposals have been made and they have a list of projects like repaving roads and parking lots. Roger Brown and Carl think that some of the money should go back to the towns. Carl wants the Select Board to be aware that this will come up at the next school committee meeting and suggests that the Select Board come to that meeting and check out the items on the list.

A student who wants to transfer to vocational school in Pittsfield was accepted, and we need to pay their tuition and transportation. The state may cover transportation, but that is currently unknown. In the past, Otis students attending vocational school had Farmington River footing the bill. They weren't supposed to, but they didn't understand the state law. If we can confirm that the district did so in the past then we will argue that the district cover this student and then both towns will comply with the state law moving forward. The transportation and tuition costs could be \$50K. Carl is working on researching further.

Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm

George Riley

Alex Bowman