

Town of Sandisfield
Select Board
Minutes of meeting July 1, 2021

Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Mark Newman, Mary Kronholm

Meeting opened at 9:00 a.m.

Interview with Mary Kronholm for Position of Temporary Town Clerk (Session 1)

- Mary Kronholm describes herself as a resident of Blandford, MA who has been a part of town and/or state government for many years. She is an active member in her community and enjoys the rural area she has lived in for 44 years. While Mary admits she is not familiar with everything the Town Clerk might need to handle, she is confident she will be able to contact the people who are familiar, therefore allowing her to fulfill any task asked of her.
- She served as Town Grievance Officer. This was a confidential position, where fellow employees could go to her for assistance with any personal issues that may arise in the workplace.
- She notes that technology is an asset and states that while births and deaths can be difficult to submit in a digital format, it is not impossible. She appreciates easy communication between departments, towns and states. Reiterates Sandisfield is not Boston. Must keep in mind smaller towns cannot do things as quickly.
- Mary notes the foreseeable challenges moving into a new town fall mostly in getting set up with passwords and familiarizing herself with surroundings. She will remain the Assistant Town Clerk in Blandford for four hours weekly, as a mentor to the Town Clerk. This will not conflict with accepting this position in Sandisfield.
- Blandford's Town Clerk is estimated to work up to 19 hours a week, while the Town Clerk for Sandisfield is estimated at only around 10 hours. This might be due to the combination of Town Clerk and Assistant to the Select Board positions.
- Mary makes note of incoming Spectrum internet. However, for now there is no high-speed internet. This should not hinder the ability to do the job for the most part because similar situations have already been dealt with in Blandford. George notes an IT assessment should occur fairly soon. It is customary for the Town Clerk to take on other tasks outside of job description. Voter registration is an additional task that the Town Clerk often takes care of during "down-time."
- There may be a need for more hours considering Blandford uses 19. More than 10 hours is possible, but she encourages the employment of an Assistant Town Clerk to keep the hours to 10. She notes that a great deal of time during the year is spent in preparing for

and holding elections, but as there are no elections foreseen this year, she feels that 10 hours average should suffice. at the beginning of the calendar year, compiling a street census is a big task. Challenges around making street lists fall mostly in confirming the resident's address.

- Mark: Questions whether to look at the position as an annual position or an hourly position. If a Town Clerk works less than 10 hours on a salary, maybe they shouldn't be getting paid for 10 hours.
- The Town Clerk in Blandford typically works 3 days a week M,T,TH. Public office hours are Monday, 5pm-7pm, otherwise residents must make an appointment. Limited hours helped during early voting significantly.
- Mary finds the public does not always understand when to come to the Town Clerk or another department for issues or questions. She has experience with public speaking and claims her computer skills are "for someone my age, they're pretty darn good." She has an understanding of spreadsheets and prefers digital documents to hard copies. However, there are a number of items that require a hard copy.
- The Town report is put together by the Town Clerk in Blandford. Website posting can be made available to the Town Clerk.
- Mary requests posting an advertisement looking for an Assistant Town Clerk immediately. She has already gone through the process of training a Town Clerk in the past. Would like them to be there for as many hours or at least half as many hours as she is. Suggests making the position desirable with room to grow. Mary believes there is plenty of time before the next election to train a new Town Clerk. She is willing to stay until May if necessary. Will "play it by ear" whether she is willing to stay longer should a replacement not be identified in the time allotted.

George Riley makes a motion to go into executive session for the purpose of negotiating with non-union personnel. Second by Mark Newman.

Roll call vote: George Riley, yes. Mark Newman, yes. Alex Bowman, yes.

Mary was excused from the room.

Executive Session

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Mark Newman

There was unanimous agreement to hire Mary as Temporary Town Clerk. Given the fluctuations in the weekly hours required, and the many State-mandated requirements of this job, it was decided that a flat stipend was most appropriate. Because we haven't had a separate Clerk we

don't know how many hours it actually requires. But if we go with Mary's estimated average of ten hours per week (assuming no elections) at \$25 per hour, that is \$250 per week.

We can re-evaluate this in future if the hours are different.

Motion to exit Executive Session and resume interview

Roll call vote: George Riley, yes. Mark Newman, yes. Alex Bowman, yes.

Interview with Mary Kronholm for Position of Temporary Town Clerk (Session 2)

- Session resumed with Mary Kronholm's return. The Select Board officially offered her the position of temporary Town Clerk. Mary is offered a \$250 weekly salary for her employment. Understanding that hours will fluctuate throughout the year, but with no elections this would even out to about \$25 an hour. Salary differs for elected town officials.
- After 30 weeks of her employment, there will need to be a special town meeting to revise pay.
- Mary suggests making strict public hours for Town Clerk similar to Blandford. Alex sees no issue with this request, so long as hours are properly posted.
- Mary actively checks email. Laptop is available for use at home.
- She asks how quickly it is estimated an assistant could be hired. She also encourages hiring someone from Sandisfield. George explained it's unknown how quickly an assistant will be hired, but notes it might not be possible to get someone from town.
- Mary states she's comfortable working without a contract. She is willing to start work immediately after Dolores leaves on July 12. Mary suggests Dolores spending a day to go over where records, paperwork, etc. are located, as well as anything that might not mirror the Town Clerk duties in Blandford.
- Mary would be the one to appoint the Assistant Town Clerk.

Mary leaves and the Select Board continues to discuss open positions within the town.

- Alex expresses not wanting to write the town minutes, therefore indicating a need for someone else to take on that task.
- Mark suggests bringing Dolores in for the duration of the meeting. Alex leaves and stops recording.
- Mark is offended about an article in the Sandisfield Times which hints, without any evidence, at mismanagement of funds by Dolores. He wants George to ask Town Counsel what actions can be taken against the paper. George feels this is an issue of free speech, but agrees to do this on Mark's behalf.
- Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.