

Minutes of the Sandisfield Board of Selectman
October 26, 2015
6:00 P.M.

Alice Boyd opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed Anne Sommers, a candidate for the part time Town Administrator's position. Alice discussed the current status of the town, priorities and the basic job description. Jeff and John asked Anne about her background and her interest in this job. It was agreed that Anne would submit references to the Chairman for consideration. Ms. Sommers stated that she would love the challenge and would be available as needed.

The meeting recessed until 7:00 P.M.

Chairman Boyd re-opened the meeting and announced that the Board was returning following a recess after interviewing a Town Administrator candidate.

She stated that Delores had a prior commitment and would not be in attendance. As a result she would take minutes, as the recorder is apparently broken.

Alice Boyd announced the resignation of Stephan Harasyko. She stated that Steve is a great guy and will be missed. Steve resigned for personal reasons and he had stated that he is tired after over 30 years working in highway departments and he's ready for a rest. Alice stated that she and the Board wish Steve all the best.

Alice announced that Bobby O'Brien would be taking over on an interim basis. She stated that she had received calls from residents expressing concerns about this decision. Jeff stated that he also had received calls. John stated that he had received calls as well. There was general dissatisfaction with this decision.

Patrick Barrett asked questions regarding the Executive Session with Stephan Harasyko including how it was handled, why, the sequence of events and when was the position of interim highway superintendent discussed. Alice Boyd answered questions within the confines of the rules guiding Executive Sessions. She stated that if a mistake was made she was the responsible party. Patrick asked if the discussion to hire an interim was made during the Executive Session or after. Alice stated that she did not have the minutes in front of her and wasn't certain but that when Stephan left the room she asked the Board what they should do if Steve resigns. Alice was asked when Steve resigned. She stated that he called her the next day.

There was general dissatisfaction with bringing on an interim person. Alice stated that although she did not know the individual brought on she had made two calls and that Jeff know the individual. She stated that she would be responsible. Jeff stated that Billy is down one person already.

Jean Atwater-Williams stated that we should support the people who were elected to lead.

Patrick Barrett stated that Town Meeting shot down the purchase of a new truck and this was a big mistake. He wants to make sure that we're safe this winter. Using contracted services to augment the highway department was discussed. John stated that he gave the routes to Bob today. Patrick asked why the routes were being redone. Bill Riiska stated that we shouldn't take guys off of the routes they already know. The May Town Meeting was discussed and the overall impression that the Truck Committee was established to determine what kind of truck the town needed. Bill Riiska asked who was on the Truck Committee and if any of them had trucks. Mark Newman stated that he's responsible for a number of trucks. The other members were listed.

Teresa DellaGiustina stated that the Board should consider how we would pay the interim person, as there is a freeze on Stabilization.

Patrick thanked the Board for taking questions.

Mary Turek stated that the Board should consider Chris Rines.

Patrick stated that the Board would be lucky to get 7 applicants.

Nina Carr asked why the Conservation Commission meeting with Kinder Morgan wasn't posted. Alice stated that Clare would normally submit the meeting notice to Delores who would post it. Nina said that she looked and it was not posted. Alice said that she would be very surprised if this was the case but if so the meeting would be null and void, be rescheduled and posted. Alice will check on this.

Theresa Sponholz, the new Town Librarian was asked to come up to the table. Alice introduced her and stated how glad the town is to have her running our library. Theresa has a four-year degree in accounting auditing cities and towns. She gets books in each week and the library is moving further into the technological age. They should be able to offer downloaded books soon. The library board will discuss this. She spoke about how to bring more people into the library. The pleasing homey atmosphere she created was mentioned. Teresa DellaGiustina stated that the kids' section is already better.

The 2017 budget process was discussed. It was determined to hold off on the Administrative budgets until Delores could be present next week.

Alice displayed and discussed the Municipal Aggregation Plan for electrical services. The Board reviewed the plan and the opt-out mechanism was discussed. Nina Carr stated that Eversource would still be the distributor. Alice read the following into the minutes:

Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30B, ss 1(b) (32), the Town of Sandisfield is not required to go through the RFP process when contracting with an energy broker to initiate a municipal aggregation program.

Broker contracts are exempt from standard procurement procedure and therefore, in accordance with State Law, the Town of Sandisfield has elected to forego the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

The Town of Sandisfield has chosen Colonial Power Group, Inc. to design, implement and manage its municipal aggregation program.

The Town of Sandisfield intends to enter into an energy aggregation contract with Colonial Power Group, Inc. for energy or energy-related services arranged and/or negotiated on behalf of its residents.

A motion was made by Jeff Gray and seconded by John Skrip to accept the Municipal Aggregation Plan and the contract with Colonial Power Group, Inc. and to proceed to the next step of making this program available for residents. Unanimous.

The WiredWest Operating Agreement was discussed. Alice has been in touch with other towns using Kopelman and Paige to share the cost of reviewing this agreement. Alice has reviewed the agreement and has sent off a few questions to WiredWest.

Selectmen's Report: Alice stated that the Environmental Assessment for the pipeline expansion project was recently posted online. She stated that she had read the EA and had posted on FERC's site as there was a significant misstatement in the EA regarding the town consulting with Kinder Morgan re: the use of Spectacle Pond for hydrostatic testing. She stated that this was not the case. Alice stated that a hearing would be held on November 10th at the Gardner Auditorium at the State House to accept testimony regarding Article 97. Jean Atwater-Williams provided additional information on this topic. John Skrip talked about attending a meeting in New Marlborough regarding working regionally for purchasing, sharing equipment, etc.

Nina Carr asked where the statement was posted. FERC website. Susie Crofut asked if Article 97 impacts any other places. Jean went over the history.

Discussion of Future Agenda Items included

- putting technology and the website on the next work session agenda
- the fuel situation (monitoring gas and diesel). Jean will call Bruce Miller for revised/verified quote of \$600

The Special Town Meeting will be held on 11/9

Alice will be out for knee replacement surgery on 11/16 for two weeks or slightly more.

Under Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair the issue of the highway department interim leadership was discussed further. John asked for a highway department supervisory job description. Billy Perry stated that the crew was finishing grading roads. Ralph Leavenworth was working with them temporarily.

Nina said that we could struggle along without an Interim. People in town are very upset about this choice. It was done in haste and there's nothing wrong with correcting this.

It was suggested that the town take all past applications and ask the Highway Department workers. John stated that he had worked with the new person and talked to him three times that day and that a great deal was getting done in just one day. Jeff said that this person had applied before and he has his licenses. He currently contracts with the town.

Nina asked Jeff if he could oversee the Highway Department in lieu of an interim. Jeff said no as he has a job and kids. John stated that we should post the job and proceed as quickly as possible to hire someone permanent. Alice stated that this would be a four to five week process. She asked Billy Perry if he could survive being shorthanded this long. He said no. It was suggested to contact Mike Salem, a former selectmen. Jean Atwater-Williams stated that we all have to pull together, be professional and ask the new person to do the job. She stated that we all learn from our mistakes. Bill Riiska said that you have to respect your boss and that it has to go both ways. Mary Turek stated that we should stick with the decision that was made.

Alice asked John and Jeff if they would change course. John Skrip stated that we should stick with the decision made and get the ad in the paper. Jeff said that we should stick with the current person.

At 8:40 a motion was made to adjourn by John Skrip, seconded by Jeff Gray. Unanimous.

Alice Boyd

Jeff Gray

John Skrip