

Selectmen's minutes of meeting July 26, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman

Called to order at 7:06pm

Remote participation information provided to the public.

### **1. Review and sign minutes of meeting**

Alex Bowman had yet to review the minutes of meetings. However, George Riley reviewed and signed them. Once Alex has reviewed and signed minutes he will post them on the town website.

### **2. Reviewed and signed purchase orders.**

### **3. Discuss and vote on changes to the stipend for the building inspector**

Determined two issues: vote to change the monthly stipend for the building inspector from \$500 a month to \$1000 a month, and vote to increase the spending limit for the building inspectors revolving fund from \$6000 a year to \$12,000 a year. The second vote requires both a vote of the Select Board and a vote of the Finance Committee.

Alex expressed concern about the allocation of responsibility between the Select Board and the Finance Committee. A lengthy discussion between Alex and Roger Brown, the Finance Committee Chair ensued regarding this issue.

George Riley motions to increase the building inspector stipend from \$6,000 annually to \$12,000 annually. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Roll-call vote: George, yes. Alex, yes.

George Riley motions to increase building inspector revolving account spending limit from \$6,000 to \$12,000. Alex seconds. This item still needs to be approved by the Finance Committee before motion can go into effect.

Roll-call vote: George, yes. Alex, yes.

George will direct the treasurer to make an additional \$500 payment for July to the building inspector with the provision that if for any reason the Finance Committee does not approve this increase, that \$500 payment will be considered an August payment.

### **4. Continue discussion of employee vacancies**

#### **a. Temporary Assistant to the Select Board**

Janey Beardsley has been hired as the Temporary Assistant to the Select Board. George reported all is going well and the backlog of minutes has almost entirely been completed and tackling of transfer station permits has already begun.

It should be noted that Town Clerk, Mary Kronholm expressed concern about the schedule because of her condition of being immunocompromised. Select Board plans to schedule Mary and Janey separately, so that they would have as little time together in the office as possible. A more definite schedule will be sorted out over the next week or so.

#### **b. Town Manager**

Select Board requests report from Barbra Cormier, member of Town Manager Search Committee. She requests another week before presenting a report.

### **5. Continue discussion of employee incentives**

Alex spoke with DPW Superintendent, Brad Curry who agreed to conduct performance reviews of the three DPW employees. George will conduct the review of the Assessor, Treasurer, and the DPW Superintendent. However, George wanted to note that he couldn't guarantee when these reviews would be done due to his excessive work schedule.

### **6. Continue discussion and vote to purchase a storage trailer for Town records**

The Select Board received confirmation from the town accountant that because this was voted on as a separate line item in the town meeting, it does not need to be encumbered. Instead, it can be simply carried over into the following fiscal year and kept until it's spent. This confirms that the purchase of this storage trailer is to be made.

### **7. Vote to approve language in H3852 regarding Mandatory Retirement**

Language includes a provision that after the age of 65, employees can continue to work until age 70. However, they will not pay any further into their retirement account after age 65.

George Riley motions to approve language in Massachusetts Joint Committee on Public Service regarding mandatory retirement. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Roll-call vote: George, yes. Alex, yes.

Roger Brown suggests checking with the treasurer to make sure that we have not already paid into any employees retirement account after age 65. If this has happened, those funds may need to be taken out of the account.

### **8. Continue discussion of Open Meeting Law complaint from Mark Newman**

Both George and Alex suspect they will not be hearing back from Mark Newman.

George reads the response he had prepared to this complaint, which was followed by a discussion about requirements vetted by town counsel. George states past practice for open meeting law complaints has required a submission to town counsel who will then draft a response. George drafted his own response, not to eliminate town counsel, but to reduce the amount of time the town counsel would have to spend on it. However, he recommended that his response be submitted to the town counsel for review prior to sending it out.

## **9. Future agenda items**

No item on agenda titled "Points to the Minutes" which allows for meeting items to get lost and never being followed-up on.

One example of lack of follow up is the vacant Animal Control Officer position. Every town in MA is required to have one. In the absence of this position, the Chief of police can be designated, but this is not ideal. Given the issues with both domestic animals and wildlife, it's crucial Sandisfield appoints an Animal Control Officer.

Question from the floor asks whether it would be possible to share an Animal Control Officer with another town. George says it might be worth exploring.

## **Topics not reasonably anticipated**

Chair of Yanner Park Committee, Adam Brown announced Yanner Park received a grant of \$50,000 from the state to build trails. The committee partnered with Greenagers to apply for the grant and will be working with the group to build the trails.

Adam asks who supervises Matt McCuin, who currently mows for the town and the park. George explains mowing is under the supervision of the DPW. Adam presented an aerial map which indicated the areas of the park he would like mowed. George will confirm with Brad Curry about this.

Adam also asks whether the Asplundh trucks, which currently reside in the park, are working for the town or Eversource. Select Board explains they are working for Eversource, and will look into when they should be finished.

Meeting adjourned at 8:18pm

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George Riley

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Alex Bowman