

Select Board's minutes of meeting August 23, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman

Called to order at 7:00pm

Remote participation information provided to the public.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings

Reviewed and signed purchase orders.

Points to minutes

George Riley explains that any money an employee over 65 has contributed into their retirement account, cannot be taken out. Roger Brown suggests we go to Town Counsel to make sure that the town is making safe financial decisions on this matter.

3. Review and sign Public Health Grant Program's Municipality Statement of Commitment

George reads the State of Commitment and summary. Sandisfield has not made any contributions to this program, nor has the town ever made contributions.

Nina Carr questions about the Berkshire Visiting Nurses and their inability to keep up with other town's operations, including a blood pressure clinic. George notes that these are two different organizations.

4. Discuss and vote to appoint George Riley as signatory on Town Clerk checking account and Tax Collector checking account

George explains that the Town Clerk would like to close her account because she does not think it's necessary. He explains the bank will not tell him anything about the account, nor allow him to close it, unless he is appointed as signatory.

Mike Morrision suggests tabling this item until a third Select Board member is elected because he believes it to be a conflict of interest otherwise. Mike then suggests Mary Kronholm be appointed signatory.

Roger mentions that after the Treasurer/ Tax Collector resigns on August 31, the town will not have access to multiple accounts. Therefore making the appointment of George as signatory on all nineteen town accounts crucial.

Margaret McClellan states that it is acceptable that George be bonded as signatory since the Town Clerk is only an interim position.

Alex Bowman suggests both he and George be appointed as signatories.

George Riley motions to appoint himself and Alex Bowman as signatories on all town accounts with the intention that these accounts will then be transferred to their appropriate owner. Alex Bowman seconds.

Motion passes unanimously.

5. Discuss and vote to appoint Tegan Abear as Town Asset Custodian

George explains that Sandisfield “does not know what it owns.” It is important that an itemization is conducted because issues with insuring vehicles have already occurred.

Barbara Cormier and Mike both question why itemization has not been occurring annually. Mike explains every time any equipment is purchased it should be recorded.

George explains Tegan Abear would be “playing catch-up.” He has been interviewed by Finance Committee Chair, Roger Brown and Roger feels Tegan is suitable for the position. The position's salary would come out of General Government funds.

Barbara suggests posting employment opportunities for the town in places other than only on the Sandisfield website, this way the town can receive more applicants. George explains that he didn't find it necessary for a part-time position because newspaper advertisements are expensive; he'd be more willing to spend that money for a more formal, full-time position for the town.

Carl Nett recommends postponing hiring any more people until a Town Administrator is hired. Roger agrees that George does not need to take on more responsibility, and does not think that it is necessary to hire this person at this time.

George tables this item.

6. Discuss and vote to hire Tegan Abear on a part-time on-call basis for the DPW

Mike questions the legitimacy of this position since it was not posted anywhere, nor voted on at the town meeting. He wonders where the money for their salary is coming from. Alex explains this is a legitimate position, and reminds the floor that the position is temporary until a full-time employee can be hired.

Mike requests that the Select Board make it clear that this part-time position will be terminated once a full-time employee is hired. He also suggests that many retired people would be interested in this part-time position should it be properly posted.

Carl suggests hiring an individual as a contractor, rather than a temporary town employee. George states he will look into this option and discuss it with Brad Curry.

George tables this item.

7. Discuss and vote on COA purchase order process

Nina requests some direction about how the purchase order process works because the COA was unaware how much money they would be spending on events, like the Town BBQ. Alex explains that if they are unsure of how much they will spend on an event, they can always overestimate and spend less than that estimate.

8. Contract with Sarah Hunter of MassMuniFin for temporary payroll and financial assistance

George suggests this item be tabled because there was a delay in getting information sent to Sarah Hunter about the number of employees and scope of operation.

Barbara questions whether the town has looked at other options for this position, including payroll programs, other towns, and if the Town Accountant, Margaret McClellan could take this responsibility on.

George explains there is an urgent need for this position to be filled because the Treasurer is leaving August 31 and town employees will still need to be paid. He also states that most towns are paid bi-weekly, instead of weekly like Sandisfield is. Once this position is filled, after 90 days, Sandisfield will likely go to a bi-weekly pay routine.

Mike suggests requesting the Treasurer stay on for another month, while they search for a new permanent Treasurer. George is hesitant to do so, citing a lack of cooperation.

Research into filling this position and the tasks that come with it have not been done extensively enough, and Sarah Hunter has not been able to give the town a letter of intention. Carl is not in favor of hiring an employee who will hire out to another program.

George tables this item.

9. Future agenda items

Brief discussion about the storage trailer and running electricity to it. George will contact Jay Reynolds for a quote.

10. Review mail

11. Review and sign warrants

12. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm

George Riley

Alex Bowman

Reminder: The next meeting will take place September 7, 2021.