

Select Board's minutes of meeting September 7, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman

Called to order at 7:00pm

Remote participation information provided to the public.

1. Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings

2. Reviewed and signed purchase orders.

3. Continue discussion and vote to hire Tegan Abear on a part-time on-call basis for the DPW

George states it is up to the community to determine whether Sandisfield is hospitable to new employees or not. This is in reference to the backlash that results in seeing new names entering the town. George suggests the town make a conscious effort to be welcoming, hospitable and reserve criticism when the town hires someone new.

George notes the DPW has been short-staffed for a long time. Tegan Abear has applied to occupy a part-time on-call position to fill in during emergencies and times of need. The position has been posted online and has not received any other applications. Brad Curry has requested Tegan be hired as soon as possible. The position will be less than 19 hours a week and will not receive any benefits.

George reminds the group that DPW employees are hired by the DPW, and then approved by the Select Board.

Employment positions are currently being posted on the town website. Webmaster, Larry Dwyer has been making an effort to share these employment opportunities on other platforms, like Connect Sandisfield on Facebook.

Ralph Morrison asks why advertisement for these positions has not been made in a newspaper, stating the town website is not a legal posting place. George explains the DPW position does not have to be advertised in the newspaper since it is not a union position. George also states the position has been posted in Sandisfield's official posting place, which is the bulletin board outside the Town Hall Annex.

Ralph suggests posting the positions in the Shopper's Guide, George agrees to do this moving forward. Alex Bowman explains for more important and crucial positions, the town is posting these opportunities on additional platforms. He examples the Town Administrator position being posted in The Beacon. He goes further to explain an on-call position needs to be nearby and it didn't make sense to post it so widely.

George explains "on-call" means if Brad feels he needs extra help for a project on a specific day, he can schedule this on-call employee to fill in for the day or a certain

allotted amount of time. They only come in when they're asked. Alex explains the dates for this employee will be scheduled, citing that Brad will know when a large project is coming up and when they will need extra help.

Alex motions to hire Tegan Abear on a part-time on-call basis for the DPW. George seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

4. Discuss and vote to appoint interim Treasurer/ Tax Collector

George refreshed the group on Sara Hunter, who was recommended by DLS, but concerns were raised based on the high cost of her service, regardless of the position being interim.

Another candidate, Laura Lee Bertram has since been identified. Laura has treasurer experience, and is currently employed as Assistant Town Administrator in Tyringham, MA. She had offered to come in as an interim Treasurer/ Tax Collector without benefits.

Alex reiterates that DLS's suggestion was very expensive and Laura has Treasurer/ Tax Collector experience in small towns. He believes hiring Laura for this interim position is the best option for the town. There were no other applicants.

George believes Laura has experience with the systems Sandisfield operates on. Laura and Roger Brown met on Saturday, 9/4 to look over these systems.

Ralph asks whether payroll will be postponed. George explains payroll will be on-time, and the push for hiring this person stemmed from the urgency of finding someone to conduct payroll.

The Select Board is asked for clarification on "appointment" vs "hiring." George explains they must appoint the position in order to give Laura access to town bank accounts and other similar information.

Alex mentions that the previous Treasurer/ Tax Collector has offered to be compensated for assistance in Laura's transition. George agrees this may be a good option.

Ralph asks if Laura will be bonded before she starts. George explains there is a "blanket bond" for all employees, but she will also be specifically bonded as the Treasurer.

Floor member asks if the town will conduct a CORI check on Laura, and multiple floor members agree that one should be conducted. The Select Board states she will need to undergo a CORI check in order to be bonded.

George motions to appoint Laura Lee Bertram as interim Treasurer/ Tax Collector. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

5. Discuss and appoint Megan Smigel as a member of the Sandisfield Cultural Council.

6. Discuss and re-appoint Connie Canty as a member of the Sandisfield Cultural Council for a second-term.

George motions to appoint Megan Smigel and re-appoint Connie Canty as members of the Sandisfield Cultural Council. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

7. Discuss and vote on Highway Department employee incentives

George explains the first round of fiscal-year 2021 performance evaluations have been completed by the DPW. Ralph Leavenworth and David McCuin would both receive a “meets expectations” rating, and Keith Larson would receive an “exceeds expectations” rating.

George motions to approve Highway Department employee incentives. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

8. Discuss and vote on special permit inquiry from Dawn Lemon

George reads Dawn Lemon’s special permit application for a mobile food establishment, aka a hotdog cart. The cart would move to different locations throughout Sandisfield depending on the permission of the property owner or town official. Locations will be approved by the Chief of Police for safety.

The hotdog cart will have the opportunity to run seven days a week, approximately 10:00am to 3:00pm.

Preliminary list of stationed addresses include York Lake entrance on Rt. 57, 234 Sandisfield Rd, Sandisfield Library, Villa Mia, New Boston Crane, either Firehouse locations, etc.

The hotdog cart would need to be approved by the Sandisfield Board of Health as well.

George explains the Select Board might need to schedule a special permit hearing. The board will research whether a special permit would be required as per the bylaws, and tell Dawn what her next steps should be.

Larry Dwyer asks if abutters would need to be notified. The board explains since the cart would be mobile, abutters would not need to be notified.

Barbara Cormier requests that the hotdog cart not be stationed near any existing restaurants in the town, in order to avoid taking business away from those establishments.

Dawn explains this project is supposed to be fun and for the kids of Sandisfield, and the board verbalizes they support her project in principle.

9. Discuss and vote to remain one precinct. Sign and initial the map and data packet

George explains this is a formality that wouldn't need to be on the agenda if it wasn't for the State of Massachusetts needing an official record in the minutes stating the Select Board voted to remain one precinct.

George motions to remain one precinct. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

10. Future agenda items

Discuss transfer station hours. Alex suggests Sandisfield's transfer station hours are high in comparison to Sandisfield's population and to its surrounding towns.

11. Review mail

12. Review and sign warrants

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

Barbara suggests scheduling one public meeting regarding FRRSD. The School Options Exploration Committee would present information and conduct a question and answer segment afterwards. George agrees. The meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, 9/30 at 7:00pm. Zoom access will be made available.

Ralph suggests rather than hiring a specialist to conduct inventory for the town, each department should conduct their own inventory and submit it to the Select Board. Ralph submits an inventory for the Fire Department and EMS.

Barbara announces she hopes Sandisfield will have a Town Administrator by November 1st or sooner.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45pm

George Riley

Alex Bowman