

## Select Board's minutes of meeting September 13, 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. Discuss transfer station hours**

Alex presents information comparing surrounding town's transfer stations to Sandisfield's, which is open 19 hours a week. According to the data Alex presents, Sandisfield is open between one and 13 hours more than most surrounding towns, but 12 hours less than Otis.

Alex suggests Keith Larson, the DPW employee who operates the transfer station could instead work on the roads, which are currently "under-maintained." Alex believes it would make sense to shift the DPW employee from work at the transfer station to more typical DPW duties, since it's already in the DPW budget.

George notes the similarities between Sandisfield and the surrounding towns in regards to the number of days their transfer stations are open, these similar towns include Tolland, New Marlborough, Monterey and Tyringham.

Alex makes a point that he often hears complaints about Sandisfield's high tax rates, and suggests high transfer station hours contribute to that rate. The DPW transfer station attendant makes over \$20/hr, which "adds up."

Alex states he would like to keep the Sandisfield transfer station open Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday, but questions whether it should be open for five hours on Wednesday, and seven hours on Saturday and Sunday.

Alex proposes adjusting the transfer station hours to 3:00pm-5:00pm on Wednesday and 9:00am-1:00pm on Saturday and Sunday, for a total of 10 hours of operation per week.

Brenda Larson makes a point that Keith would no longer be a 40 hour-a-week employee if they reduce the hours of the transfer station, unless he was to forfeit one of his days off.

George suggests that Sandisfield currently has a higher population than the census dictates because there has been an influx of second-homeowners due to the pandemic.

George goes on to state that he expects to continue to see a rise in Sandisfield's population due to its improved roads and the installation of broadband next summer, and suggests Sandisfield may need to further increase its transfer station hours when that time comes.

George proposes Keith counts how many cars visit the transfer station and at what time to get a better idea of when it's busiest and if the hours of operation should be adjusted.

George suggests the possibility of opening the transfer station an hour later, so that Keith has time to deal with any paperwork or money that comes for the operation of the establishment.

The Select Board tables this item.

#### **4. Future agenda items**

Discuss possibility of a transition of Sandisfield's current Accountant to the Treasurer/ Tax Collector. Since there has not been much interest in Sandisfield's Treasurer/ Tax Collector position, Alex suggests posting the Accountant position online to see if anyone applies. Sandisfield's temporary Treasurer/ Tax Collector, Laura Lee Bertram suggests posting the Treasurer/ Tax Collector position on the MTCA website.

Brad Curry is requested to attend the town meetings occasionally to answer questions. George suggests Brad should be scheduled to attend a meeting at least once a month.

Alex notes Sandisfield should be more transparent about DPW projects. George mentions when DPW had an Administrative Assistant, they would post updates on the town website. Alex states the Select Board has had a difficult time filling secretarial positions since they're typically only part-time, but they are actively looking for ways to combine these types of positions across departments to create a more full-time position under the supervision of the Town Administrator.

George states after the Town Administrator is hired, the best option might be to hire a Town Administrator Assistant, who would also work as the DPW Assistant.

Alex mentions the Pavement Program has awarded Sandisfield 3.7 miles of paving for Rt. 183. He also notes the Program was unaware that Sandisfield has already paved one mile of that road, and are now negotiating whether Sandisfield can use that mile elsewhere, instead of losing it altogether. Already it's proposed to move the mile to the top of the hill on Rt. 57 going down. Finishing the five miles of Rt. 57 is the priority. This project should be done within this fiscal year.

#### **5. Review mail**

#### **6. Review and sign warrants**

## **7. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting**

George reads an email from Town Clerk, Mary Kronholm requesting an increase in compensation of \$100 a week retroactive to when she started on July 14, for she has consistently worked over 10 hours a week since she started. Mary states in the email that she will put in many hours for the upcoming election and afterwards, as well as working on business and other licenses.

George explains, upon hiring Mary, she estimated she could do the job in 10-12 hours a week. The Select Board agreed with the estimation, but at the time were unaware there would be an upcoming Special Election. Elections are almost solely the responsibility of the Town Clerk.

George states questions typically arise from the Annual Town Budget in regards to the fluctuation of the Town Clerk salary. George explains this fluctuation is based on whether there was an election that year.

Brenda Larson suggests paying the Town Clerk hourly, rather than on salary. George states the Select Board didn't feel the need to require Mary to record her hours because they didn't expect a Special Election. Brenda asks if Mary will revert back to her original pay once the election is over. George suggests Mary will be ethical about the situation and open to another conversation about her pay once her duties settle.

Alex would like to receive additional clarification as to what tasks Mary has been conducting before approving an increase in compensation. The Select Board will have a conversation with Mary about her tasks, hours, and the possibility of moving to hourly pay.

Meeting adjourned at 7:44pm.

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George Riley

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Alex Bowman