

Select Board's minutes of Work Session with the Finance Committee Chair on
August 24, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Roger Brown

Called to order at 9:04am

Remote participation information provided to the public.

1. Discuss the Treasurer/ Tax Collector transition and both long and short-term initiatives for this

Roger Brown presents Sarah Hunter's letter of intent, the Select Board quickly reads through the letter.

Roger highlights points within the letter including Sarah's request for discussion on payroll, access to four computers, and bringing in four employees. She also requests the audit, which Roger will provide to her with the Select Board's permission. They allow it.

Roger reached out to discuss Sarah's work with the Monterey Town Manager, as well as their Finance Committee Chair. However, he never heard back from the Town Manager and the Finance Committee Chair stated they did not know her well enough to share any information. This was surprising to Roger. Roger will try again to get in touch with Monterey's Town Manager.

Roger suggests hiring Sarah on a short-term basis to address the immediate term. However, he believes the Board needs to begin looking for other candidates for this position immediately.

Sarah would be in charge of all the Treasurer/ Tax Collector's duties. It is questioned who will be managing and monitoring her work.

Alex points out how significantly more expensive Sarah is than their previous Treasurer/ Tax Collector. Roger explains DLS has suggested the town not focus too heavily on money at the moment since this is a crucial position to fill.

Roger would like to determine whether this position should be considered a town employee on salary or if it could be seen as an operating expense. Suggests discussing this with our accountant, Margaret McClellan.

Roger also suggests speaking with DLS to receive their opinion and advice on how the town should proceed. This would help justify any decisions the Select Board might make on the matter.

DLS has stated that Margaret should not be allowed to operate all three positions: Treasurer/ Tax Collector/ Accountant.

Alex states that payroll is the most pressing item that needs to be addressed. Roger estimates a month-long transition for outsourcing a payroll company.

George and Roger discuss Sarah Hunter's recommendation to move Sandisfield from a weekly payroll to a bi-weekly payroll. This transition is estimated to take 90 days.

Roger goes over his list of leads for filling the position. He mentions he has posted the employment opportunity on the MMA website as both a temporary and full-time position. However, he has not received any interest.

Alex asks about the Select Board's lead from Tyringham. Roger explains he's hesitant, but would be willing to follow-up with this applicant should he receive more information about them.

Alex expresses concern about hiring Sarah because she is the most expensive option and works by the hour rather than having a specific amount of allotted hours, leaving the amount the town would be spending unknown.

Roger explains Sarah's plan to place a team member in town hall one day a week for an eight to ten hour day, plus \$100 travel time. Roger estimates they are looking at around \$1,000/week for that individual. There will be other team members working remotely for an undisclosed amount of time. Roger explains he is unsure how this would work in terms of costs. He suggests negotiating with Sarah's proposal.

Alex states that hiring Sarah would cost the town \$10,000 for two months of work. George explains this is only the proposal and they do not have to accept it the way it is. Roger understands Alex's concern and disappointment, but reiterates there does not seem to be an alternative at this point.

Roger recommends not hiring a permanent person until they have "stabilized things."

With no Town Administrator, George will be in charge of supervising the interim Treasurer/ Tax Collector. George states with limited knowledge about the position's tasks, he will need Roger's assistance in supervision.

George supports hiring Sarah on a temporary basis. Roger reiterates that close supervision as to what's being done will need to occur.

Alex suggests looking further into the applicant from Tyringham as an alternative to Sarah Hunter. Roger agrees to speak with this applicant today. Roger will also reach out to Sarah for a more detailed agenda of the tasks they will be doing and the amount of time her and her team will be spending on the town.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50am

George Riley

Alex Bowman