

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board
October 19, 2021

Minutes for Select Board Executive Session held on Tuesday, October 19, 2021 at 7:00p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Steve Seddon

Called to order at 7:00PM

2. Vote to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining

George Riley motions to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining, and states that an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Select Board.

George summarizes that the Select Board conducted a meeting with Victor Santiago, who was representing the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 404 on Monday 10/18 to discuss their union contract for the DPW. They received three proposed items.

The first item was a reaffirmation that the contract would be a three-year agreement. The second item was Article 2, paragraph 12, regarding wages. The union proposed wages would increase by 5% per year over the three years. The third item regarded annual bonus and employee evaluations, and requested a sentence be added to this section stating all evaluations shall be done annually and a time frame be confirmed. Victor suggested evaluations be conducted the first week of October, and bonuses paid by the first week of December. The Select Board suggested evaluations be conducted the first week of March, and bonuses paid by the first week of June, and the union was amenable to that.

The Select Board requested that Juneteenth, June 19th be added to the holiday schedule as well. Alex suggests using this holiday as a bargaining chip to get something in return.

George states that the first and the third amendments the union made to their contract prove no issue to the Select Board. However, the second item is not possible. Currently the increase in wages is 2%, and George does not see this percentage increasing, for the entire DPW budget is structured around it. Alex suggests increasing wages to 5.9% the second year as a bargaining strategy, but returning to 2% the third year. George expresses concern towards this increase, and states he would only be comfortable with a 3% increase for the second year.

Steve expresses concern in the pay structure, for it does not base pay off experience, skill, or license requirements, but instead only focuses on seniority. He suggests structuring the pay in a way that promotes employees to better themselves in their work environment. Currently, there is

no way to move up, therefore the DPW may see a lack of motivation within their employees. Steve recommends incentivizing employees to get licenses with a small raise, and in return ask for their commitment to stay at the Sandisfield DPW for a certain amount of years. The Select Board needs to take into consideration how to attract people to these positions.

The Select Board revisits the idea of hiring a new transfer station attendant, and moving the current attendant, Keith Larson, to more general DPW duties fulltime. This would allow the new transfer station attendant to be paid at a lower rate, and improve productivity for the DPW. However, there are concerns that Keith and the other DPW employees might take issue with this solution. Steve makes a point that it might be necessary to add this position into the contract disclosing that the rate would be lower than the typical DPW employee. George will speak with Brad Curry about this option. George questions whether the position would require membership in the union. Steve suggests the Select Board hire this position and it would be supervised by the DPW. George believes they should present this issue to Town Counsel.

Alex wants to develop more ideas on how to motivate and incentivize DPW employees. He suggests developing an hourly wage increment for each license. An example might be an hourly increase for having a CDL. George agrees this is a reasonable method and the Select Board will look further into this idea.

George proposed they alter Item one of their contract and change the three-year contract to a one-year contract. This will give the Select Board the opportunity to make changes and decisions in regards to DPW positions, incentives, and compensation.

George reiterates their proposal to Victor will be a one-year agreement in order to decide on incentives and restructuring of pay scale. Wages will increase by 2% the first year. Evaluations will be done by the first week of March and paid by the first week of June.

Alex does not believe they should add the additional Juneteenth holiday and instead should focus on increasing wages, for he predicts higher wages would attract more applicants to DPW positions, rather than more holidays.

Skill sets the Select Board would like to search for in new hires for the DPW are mechanic and welding skills. This would provide the DPW with someone to maintain their vehicles, which require more attention in the winter.

George states the DPW does not have very much accountability when it comes to vehicles breaking down, driving off the road, or even flipping over. Steve suggests they ask for more accountability in return for the incentives the Select Board is willing to provide. He recommends asking for GPS to be installed in DPW vehicles which would track speed and whether employees were maintaining the proper roads in a reasonable amount of time. This would also help to improve performance reviews.

The Select Board will request that the next contract agreement, which will include the new wage structure and incentives, be finalized by March or April.

George motions to exit Executive Session. Alex seconds.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm

George Riley

Alex Bowman

Steve Seddon