

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board Executive Session held on Wednesday, May 31, 2023 at 5:00PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Robert Fedell, John Field, Jonathan Sylbert, Brian Maser of KP Law

1. Motion to open session

2. Motion to open Executive Session under G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1) – To discuss complaints or charges brought against a public employee

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to open Executive Session under G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1) – To discuss complaints or charges brought against a public employee.

Steve Seddon	Aye
John Field	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

Steve notes the purpose of the meeting is to discuss a complaint brought against Ralph Morrison for being verbally abusive towards the residents/staff of Berkshire Rehab & Skilled Care Center. The Select Board will discuss how to proceed with this complaint, not discuss the complaint itself.

Brian Maser of KP Law recommends the Select Board address the incident one of three ways: The Select Board can conduct interviews through the Town Manager, a third party can be hired through a services agreement, or Town Counsel can conduct the investigation. Steve suggests hiring KP Law to conduct the investigation.

Ralph questions whether the letter can be considered a valid complaint, as it is signed "All the staff at Berkshire Rehab" instead of a specific individual. Brian Maser confirms that despite the letter not containing specific names, it does not negate the fact that the Town received a complaint. This may require the Town to establish an initial point of contact with Berkshire Rehab to better determine who will be involved in the initial investigation, but the Town has every right to conduct follow up on the complaint.

Once the investigation concludes, the Select Board will review all the information and decide how to address the incident.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to hire KP Law to conduct the investigation and interviews, and produce a report for the Select Board.

Steve Seddon	Aye
John Field	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to exit Executive Session.

Steve Seddon	Aye
John Field	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

3. Adjourn the Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 5:17pm

Steve Sedon

John Field

Robert Fedell

To the Board of Selectmen

Town of Sandisfield,

We work at The nursing Center in town. On May 18th in the early morning hours we needed an ambulance for one of the residents. Responding was Rico Sanchez and Ralph Morrison.

Mr. Morrison came into the facility with a bad attitude as he always does throwing around the " Do you know who I am" line. Come on ! Yes we know who you are your the jerk we have to call for help!

Mr. Morrison's attitude and behavior towards the residents and staff every time he enters the building is verbally abusive and belittling. And we mean this happens every time he comes into our facility and we have had enough! We are asking the Selectman to please correct the aggressive behavior of your Fire Chief . Enough is Enough ! We will petition and demonstrate on the grounds of the Town offices if we have to .

We deal with residents with severe mental health issues on a daily basis. When our residents become upsets it is challenging enough for us to help them not to mention it can be potentially very dangerous for us. We do not need the Fire Chief responding to medical calls coming into the facility hollering and being verbally aggressive towards us upsetting both residents and staff with his awful attitude. We do not need him yelling in our facility at two am in the morning either ! This has to stop! If he doesn't enjoy the job RETIRE!!!!!!.

Mr. Morrison acts like a child throwing a tantrum. Its embarrassing for the town .This facility gives the town thousands of dollars each year for an ambulance service.Most of the time its neighboring towns that respond.

For our dollar we want a pleasant response. These people are very sick and scared. When they have to go to the hospital put yourself in their shoes. Would you like to be belittled for calling a service? No you want calm reassuring professionals period!

Please correct this behavior!!! This is a written complaint !

All the staff at Berkshire Rehab.!



**Town of Sandisfield
Select Board
(413) 258-4711 Ext. 3
Sandisfieldma.gov**

May 25, 2023

Berkshire Rehab & Skilled Care Center
7 Sandisfield Road
Sandisfield, MA 01255

Dear Staff of Berkshire Rehab & Skilled Care Center,

The Sandisfield Select Board has received your written complaint regarding Fire Chief, Ralph Morrison. We are currently working towards a resolution.

Thank you,
Sandisfield Select Board



**Town of Sandisfield
Select Board
(413) 258-4711 Ext. 3
Sandisfieldma.gov**

May 24, 2023

BY HAND DELIVERY

Mr. Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief
Sandisfield Fire Department
207 Sandisfield Road, PO Box 22
Sandisfield, MA 01255

Re: Notice of Executive Session

Dear Chief Morrison:

Please accept this letter as written notification that on Wednesday, May 31, 2023, at 5:00pm, the Sandisfield Select Board will vote to convene in Executive Session pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1) to discuss a complaint filed against you as a Town employee. Specifically, the Board will meet to discuss how to review the attached complaint from the Berkshire Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center which alleges that you treated residents and staff at the nursing home unprofessionally during a call for service that you responded to on May 18. The written complaint further alleges that you belittle and harass residents and staff whenever you respond to the nursing home.

The Board's meeting will be held at Sandisfield Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, Massachusetts 01255.

As the subject of the Executive Session you have the right to be present for the Board's discussion which pertains to you; you have the right to speak on your own behalf; you have the right to appear with counsel or a representative of your choosing, for purposes of advising you, but not for active participation; you have the right to record the meeting by stenographic or other means; and you have the right to request that the Board conduct the meeting in Open Session.

You are hereby directed not to take any action (or omission) against either the residents or staff at the nursing home that could be deemed as being threatening, harassing, or retaliation for the nursing home's sending the attached to the Town. Failure to follow this directive would constitute grounds for the immediate termination of your employment with the Town.

A copy of this letter will be placed in your permanent personnel file.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Sylbert
Town Manager
Town of Sandisfield



May 30, 2023

To Whom it may concern:

I was not aware of any issue between the staff at Berkshire Rehabilitation and Ralph Morrison, Fire Chief in the morning hours of May 18, 2023.

The facility has always maintained a positive professional relationship with Mr. Morrison as well as other first responders. We look forward to continuing that relationship and working with Mr. Morrison in the future.

Please let me know if I can be of any other assistance. I can be reached at (413) 258-4731.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Greg Dempsey", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Greg Dempsey

Administrator

Berkshire Rehabilitation and Skilled Care Center