

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board
October 12, 2021

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, October 12, 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

1. Review and sign minutes of meetings. Points to minutes

2. Review and sign purchase orders

3. Clarification of mask policy for town buildings

George Riley reads a mask advisory from the Massachusetts Department of Health, which states vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks indoors unless they are immunocompromised or live with someone who is. Unvaccinated individuals are still required to wear a mask indoors.

George expresses concern regarding whether town employees will be comfortable asking visitors if they are vaccinated before entry into the building. He suggests it may be best to create a blanket rule that all visitors are required to wear a mask. The Select Board will have a conversation with the Board of Health to determine the best option for the town.

4. Discuss procedure for amending the FRRSD RDA

Steve Seddon explains the Sandisfield School Committee can approach the Otis School Committee and request a motion to add an agenda item. However, Otis has not always been receptive to Sandisfield's requests. Currently, a motion is done by a simple majority, which is only four members. Since Otis has four members on their committee, they will always win the majority. Steve suggests amending the rule to be a simple majority, plus one member from each town.

George suggests they also add to the amendment that there should be consistency in what constitutes a quorum and what constitutes a majority vote.

5. Review and take action on establishment of driveway permit fees

George explains that Sandisfield does not charge for driveway permits. He briefly goes over the driveway permit process and states he believes based on the considerable amount of work that goes into acquiring one of these permits, Sandisfield should be charging a fee for the permit. Surrounding towns vary in price from \$50-\$100, while others still do not charge.

Barbara Cormier, who served on the Planning Board for a number of years, explains the driveway is already established in the building permit process, and does not see it necessary to charge an additional fee. Barbara goes on to explain that this building permit is always submitted to the Planning Board first, and suggests reorganizing the order to have Planning Board approval before Conservation Committee approval.

George explains Sandisfield's bylaws separate the building and driveway permit. However, they will continue to adjust the permit process in order to make it more cohesive. Alex states he spoke with Matt Kolmer, the Building Inspector, and Matt will try to get Brad Curry on PermitEyes, so the driveway permit will be more accessible and the bylaws followed more strictly.

The Select Board makes a note that unless they are told by town residents, they may not be aware that a driveway is not following the bylaws. They recommend that if a driveway affects a resident or roadway, these observations should be brought to the attention of the Select Board in order for adjustments to be made.

Mary Turek expresses concerns about charging for the driveway permits, and suggests waiting until Sandisfield establishes Broadband. She feels as though the town is charging too many fees without supplying the residents with anything in return.

Alex states he only sees the establishment of a fee necessary to be assured the proper documentation has been filled out and an applicant followed the process accurately. However, he questions the price of that fee.

Mary Turek suggests sending the driveway permit to the Planning Board for review and revision.

This item is tabled.

6. Review and sign letter to Joint Ways and Means Committee asking to support Sandisfield Broadband Project with Governor Baker-recommended American Rescue Plan Act allocation

George explains the State Legislature could provide a significant amount of money to Sandisfield for its Broadband project, which is estimated to put Sandisfield around one million dollars in debt. It was suggested to the Select Board that they write a letter to the Joint Ways and Means Committee requesting their financial support.

George reads the letter written by Alex. Each Select Board member signs the letter.

7. Acting Town Manager Updates

8. Select Board Updates

George announces the state has allocated money to identify a number of private wells in Sandisfield to test in order to get an idea of whether there is a water issue within the community.

George updates that the lease on the printer in the Town Hall expired, so upon renewing this lease they were able to upgrade the printer to a newer color-printing model for the same price as the previous lease.

George explains the Treasurer's mail had not been picked up since the previous Treasurer resigned. The PO Box key had been missing for a period of time and the current Treasurer was unaware the mail needed to be retrieved. The excess of mail was recovered by Janey Beardsley who was informed of the issue by the Post Office Clerk. However, because of this mail backup, the tax bills were delayed until the mail was sorted through and dealt with.

The Select Board conducted a meeting with their Union Representative to go over the renewal of their three-year union contract. The Select Board now must conduct a private meeting to discuss and approve their proposal, then schedule another meeting to sign the contract.

George explains when a Town Tax Collector manages to collect a past due tax bill, the penalties of the uncollected tax bill are paid directly to the Collector, which accumulates around \$7,000 a year. This incentivizes them to collect these taxes. However, after George spoke with the Treasurer/ Tax Collector and the Head of the Finance Committee, they have come to the conclusion that this policy may be counterproductive. George suggests dissolving this policy, and increasing the Treasurer/ Tax Collector hourly wage allowing Sandisfield to come closer to the average Treasurer/ Tax Collector hourly wage. Just as well, the employee performance review bonus would additionally help to make up for the removal of this policy.

Interim Treasurer/ Tax Collector, Laura Bertram has resigned from her position early due to a family emergency. In light of this, one Treasurer/ Tax Collector candidate has already been interviewed for the position, and an additional candidate will be interviewed Friday, 10/15.

George is still waiting on a proposal from Alarm Systems of Berkshire County for a new alarm system and hopes to go to a keyless system that will require all employees to have a personal code to access the building.

Kathleen Segrin brings up her culvert issue again. The issue is on Brad's list of items to resolve.

9. Public comment

10. Future agenda items

George would like to discuss his compensation for his duties as Acting Town Manager.

George would like to revisit the Select Board meeting guidelines.

Alex would like to discuss winter transfer station hours.

Anina Carr would like to revisit Sandisfield's mask mandate once they have communicated with the Board of Health.

Steve Seddon will contact the Building Inspector about getting the driveway permits on PermitEyes.

11. Review mail

12. Review and sign warrants

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

Mary Turek expressed concern over her name being used without her knowledge by Brad Curry in a previous meeting. She stated she spoke with the Ethics Committee about Open Meeting Law, but discovered using someone's name without their knowledge is not a violation. However, Mary explained that previously the Select Board or department/committee member would notify anyone if they will be discussed during a meeting.

George read from the minutes the moment Mary was mentioned, which stated she applied for a driveway permit on behalf of a property owner. While this mention was

neutral in nature, she would prefer to be notified if her name is to be mentioned during the discussion of a specific issue. George stated he will request Brad notify anyone he plans to mention during a meeting in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

George Riley

Alex Bowman

Steve Seddon