

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board
May 17, 2022

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, May 17, 2022 at 7:00PM at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Alex Bowman, John Field, Jonathan Sylbert

Called to order at 7:00PM

- 1. Call to order: Note that the meeting is being recorded**
- 2. Reorganization of Select Board**

Alex Bowman motions to appoint Steven Seddon as Select Board Chair. John Field seconds. Motion passes.

- 3. Review and sign minutes of meetings. Points to minutes**
- 4. Review and sign purchase orders**
- 5. Discuss and sign Year-End Transfers**

A bill was received from KP Law regarding Berkshire Mountain Cannabis. The Select Board will confirm who is responsible for this bill.

Steve motions to approve the Year-End transfers for Operations, Maintenance and Repair and Street Lighting. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

6. Appoint Municipal Hearings Officer

Steve reads a letter from the Department of Fire Services, which states "As part of the Massachusetts Fire Safety Act of 2004, the Legislature enacted M.G.L. c. 148A which allowed for the issuance of citations for certain violations of the State Building and Fire Code by state and local code enforcement officers." In order for Sandisfield to participate, a certified hearings officer must be appointed.

Fire Chief Ralph Morrison has requested Jonathan Sylbert be appointed to this position. Jonathan will attend the two hour online training course May 23, 2022.

Steve motions to appoint Jonathan Sylbert as Municipal Hearings Officer. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

7. Discuss Broadband Service to Unserved Premises

Steve reports there are around 120 Sandisfield residents in the Otis Woodlands, who invested about \$850,000 to install their broadband underground. Each resident then paid additional expenses, including \$8.50 per foot for a conduit to their individual

homes. Jamie Lane residents paid \$1,500 on average to connect broadband to their homes.

There are two homes in Sandisfield that fall outside of Sandisfield's broadband servable residencies. Steve has gotten an estimate from Sertex to provide broadband from the Otis telephone poles to the unserved homes for \$11,457.50. Another option is installing Starlink, which has an upfront cost of \$600 per unit, with an assumed value of \$200 for dish installation.

Steve expresses concern that should the town pay the \$11,457.50 for these two homes, the Sandisfield residents in the Otis Woodlands or on Jamie Lane will want to be reimbursed for their out-of-pocket costs as well. He suggests opting for the Starlink option, for this is a much lower cost.

Dolores Harasyko, resident of one of the unserved homes, expresses disappointment that she was not informed early on that her home would not be included in Sandisfield's broadband installation, for there may have been an opportunity to get service from Otis during their installation. It's suggested to service Starlink to the two homes and continue searching for other broadband funding sources.

It's decided that both the Otis Woodland and Jamie Lane properties proved to be in a much different situation than the two remaining unserved homes, and should not be entitled to compensation for their broadband costs. Steve motions to utilize ARPA funds to pay the estimate from Sertex to connect 189 and 193 North Main Street to broadband. John seconds. Alex abstains, for he would like to conduct more research for other funding sources before agreeing.

8. Discuss Movement of Records and Removal of Storage Containers

Douglas Miner reports he would like to remove all the records from the storage container, for the conditions are not ideal. He suggests that King Information Systems may have stored away moldy books and documents, which have caused an unhealthy environment. It's suggested a request for accountability be asked of King Information Systems before action is taken, for they may be willing to remedy the situation if they are at fault. The seller of the storage container should be contacted as well, for the container was damaged upon delivery. Douglas notes that there are other companies that can condense, organize, and digitize documents, and there are grant opportunities available for these types of projects.

9. Town Clerk Updates

Douglas reports the Annual Town Meeting and Town Election went well. This week he will be completing the minutes of the ATM and swearing in the newly elected officials.

10. Interim Town Manager Updates

A request for a Special Permit application came from a woman who wants to open an art studio at her home. Jonathan notes that since Sandisfield does not have a business district, all businesses must apply for a Special Permit. Dolores reports there is a \$50 fee for Special Permits, a Public Hearing will be scheduled, and abutters shall be notified via certified mail, which is the same notice published in a newspaper. The mailings and advertising are paid at the expense of the applicant.

Attorney Jeffery Blake confirms the agreement to sell Mass Audubon a piece of property for a portion of the back taxes will not work. Instead, he suggests the town defer to Land Court. Jonathan explains that whoever inherits the land will have to sell a portion of the property to pay off the back taxes, which will still give Mass Audubon the opportunity to buy the land.

Jonathan suggests moving the Annual Town Meeting to the Firehouse. This will avoid taking up DPW employee time setting up the space. While parking tends to be better at the DPW Garage, the Select Board agrees.

The Select Board needs to discuss Janey Beardsley's employment status, for she may now be considered exempt, meaning she no longer qualifies for overtime. Generally, positions that make over \$35,000 annually are exempt. However, this may be higher in Massachusetts since minimum wage is higher.

It's noted that stipends cannot be paid in advance because the town cannot get the money back should a member quit prematurely, nor would there be a stipend budgeted for a replacement member. The Treasurer suggests paying members bi-annually or monthly.

Jonathan reports that should Sandisfield issue more than 20% of its allotted liquor licenses, the licensing of a retail cannabis establishment will need to be included as a ballot question at an election.

It's reported that Principal Assessor Jacki Bitso will be resigning effective July 15, 2022. Jonathan reads her resignation letter. The Select Board and Town Manager will begin the search process for a replacement. It's noted that the majority of the surrounding towns contract out their Assessing Departments.

11. Select Board Updates

Steve has been researching options for GPS systems in the DPW vehicles and equipment.

Alex requests holding a Work Session to review their goals and initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year. This meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, May 23 at 5:30pm.

12. Future agenda items

Discuss stipend policy

There is a discussion about the purchase of a firetruck and whether due diligence is being done looking into new, used and demo options. A spec sheet will be requested of Ralph Morrison and further discussion will continue with him at a meeting.

13. Review mail

14. Review and sign warrants

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

Road work will begin Thursday, May 19 at the top of the hill on Route 57 to the bottom at Lower West Street. Delays are expected.

Decisions still need to be made in regards to the detour route for the culvert bridge replacement on Route 57 before construction can begin.

Meeting adjourned at 8:53PM.

Steve Seddon, Chair

Alex Bowman

John Field