

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

April 4, 2022

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, April 4, 2022 at 7:00p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon as Acting Chair, Alex Bowman, Jonathan Sylbert

Called to order at 7:00PM

- 1. Call to order: Note that the meeting is being recorded**
- 2. Review and sign minutes of meetings. Points to minutes**
- 3. Review and sign purchase orders**

4. Discuss and vote to appoint Theresa Spohnholz as a member of the Conservation Commission

Steve motions to appoint Theresa Spohnholz as a member of the Conservation Commission for the remainder of the vacant term. Alex seconds. Motion passes.

5. Review and vote on Town Warrant item for amendment to Chapter II Town Meeting, Section 4 of Town Bylaws

Alex Bowman reads the current bylaw which refers to mailing out the Annual Town Report to every household of registered voters in Sandisfield, and any second home upon request. Alex proposes the bylaw be amended and voted on at Town Meeting to allow the Annual Town Report not to be mailed, but rather be printed and made available in the Library, Town offices, and posted on the Town website. Any taxpayer household can request in writing for a copy mailed to them.

Steve proposes taking Mary Kronholm's advice and sending out postcards to all Sandisfield taxpayers notifying them of the change. Alex will add to the proposed bylaw amendment that a postcard will be sent out to all registered voter households at least seven days prior to Town Meeting as a reminder that the Report is on the Town website and to request in writing if they would like a physical copy mailed to the household.

Jonathan suggests separating the Town Warrant and Town Report. He recommends making the Town Report available as early as January, and sending out the Warrant at least seven days prior to Town Meeting as required by law. It's proposed amending the bylaw to state the Town Report shall be made available by March 1 at the latest.

It's suggested that the Municipal Calendar be included on the postcard as well. The Select Board will make adjustments on the wording of the proposed amendment and present it at the following Select Board meeting.

6. Interim Town Manager Updates

Jonathan briefly goes over the status of the FY23 budget. He reports that the operating budget, which excludes capital expenses, is due to increase 1.22%. Part of this increase is due to the school budget being reassessed as less than what it was budgeted for in the previous fiscal year. Jonathan goes on to explain that the school was budgeted at \$1,652,000, was reassessed, and some of the remaining funds were transferred at Special Town Meeting for capital expenses and some salary increases.

Ralph Morrison asked if taking funds out of Free Cash or stabilization to lower the tax rate has been considered. Steve reports this has not been discussed, and focus has been on finalizing some of the capital costs and the budget in general. Alex reports he would like to focus less on the tax rate, but rather the median tax bill.

Jonathan reports that Stabilization makes up 33% of the budget, and Free Cash accounts for 35%. However, DLS recommends a maximum of 10% for each. This is why the levy limit has not increased, while the operating budget has. It suggested holding a public meeting before Town Meeting to review the budget.

It is recommended the budget be broken down into categories, which are General Government, DPW and Facilities, Education, Human Services, Protection Persons and Property, Culture and Recreation, and Fixed Costs. Just as well, any one time capital expenses will be excluded from the operating budget and presented as special articles. One of the special articles for FY23 will include an audit.

Jonathan reports he offered to stay on as Interim Town Manager for six months until they find someone to permanently fill the role. He believes the town needs to invest in a "headhunter," like the Collins Center, to find qualified candidates. The Collins Center is estimated to cost \$10,000, but this has yet to be confirmed. Once candidates have been found, they will be brought to the Town Manager Search Committee for review and be interviewed.

7. Select Board Updates

Next Monday, April 11 at 5:00pm the Building Inspector will be hosting a PermitEyes demonstration for all the boards and committees who need to understand how to utilize the program.

The DPW Union Contract has been tentatively finalized. Final review with Town Counsel will need to occur.

Due to a significant increase, the Select Board is currently looking for other options for health insurance for town employees. MIIA has requested a letter from the Select Board asking MIIA to get a bid together for health, dental and life insurance.

8. Future agenda items

The warrant must be posted by May 7. Town Meeting is May 14. Jonathan notes that since the Sandisfield Times is released on May 1, if the Select Board would like budget information published, the budget should be finalized by April 21 or 22. A Public Meeting to go over the budget should also be scheduled soon. A budget Work Session is scheduled for Thursday, April 7.

9. Review mail

10. Review and sign warrants

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

A list of DPW priorities is requested by Mary Turek. Steve reports Brad Curry and his assistant are working on creating this list.

The Select Board signs Jonathan Sylbert's Interim Town Manager contract.

Meeting adjourned at 8:36pm.

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman