

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board
April 19, 2022

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 7:00p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Jonathan Sylbert, Alex Bowman by remote

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. Budget review for public input**
- 5. Review in-progress Town Meeting warrant items**

Jonathan Sylbert reports the operating budget has increased by 1.76% from last year. Most of the increase is within the General Government, with a \$47,000 increase. Jonathan goes through the General Government budget lines, noting an increase in the Reserve Fund from \$10,000 to \$20,000, salary and expense increases for the Assessors and Treasurer/Collector. Technology Expenses has been divided into multiple lines dedicated to each of the following: IT salary, Webmaster salary, hardware/software, and Building Department expenses for PermitEyes. Stipends were also budgeted for in committees who did not previously receive them.

Highway Maintenance increased by \$4,600, Machinery Maintenance increased by \$15,000, and the Tree Account increased by \$5,500. The Repair & Maint Town Properties Exp line is being closed out, for these were dedicated to specific projects. The position for a Maintenance person/ Handyman has been posted online to be filled.

The Solid Waste Disposal revolving fund will be closed and all funds will be put into free cash. The total budget for Solid Waste Disposal would be the cost of the net operating costs after the estimated revenue of the transfer station stickers. Transfer Station Attendant, Keith Larson may move solely to DPW employee tasks, and a new attendant will be hired. Therefore, Keith's salary is included in both Solid Waste Disposal Salary and Highway Salaries.

Utilities accounted for \$47,000 of the \$53,900 in Operations, Maintenance & Repair. Utilities is now its own line with \$47,000. Oper, Maint & Repair will be budgeted the remaining \$6,900, for there is no definite plan for specific renovations, such as the windows at the Old Town Hall. The Highway Department in total accounts for an 8.4% increase, or \$70,000.

Some significant budget increases include Berkshire County Retirement, which is non-negotiable and increased by \$25,299. Just as well, Employee Benefits increased by \$62,846.60, which is because in the previous fiscal year only the positions that were taking the insurance were budgeted for. This can be problematic because if an employee without benefits resigns and their replacement wants benefits, they would not be budgeted for. Insurance and Bonds will also increase by \$16,577 because it was under-budgeted last fiscal year.

Jonathan goes over the special articles:

- Appropriate \$397,000 from Free Cash for a grader
- Borrow \$152,717.60 for a roller
- Appropriate \$84,756 from Free Cash for a engineering
- Appropriate \$18,000 from Free Cash for an audit
- Appropriate \$9,500 from Free Cash for for the purpose of engaging an executive recruitment firm to assist, advise, and support the Town Manager Search Committee
- Appropriate \$10,000 from Free Cash for the Assessors tri-annual recertification
- Appropriate \$335,000 from Free Cash for a used fire truck

Jonathan reviews an article which will allow the transfer of funds from a revolving account into a stabilization fund. This will allow the succeeding article to pass, which regards transferring the contents of the Ambulance Fee revolving account into Ambulance Stabilization. An additional article on the warrant involves paying \$533 for overdue bills.

Alex summarizes the status of Broadband. He reports that the Select Board has received confirmation from MBI allowing Sandfisfield to begin the assessment in FY24 instead of FY23. This will allow more opportunities to find additional funding for the project or renegotiate the payment agreement.

Barbara Cormier encourages the Select Board to include an article to pave the driveway at the Town Hall and begin work on other maintenance at this building.

An additional warrant article will be to lower the levy limit. In order to calculate this amount, Jonathan will take last year's actual levy, back the whole budget out, and the net difference will be the amount used to reduce the levy.

A discussion about assessing households pursues. Jonathan notes the importance of the Assessors or their assessing service Mayflower make site visits to reassess homes that have since been renovated.

It's questioned whether the Recreation Committee really needs the lease with the American Legion for the pavilion located on South Main Street, for they have proven difficult to work with in the past.

Alex reviews the controversy with the proposed bylaws for the Annual Town Meeting. He notes he and Steve were surprised to find there were substantial differences between the bylaws posted on the town website, and those submitted by the Planning Board. Both Steve and Alex were under the impression they were voting to accept the Planning Board's original bylaws at the Monday, March 28 meeting. Leslie Garwood quickly summarized the revisions that were made, including changing the word "marijuana" to "cannabis."

Steve motions to rescind the vote to accept the Planning Board bylaws made on March 28 based on incorrect presentation of documents. Alex seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

6. Interim Town Manager Updates

Jonathan visited the Rudolph property, which was discussed at the Special Town Meeting. He reports they seem to be in agreement where the property lines would be. Barbara suggests that the town sell the property to the Rudolph's for a dollar since they will be paying for a lawyer and/or real estate agent.

Jonathan notes that there was a threatening post made on the Facebook page Connect Sandisfield that the Select Board should be aware of. This post will be filed should a court case ever arise. It is confirmed that the Town of Sandisfield has no affiliation with Connect Sandisfield.

An estimate for hooking up the last two homes to Broadband was received, it was estimated at over \$11,000. This should be on the agenda for the next meeting.

An informational budget is scheduled for May 5 at 7PM located at the Old Town Hall.

7. Select Board Updates

A public meeting to discuss the detour options during a culvert replacement near 90 Sandisfield Road is scheduled for May 9 during the Select Board meeting.

8. Future agenda items

Sign the DPW Union contract

9. Review mail

10. Review and sign warrants

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

Alex motions to make Steve Seddon the member responsible for signing the weekly payroll warrant for the week of April 19. Steve seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

A Finance Committee meeting has been scheduled to review the proposed budget. However, they will not yet make recommendations. A Select Board meeting will be scheduled for Monday, April 25 at 6:00PM to review the Finance Committee's comments.

Meeting adjourned at 9:38PM

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman