

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, February 27, 2023 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

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

1. Call to order: Note that the meeting is being recorded

2. Appoint Regional Agreement Amendment Committee Member

The Select Board did not receive a fourth nominee for the RAAC. A letter was sent to the Otis School Committee notifying them Sandisfield has identified three RAAC members. It's questioned whether the School Committee appoints the RACC members or the Select Board. Jonathan will consult with FRRSD Superintendent, Robert Putnam. Since there were no other RAAC appointment requests, it's suggested John Field fill the vacant seat, even if it's on an interim basis.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to identify John Field for the Regional Agreement Amendment Committee.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

3. Amend School Committee Appointment Term

The School Committee appointment is through the current term, not until the May 2023 election as originally voted on January 23, 2023.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to update the appointment of Alex Bowman to the School Committee for the remainder of the term.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

4. Review Cannabis Bylaw and Discuss Recommendations

Jonathan summarizes that the current Cannabis Bylaw passed at Town Meeting is under review. This review has an extension and it is unknown when the Attorney General will return the bylaw. There is a minimum number of days the Planning Board has to put forward a new bylaw as opposed to revising the existing one. If the Planning

Board does not submit a new Cannabis Bylaw, a Citizen's Petition may occur to get it on the warrant one way or another.

Planning Board Chair, Barbara Cormier will bring the creation of a new Cannabis Bylaw to the Planning Board when they meet on March 7, 2023. Currently the Board is working on a Short Term Rental Bylaw to include on the warrant, so it is uncertain whether the Board would like to take on this Bylaw production as well. Originally, the Planning Board had intended to wait for the Attorney General to return the original Cannabis Bylaw and move forward from there, which may include holding a Special Town Meeting.

5. Discuss Finance Committee Composition Options

The Select Board should consider what Boards/Committees should be changed from appointed to elected and vice versa. One potential adjustment could be making the Finance Committee an elected body of three, rather than an appointed body of five. Elected positions tend to bring on more committed members, and beholden to the taxpayers. After a brief discussion, the consensus is to look into making the position elected, as the seats aren't being filled as appointed.

6. Green Committee Process for Heat Pump Bid and Rebate

Steve reports that upon review of the contract, the project administrator on the heat pump grant is asking for the full 10% overage amount on top of the allocated admin fee. The concern is that, should the project go over and the 10% overage already be paid out, the town would be responsible for the difference. Additionally, the contractor chosen by the Green Committee, did not meet the engineer's requirements. Jonathan distributes the contract given to him by George Riley, the designated project administrator. The Select Board will review the contract at their meeting next week.

7. Review of Financial Policy Regarding Fund Balances

There are three cash funds: Free Cash, General Stabilization Fund, and Capital Stabilization Fund. Previously, the Select Board voted on 5% of the operating budget for Free Cash, 5% for General Stabilization, and 25% for Capital Stabilization. Additionally, there was a vote for 13-19% of cash total holdings for all the accounts. And for all other stabilization accounts, like the Ambulance, were not to exceed 19% of the total operating budget. These present issues as it's asking for an extraordinary amount in reserves, and it's suggested these policies be revisited before any capital funding be done. The Select Board will review the policies at their Work Session on Friday.

8. Purchase Order Process

Steve explains that the Board would like to review this policy because there has been an influx of purchase orders coming in after the work has already been done or the item already purchased instead of asking permission from the Select Board beforehand. It

was previously understood that the Select Board voted to allow the Town Manager to serve as the signatory on purchase orders in emergency situations. However, the wording of the policy may be up for interpretation. The Select Board agrees to revisit the policy to make it clear all purchase orders must be submitted **before** work is done.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to amend the Purchase Order Policy so the Select Board is the primary approver and the Town Manager is the emergency approver, and to be explicit that purchase orders are to be submitted before any work is done, effective immediately.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to withdraw the above amendment.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to suspend the current Purchase Order Policy until further review.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

New wording for the policy will be proposed at the following Select Board meeting.

9. Review Broadband Loan Structure and Commitment

The actual amount for the broadband is around \$853,000 for the principal. Once fully paid off it will accrue around \$250,000 in interest. Steve recommends using monies from one of the cash funds to lower the total. There is limited time to decide this before the Annual Town Meeting. He examples spending \$200,000 will lower the interest cost by \$100,000. There is discussion regarding general financial planning, interest rates, etc. Jonathan recommends seeing whether the loan can be paid off at a later date should the interest rates become favorable. Alex notes MBI seemed open to amending their contract with the town should it make financial sense; he will confirm this in writing.

10. Town Manager Updates

SAMA Productions LLC sent a letter requesting records of any costs imposed on the town that are reasonably related to the operation of the cannabis facility. Any quantifiable impact the facility has had on the town must be reported as a public record. Jonathan will communicate with Emergency Management, Fire, Police, and Highway to determine if there have been any impacts thus far.

Free Cash has been reapproved to \$329,677.

The CORI Policy is now on the town website. Once the CORI form is distributed, the employee/town official will fill it out, the Select Board will review, and the Police Chief will conduct the check.

Yanner Park Committee Chair, Adam Brown submitted a \$102,000 capital request for the warrant to construct a pavilion at Yanner Park. Unfortunately, this project will require a state bid with prevailing wages and cannot yet be included on the ATM warrant. Adam will meet with Jonathan next week to try to establish a plan.

Planning Board members, Barbara Cormier and Paul Gaudette currently both also serve on the Zoning Board of Appeals. It's questioned whether this is allowed, as that means the ZBA may be appealing their own decisions. This will be discussed further at the next Select Board meeting.

11. Select Board Updates

12. Future Agenda Items

- Green Committee Process for Heat Pump Grant/Rebate
- Review Financial Policies
- Purchase Order Process
- Yanner Park Pavilion
- Finance Committee Composition Warrant Item
- Commercial Zoning
- Select Board One-Year Vacancy on Ballot

13. Review and sign minutes of meetings, purchase orders, warrants, and mail

Robert Sampson notifies the Select Board he has been receiving daily fines for a woodstove in the shed on his property. He argues the Building Inspector has not conducted a site visit and he does not live there full-time, so he should not have been issued the fines. However, he is willing to come into compliance by removing the woodstove. He also notes he is in the process of building a house on the property.

14. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman

John Field