

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Alex Bowman, Jonathan Sylbert

Absent: John Field

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

2. Joint Meeting with the Board of Assessors

- **Discuss Department's Budget**

A plan needs to be determined how to address assessing homes more frequently and as building permits are coming in. The budget will require re-adjustment based on their decision. This will be revisited once the entire Select Board is available.

- **Board Responsibilities for Stipends**

The Board of Assessors do not personally conduct site visit assessments, as they do not want to be accused of favoritism in any way. Assessing homes is not why the Board receives stipends. Stipends are awarded to BOA members because all members must complete the 40 hour DLS course and fulfill the responsibilities as identified by DLS, which Bethany reads to the Select Board. It's questioned who actually conducts this work, as it appears to be the Principal Assessor completing the bulk of it, while the BOA simply reviews and signs off on this work.

Steve questions whether a Board member is able to sign off on building permits and conduct a site visit for these properties, as the town cannot have their assessing contractor, Mayflower frequent the town that often. Since all Board members hold full-time jobs, it is difficult to complete these tasks.

- **Clerk's Responsibilities**

It's suggested that since the current Clerk also serves on the BOA, perhaps they could utilize a portion of their weekly hours to conduct site visits and assessments. This may cause an issue, as the Clerk is currently the only person in the Assessor's Office, and only works 15 hours per week.

- **Long-Term Plan for Department**

Sandisfield is looking for more revenue options in town, which the Assessor's Department can assist with. Steve asks what the protocol is on assessing homes in town, as it appears there are many homes that have not been assessed in some time. It's explained that homes that have pulled building permits are assessed earlier in the 10-year cyclical schedule. Homes that are further off the road tend to get away with being reassessed as changes are not obvious. Steve notes that all renovations require a building permit, and if changes are not being assessed until 10 years later, there is no way for the town to reconcile for that lost revenue.

3. Brad Curry in for DPW Updates

To shorten the length of the road closure on Route 57 when the culvert bridge is being replaced, preliminary work will begin in the next few weeks. Work is scheduled to begin June 1, 2023 and will not continue beyond June 30, 2023. The detour for commercial traffic will be up Route 8 and back, residential and emergency traffic will be over Silverbrook Rd.

An estimate of \$60,000 has been received to tear up the Town Hall parking lot and re-pave it. The project will still need to go out to bid before any work can be scheduled.

There is no entity to put the Transfer Station hauling out to bid, so it is up to Brad to look into potential haulers to replace Sandisfield's current contractor, Casella. Unfortunately, Casella has bought out the majority of nearby haulers, so Brad is looking at haulers from further away. Brad will reach out to USA from Torrington, CT and Roger Trucking from Housatonic, MA, as they have not been bought out.

The Select Board declared a snow/ice emergency on March 10, 2023. The DPW was running out of snow/ice funding, and needed to assure they could compete with the incoming snow storm. The town is currently around \$67,000 over budget on materials due to cost increases and multiple small storms throughout the year.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to set the annual limit for Snow/Ice at \$250,000.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye

Mary Turek expresses concern that the DPW is unnecessarily widening portions of Silverbrook Road creating even muddier terrain. She reports that the DPW should be focusing on the more narrow sections further down the road, and get input from Police, Fire, & EMS to assure they can navigate the road quickly and safely. Brad explains his crew is making their way down the entirety of the road.

4. Phillip Blume in for DayDreamz Estates, LLC Update and Annual Business License

Phillip Blume explains that he must renew all his licenses with the state this year. Additionally he is working with the Building Department to acquire a temporary CO for his facility.

The Select Board signs the Annual Business License for DayDreamz Estates LLC.

5. Green Committee Process for Heat Pump Bid and Rebate

Steve explains that a member of the Green Committee brought the Town Manager a contract that allowed that member to serve as the Administrator on the heat pump project and receive an administrative fee, as well as receive 10% of the rebate. According to the original grant contract, Larry Dwyer was indicated as the point person for the project, Jonathan Sylbert as point person for the town, and BRPC as the project administrator. Jonathan has requested a contract proposal from BRPC.

The Select Board supports following the original plan, and contracting with BRPC. Jonathan clarifies that the rebate comes from MassSave and goes to the vendor, there is no money that can be paid out to the project administrator.

6. Fire Department Equipment Purchase Order & Purchase Order Policy

The Fire Department Equipment Purchase Order is tabled.

The Purchase Order Policy has been updated which clarifies that no Board/Committee/Department has the authority to classify a purchase as an emergency without the Select Board or Town Manager's permission. Disciplinary action may be taken against anyone who violates this rule. All purchase orders must be submitted to the Select Board for approval prior to purchase of the item/service. The complete Purchase Order Policy can be found on the website at https://www.sandisfieldma.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1171/f/uploads/purchase_order_policy_updated.pdf

7. Zoning Board of Appeals Membership

Item is tabled.

8. Discuss Finance Committee Warrant Item Regarding Composition Options

The Finance Committee has continued to be unable to produce its allotted five members. It's suggested the Committee move to an elected five member committee, rather than appointed. Alex drafted the proposed warrant article outlining this change. Steve expresses concern with switching from appointed to elected, as he believes requiring residents to campaign for the position will only deter them more. The Select Board decides to let the town choose, and include it on the warrant. Town Counsel will review the wording of the drafted article.

9. Annual Town Report Review

The Annual Town Report for the Select Board and Town Manager were both written by the previous Select Board Chair/Interim Town Manager. There were some inconsistencies within the reports, so the Admin Assist made a few modifications. Alex would like to include a Vendor Report in the Annual Town Report. The Select Board will review the entire Annual Town Report again next week with the inclusion of the Vendor Report.

10. Town Manager Updates

The Metropolitan District in Connecticut has sent a letter of intent to abandon the Colebrook Lake storage.

It's suggested the date of the Caucus be moved earlier in the year moving forward, as many towns hold the Caucus in March rather than April. Jonathan clarifies the rules of holding a Caucus, which include posting the Caucus notification in five conspicuous places and appointing a Chair to run the meeting.

Robert Sampson has agreed to remove his solid fuel appliance, and therefore will stop being fined and all previous fines will be forgiven. It's noted the Town is ultimately looking for compliance from all residents.

Kathie Burrows and Vicki Bakunis resigned from the Cemetery Committee.

11. Select Board Updates

12. Future Agenda Items

- Town Caucus
- Cemetery Committee Vacancies

13. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings, 1/30/23, 2/3/23, 3/3/23

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept the minutes of 1/30/23, 2/3/23, and 3/3/23.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye

14. Review and sign purchase orders, warrants, and mail

15. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman