

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, March 20, 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. Amendment to Dilapidated Vehicle Bylaw (Chapter 8, Section 11)

Alex requests to amend the Dilapidated Vehicle bylaw by removing “unregistered and” from any part of the bylaw and instead only keep the term “dilapidated.” It will then be entirely up to the Select Board to decide what vehicles are considered dilapidated. Additionally, he would like to include language that would require dilapidated vehicles to be shielded from neighbors and the road. Jonathan suggests confirming there are no Mass General Laws that conflict with this new language. The Select Board supports the inclusion of this bylaw amendment and Alex will draft the article.

3. Zoning Board of Appeals Membership

There are two Planning Board members who are also on the Zoning Board of Appeals, and it has been questioned whether this could be considered a conflict of interest, as this means if a taxpayer chose to appeal a verdict made by the Planning Board, the ZBA members would be asked to appeal their own decision.

One of these members spoke with the Board of Ethics, who confirmed membership to both boards would be acceptable, so long as they are not being paid. Town Counsel has also been asked to confirm this, as the Board of Ethics may have been looking at the conflict under the guise of corruption. The Select Board will likely not allow membership to both Boards regardless of the verdict from Town Counsel.

4. Amendment to “serve without pay” clause of Planning Board Bylaw (Chapter 3, Section 2)

6. Update Budget to include Stipend for Planning Board Members

The Select Board budgeted to include stipends for Planning Board members on the ATM 2022 warrant. However, according to the Town Bylaws, Planning Board members are not to receive compensation from the town. The Select Board would now like to amend the bylaw to allow the Planning Board to receive compensation and then budget for stipends, \$250 for members and \$350 for the Chair.

5. Amendment to Article 5 of STM to read: "each agreement shall be for a term of five years and shall waive 50% of the interest that has accrued on the tax title account."

The state has disapproved of the original wording of the ATM Article passed in May 2022. The Select Board agrees to include the amended policy on the ATM May 2023 warrant.

7. Discuss BOA Budget and Responsibilities

Item is tabled.

8. Discuss Caucus Date and Responsibilities

While it is too late this year, many towns host the Caucus much earlier in the year to allow candidates to be nominated on the floor rather than take out papers. Douglas Miner reads Blandford's Caucus bylaw, "The Town shall hold a Town Caucus on the First Monday in March of each year, and place on the annual election ballot the names of the two nominees for each office having the most number of votes." Douglas suggests including this bylaw on Sandisfield's ATM 2023 warrant. The Select Board agrees to hold the Caucus earlier moving forward. However, they may choose a day other than the first Monday in March.

The Caucus notice will be signed by the Select Board and posted in three conspicuous places by the Constable. Jonathan confirms that according to MGL, the quorum for the Caucus is 25 registered voters.

9. Tree warden Position Review

Currently, Brad Curry serves as the Tree Warden on top of his duties as the DPW Superintendent. The Select Board would like to consider creating an independent Tree Warden position with a stipend, as Brad is very busy and more time needs to be dedicated to creating a plan for the trees in Sandisfield. The Tree Warden will be an appointed three year position. Steve suggests a stipend of \$1,500, but will compare this amount to surrounding towns before making a decision.

10. Vote to Nominate Animal Inspector

Kim Spring currently holds the position of Inspector of Animals and would like to continue with the responsibility.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to nominate Kim Spring for Inspector of Animals.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye

11. Cemetery Committee Appointment Applicants – Lynn Rubenstein & Tegan Abear

Kathie Burrows, Laurie Foulke-Green, Steve Harasyko, and Vicki Bakunis all recently resigned from the Cemetery Committee, leaving four vacant seats. Lynn Rubenstein, Tegan Abear, and Keith Larson have all submitted appointment requests to the Committee.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Lynn Rubenstein, Tegan Abear, and Keith Larson to the Cemetery Committee.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye

12. Full Circle Tech/PermitEyes Cost Increase for FY25

BRPC has agreed to pay for the one-time cost software update on PermitEyes for many Berkshire towns. However, with the significant increase in annual services costs, they have asked confirmation from all towns whether they will be continuing with the PermitEyes service. Should the majority of towns decline continuing with the program, BRPC will not pay the update cost. Despite the cost increase Sandisfield will continue with the program.

13. Review Annual Town Report

Previous Select Board Chair/Interim Town Manager, George Riley wrote the FY22 Annual Town Reports for Select Board and Town Manager. Steve Seddon made some edits to the reports, which included the addition of a few accomplishments, ect. The edited reports will be sent to George Riley to approve the changes, as his name is on the reports.

14. Town Manager Updates

Court Hearings have been scheduled for March 29, 2023 at 9:00am to review the fines against Robert Sampson for an unpermitted solid fuel appliance, which the town has agreed to forgive, as Robert will be removing the appliance. Additionally, Jennifer

Pilbin's case will be addressed for living in a trailer in violation of the Sandisfield Zoning Bylaws. Building Inspector, Paul Greene will attend the Court Hearings.

A Winter Weather Update was posted on the Town Website informing residents of road closures, scheduling, etc. While this was effective, Jonathan still supports purchasing the Emergency Notification module from CivicPlus that will send direct messages to residents' phones.

Colonial Power Solutions has contacted Jonathan in regards to the Municipal Aggregate Electricity. Sandisfield received a one-year contract to align with all the other towns. Once Eversource moves to its summer rate, everyone should opt out of Colonial, which will move residents to the lower Eversource rate. In December it's likely Colonial's new contract will be more competitive with Eversource's winter rates and residents will be given the opportunity to opt back in.

15. Select Board Updates

The Select Board expresses gratitude to the DPW for their tremendous work during the harsh winter storm.

16. Future Agenda Items

- Emergency Notification Module

17. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings, 2/7, 2/10, 2/13

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve 2/7, 2/10, 2/13, and 3/3 minutes of meetings.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye

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

19. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 7:50pm

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman