

# Town of Sandisfield

## Select Board

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

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

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

### **2. Joint Session with Board of Assessors**

- **Discuss Boards Budget Request**
- **Board Responsibilities for Stipends**

Of the 1,556 parcels in Sandisfield, the Assessors Department is behind 200 home assessments. This delay in assessments can be attributed to the COVID pandemic, as site visits were not conducted as often. The Assessing Consultant, Mayflower will begin getting caught up on these assessments shortly. The process normally involves choosing around 156 parcels per year for 10 years to complete the 10-year cyclical. It's noted that DOR only requires 10% of improved homes to be assessed annually.

Parcel evaluation based on road frontage, road type the parcel is on, and lot size is discussed, as these all have the potential to alter an assessment, for the property may be considered more/less valuable. Steve expresses the importance of having an Assessor available to conduct assessments for new construction before a CO is issued.

It's noted that land values did not increase this year. The Assessors explain this is because there have not been any land sales that prove land value has increased. Comparison to other town's trends cannot be made to increase the land value in Sandisfield.

The value of changing to a five-year cyclical schedule from a 10-year is questioned. Bethany explains that while the town would likely generate more revenue if properties were assessed every five years, it would simultaneously cost more. They would have to figure that difference in order to decide if it's worth the switch.

Steve notes that the Board of Assessors in Monterey conduct the assessments themselves, rather than having a consultant go out and do them. Bethany explains that neither the Tyringham, nor Otis BOA conduct the site visit assessments and either receive the same or a higher stipend than they do in Sandisfield.

Steve requests a guarantee on a commitment for all new buildings prior to the CO. As soon as the BOA is notified by the Building Inspector, they should send someone out to conduct the assessment. This will help justify the stipends the BOA receives. While the

BOA may not conduct the site visit assessments themselves, they agree to schedule them to be done in a timely manner. Additionally, they should work on calculating if it's worth switching to a five-year cycle.

### **3. Fire Dept Equipment Purchase Order**

Steve notes they have not signed a Fire Department purchase order (PO), as the purchase was made prior to the PO being submitted, which has occurred several times throughout the year. The PO Policy has always been to submit the PO prior to purchase. Most recently, the Fire Department paid for general maintenance on the fire trucks, which would not constitute an emergency.

The Select Board reiterates they do not disagree with the purchases being made by the Fire Department. However, all departments/boards/committees must follow the policy correctly. Moving forward should this policy not be followed, disciplinary action may be taken.

Fire Chief, Ralph Morrison requests the Select Board revisit the minimum PO amount required for the Fire Department, as the majority of their equipment purchases exceed their current \$1,000 minimum.

### **4. Cemetery Committee Applicant**

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Ron Pachulski to the Cemetery Committee.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

### **5. Town Charter Committee Vacancy**

Olivia Konstam resigned from the Town Charter Committee, leaving one seat vacant. Douglas Miner has requested to fill the vacancy.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to appoint Douglas Miner to the Town Charter Committee.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

### **6. Discuss Status of Otis's RAAC Appointments**

Jonathan notes he was concerned that Otis still has not appointed their Regional Agreement Amendment Committee (RAAC) members. However, the School Committee included the appointments on their upcoming agenda.

## **7. Emergency Alert System for Warrant Consideration**

Not many residents currently subscribe to the website notifications, and therefore do not receive updates on town happenings, including weather advisories. There are two online alert systems the town is looking into: Code Red and CivicReady which can send emergency notifications via email, text, or call. CivicReady costs approximately \$3,500 annually. The purchase of this service could be included on the FY24 warrant as a special article and be included in the general budget thereafter. The Select Board decides to hold off on putting this program on the FY24 warrant, and will instead pin a notice at the top of the Connect Sandisfield Facebook page requesting residents sign up for website notifications.

## **8. Tree Warden position**

Highway Superintendent Brad Curry currently holds the Tree Warden position. However, he is too busy with the DPW to properly address Tree Warden responsibilities. The Tree Warden would be responsible for identifying trees that need to be attended to, creating a schedule to address the problem areas, screening resident concerns regarding trees, and assuring the power companies are taking down trees that fall under their jurisdiction. Steve recommends a stipend of \$2,500 for the three-year appointed position.

## **9. Town Manager Updates**

The end of the state of emergency for the winter storm was declared on March 16th. A total cost of damages is being compiled.

Jonathan reached out to Smitty Pignatelli asking him to advocate for Sandisfield with MassDOT to complete the final stretch of Route 57 for re-paving.

The Fire Department requested a Reserve Fund Transfer because they have already expended the entirety of their \$34,000 budget for fire/ambulance calls despite there being four months left in the fiscal year. The request was for \$20,000, but there is only a little over \$14,000 left in the Reserve Fund, so the Fire Department has requested a transfer of the total remaining amount. Interdepartmental Transfer can occur beginning in May.

## **10. Select Board Updates**

The Select Board signs the notice of the Town Caucus which will be held Tuesday April 4, 2023 at 7:00pm at the Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd. It's reiterated that MGL states quorum for a Caucus is 25 registered voters.

Candidates can be nominated for the following offices:

Moderator (1 year)  
Town Clerk (3 years)  
Selectboard (1 year)  
Selectboard (3 years)  
Board of Assessors (3 years)  
Board of Health (3 years)  
Planning Board (5 years)  
School Committee (3 years)  
Library Trustee (5 years)  
Constable (3 years)  
Constable (3 years)

#### **11. Future Agenda Items**

- Fire Dept Purchase Order Minimum

#### **12. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings, 2/17**

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve the minutes from 2/17/2023.

Steve Seddon	Aye
Alex Bowman	Aye
John Field	Aye

#### **13. Review and sign purchase orders, warrants, and mail**

#### **14. Adjourn Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 9:06pm

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Steve Seddon

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Alex Bowman

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John Field