

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

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

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

2. Review Installation Quotes for GPS/Dash Cams

The grant the town received for the GPS/dash cams only covered the product, not installation. The DPW Superintendent has expressed concerns with his abilities to install the products himself. Steve received a \$2,000 quote for installation of GPS/dash cams for the nine vehicles and four pieces of equipment. John Field is in the process of receiving another quote. It's suggested to take the cost out of ARPA funds.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to take the installation of the GPS/dash cams out of the ARPA account, which currently has a \$2,657 balance.

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| Steve Seddon | Aye |
| Alex Bowman | Aye |
| John Field | Aye |

3. Review Warrant Items for the May 2023 ATM

- Special Town Meeting Article 5, regarding payment agreements for properties in tax title required a language change, replacing the word “may” with “shall” to avoid any open-endedness.
- Update the Finance Committee bylaw, which will include a new configuration of the committee.
- Disposal of 105 acres of town property on Beech Hill Rd.
- Removal of the portion of the Planning Board Bylaw which states members shall serve without pay.
- Clarifying the date and procedure of the annual Town Caucus to state: The procedure for posting the Caucus Call shall conform with the directions for posting other Town Warrants. 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.
- Update to Dilapidated Vehicle Bylaw, which will remove and use of “unregistered and”. This gives the Select Board complete authority to determine what vehicles should be removed. Additionally, there will be the inclusion of the term “any open

area” signifying that dilapidated vehicles must not be in public view, but are allowed on a property with proper screening.

- The Planning Board will also submit a Short Term Rental Bylaw to be included on the warrant for voter consideration.

The warrant must be finalized by May 1, 2023.

4. Review Necessary FY24 Budget Adjustments

Jonathan presents an alternative way to format the budget on the warrant, which will offer the opportunity to transfer funds from accounts within a specific department if necessary before May 1 of that particular fiscal year.

Currently there is a total budget increase of 4.03%, of which 2.5% is for the operating budget and 6.29% for the School. The School compiles 41.4% of the total budget.

The Select Board agrees to include the Tree Warden position on the warrant with a stipend of \$3,000. The Cemetery Committee is still in the process of compiling their budget, as the Committee recently acquired all new members.

Jonathan will ask the Fire and Highway Departments to lower their maintenance budgets by 20%, as they have purchased new equipment that will not require as much maintenance in the coming fiscal year.

The Select Board will lower the salary line for the Transfer Station to accommodate 12 hours of operation in the winter and 14 in the summer, the specific time of operation is yet to be determined. Should the Town disagree with this change, it can be amended on the floor at Town Meeting.

5. Select Board Updates

We contracted with Dinax for two years for 14 cents per kw beginning January 2024. In May or June everyone should opt out and switch to the lower Eversource summer rate, and in the winter opt back in with Dinax when Eversource is estimated to increase to 15.8 cents per kw.

The Select Board declared an emergency on March 10, 2023 before the winter storm. The Select Board must make another \$25,000 emergency declaration to cover the additional costs of the storm, which will include vehicle fuel from the plow trucks.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to raise the total Snow and Ice budget to \$275,000 from \$250,000.

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| Steve Seddon | Aye |
| Alex Bowman | Aye |
| John Field | Aye |

The state turned Sandisfield down for the emergency that the town called through the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency because despite having \$58,000 in expenses we could have allocated towards it, Berkshire County did not receive enough snowfall to qualify for reimbursement.

Michael Carrol is being fined daily for renovation work on a residence without a permit and occupancy of a trailer in violation of the Zoning Bylaws at his property on 12 Dodd Rd. Michael explained that it is his tenants who are in violation and he is having difficulty evicting them. Jonathan is working to find a solution, as the town is more interested in residents coming into compliance rather than collecting fines.

Alex Bowman looked into a different way to conduct the tax classification, by taxing residential and personal property, industrial, and commercial at different rates. Sandisfield would benefit from this change because 60% of the valuations for PP, commercial, and industrial are telephone and pipeline. Carl Nett notes the town can protect the smaller businesses by creating a small commercial exemption should they decide to move forward with the different classification. Alex will write a letter to the Board of Assessors to propose this change.

6. Future Agenda Items

7. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings, 2/17, 3/3, 3/13

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to minutes of 3/3 and 2/17.

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| Steve Seddon | Aye |
| Alex Bowman | Aye |
| John Field | Aye |

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

9. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 8:38pm

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman

John Field