

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, September 11, 2023 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, John Field, Robert Fedell, Jonathan Sylbert

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

2. Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Representative Appointment

An MPO is a “federally required regional transportation policy-making organization. It consists of representatives from local government, regional transit operators, and state transportation agencies.” The MPO representative position will be posted on the website with its obligations for interested parties.

3. Review COVID-19 Policy

A COVID-19 Policy was written following the CDC’s COVID-19 guidelines. Steve Seddon is in support of approving the policy for the safety and well-being of the Town staff. John Field disagrees with establishing a policy and believes individuals should have the common-sense to call out of work when they are feeling ill instead of making it a requirement. Jonathan Sylbert notes that employees may not agree to isolate despite having symptoms, and it’s the responsibility of the administration to create a policy that makes everyone feel safe and comfortable in the Town’s public buildings.

The Select Board agrees to poll Town staff and board/committee members to determine what they would like to see in a COVID-19 policy.

4. Review Options to Increase Building Inspector Hours

Steve notes that since Sandisfield has gotten internet, building permit revenue has increased from around \$10,000 three years ago to \$40,000, and will likely increase even more this fiscal year. With the increase in permits, Steve believes it would be beneficial to the Town and its taxpayers if the Building Inspector established regular office hours. Meetings would be by appointment, and should there be no appointments, he could dedicate that time to enforcement. Steve confirmed that the Building Inspectors in surrounding towns all charge \$45/hour, and since the Town has earned so much in permit fees, Steve sees no issue hiring Paul Greene for this amount. If Paul was to work 1.5 hours per week, it would total \$3,240.00 on top of the stipend he already receives. The Select Board agrees to approach Paul Greene about establishing office hours. Steve will negotiate with him.

5. Sandisfield Times Article Response

The Select Board responded to an article titled “Bridge Over Troubled Wetlands” in the September 2023 issue of the Sandisfield Times. The article implies that it was up to the Sandisfield Select Board to determine what conservation regulations needed to be followed during the Rt. 57 culvert bridge project. However, those regulations are established under the Wetlands Protection Act.

Additionally, the bridge was paid for using grant funds. Creating a temporary bridge in order to keep one lane of the road open would have cost the town significantly. These funds would have come directly from taxpayer money, as the grant would not cover the cost. John Field will draft a response letter to be published in their Sandisfield Times’ next issue.

6. Town Manager Updates/Project List

Jonathan signed the Tri-Town Health Health Agreement, which is a contract with Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative for \$6,400. Jayne Smith will no longer be the only Public Health employee in Sandisfield; she will be among two or three members who will assist in services for the Town.

The vendors have been chosen for salt and sand for the upcoming winter months. The Heavy equipment and operator bid has been advertised. The Kubota tractor was sold at auction for \$14,300.00.

Jonathan has been working on the EMS Feasibility Study to assist with better understanding the department and its operation.

7. Select Board Updates

Robert Fedell questions the amount paid to the standby EMTs and why there are four members on standby. Jonathan notes that Fire Chief, Ralph Morrison explained some of the members are not strong enough to lift patients and another member is still in training. The weight of the patients soon will not be a problem once the new power lift stretcher arrives. Robert suggests the possibility of establishing a lower rate for trainees. Jonathan will reach out in writing to open another conversation about EMS compensation.

8. Future Agenda Items

9. Topics Not Anticipated

10. Public Comment

The COA plans to submit a petition for the purchase of a van for elderly transportation to be included on the Town Meeting warrant, unless the Select Board would like to suggest another option. The van does not have to be handicap accessible, as transportation can be provided through medicare for those who are disabled. Instead, the COA is looking for a van to provide transportation to the doctors, grocery store,

pharmacy, hairdressers, etc. Steve notes he is in support of the purchase for a van, but research needs to be done to figure out how much the van will cost, where the van will be housed, how much a hired driver will cost, etc. The Select Board recommends the COA conduct more research and get some estimates for a van. A petition may not be necessary, as all Select Board members agree the elderly taxpayers deserve this type of accessibility.

11. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve minutes of meeting from 8/28.

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| Steve Seddon | Aye |
| John Field | Aye |
| Robert Fedell | Aye |

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

13. Adjourn Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 7:40pm

Steve Seddon

John Field

Robert Fedell