

# Town of Sandisfield

## Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 7:00PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

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

Participants: Roger Brown, Kathie Burrows, Steve Kopiec, Mary Turek, Melissa & Jeff Bye, Barbara Cormier, Carl Nett, Ralph Morrision, Kathleen McCormick, Tegan Abear, Eric Pachulski, Dominic Konstam

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

### **2. Board of Assessors in for Tax Classification Hearing**

Roger Brown reports that the first step in the tax classification process is determining the valuations to assure full and fair value of properties in Town. Certification is required next, and Roger confirms Sandisfield was certified by the state two weeks ago. This was a five-year certification, which is more in-depth than normal. During this meeting the Board of Assessors will decide what the tax policy is, after which the BOA will submit the results of the meeting to the state and until this happens taxes cannot be raised.

The results of the valuation process proved a 10% increase in assessed values for the residential portion of the Town. Personal property valuations increased slightly higher than 10%.

The first decision the Select Board must consider is a split tax rate. A split tax rate shifts taxes paid by residential taxes to the other categories (ie; commercial, industrial, personal property). A split tax rate does not change the amount of taxes being collected, but instead changes who is paying. A split tax rate would be more appealing in a Town with a large industrial base. Roger notes that should the Select Board consider the split tax rate, it would increase the taxes for all property in Chapter. Steve recommends more analysis on the effect of a split tax rate, and Roger recommends holding a Work Session with the BOA.

Roger reviews the different types of exemptions. Residential exemptions would benefit full-time residents, as opposed to other residents (ie; second homeowners, renters, etc). Small commercial exemptions only apply to businesses with fewer than 11 employees and have less than a million dollars in valuation. This exemption would increase the tax rates on other commercial and industrial properties. Open-space classifications are similar to conservation; this would increase residential taxes. Senior means-tested is an exemption different from a senior tax abatement, as it would be required to be taken out of the tax rate. This is typically a 10% reduction.

The Select Board agrees that a Work Session and more discussion is necessary before considering a split tax rate or any of the exemptions.

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to accept a single tax rate for all categories.

Steve Seddon	Aye
John Field	Aye
Robert Fedell	Aye

### **3. RAAC Member Resignation & Announce Vacancy**

John Field resigned from the RAAC. The position is open to be filled and will be posted online.

### **4. Finance Committee Resignation & Announce Vacancy**

William Newsome resigned from the Finance Committee. The position is open to be filled and will be posted online.

### **5. Finalize and Sign STM Warrant & Schedule STM**

The STM Warrant articles include:

- Appropriate the sum of \$150,332.75 released from overlay to reduce the Tax Levy for Fiscal Year 2024, beginning on July 1, 2023
- Transfer the sum of \$2,500.00 from Emergency Management Expenses to Emergency Management Grant to cover the cost of unreimbursed expenses
- Appropriate the sum of \$7,976.67 from General Stabilization to pay the town's portion of 5% of the Assistance to Firefighters Grant award
- Appropriate the sum of \$7,500 from General Stabilization to the Reserve Fund to pay for FY24 unforeseen legal expenses
- Appropriate the sum of \$10,000 from General Stabilization to the Voc-Tech account to pay for FY24 student transportation expenses
- Appropriate the sum of \$9,716.51 from General Stabilization to pay bills from prior fiscal years

The STM will be held on Wednesday, November 8th at 6:00pm at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Rd.

### **6. Discuss FY25 Budget Policy Target**

The Select Board agrees to ask all Departments to level fund their budgets for FY25, or explain in detail their reasons for any increase. A letter will be sent to all Department heads outlining this request, as well as a budget form to fill out and return.

### **7. Review Tanker Crash Investigation Documents and Updates**

A private citizen submitted documentation regarding the Fire Department fleet and its inspection status to the Select Board. Steve reports this item will be tabled, as it should

be reviewed in executive session. Kathleen McCormick, legal representation attending the meeting “on behalf of the Sandisfield Fire Department” requests copies of the documents submitted to the Select Board.

**8. Town Manager Updates/Project List**

**9. Select Board Updates**

Robert has been reviewing companies to conduct in-depth inspection on the public safety vehicles in Town. He is currently leaning towards Bulldog Fire Apparatus, as they provide a detailed report of all issues and have the ability to service those issues if necessary. There is a brief discussion on establishing an inspection policy.

**10. Future Agenda Items**

**11. Topics Not Anticipated**

**12. Public Comment**

**13. Review and vote to approve minutes of meetings**

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve minutes of meeting 9/18

Steve Seddon	Aye
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John Field	Aye
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Robert Fedell	Aye
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**14. Review and sign purchase orders, warrants, and mail**

**15. Adjourn Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 8:19pm

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Steve Seddon

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John Field

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Robert Fedell