

# Town of Sandisfield

## Select Board

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Tuesday, January 16, 2024 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, John Field, Jonathan Sylbert (remote)

Participants: Barbara Cormier (remote), Jeff Bye (remote), Willard Platt (remote)

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

### **2. Special Permit Hearing – 40 Viets Rd**

Special Permit Hearing for 40 Viets Rd is postponed, as Bob Fedell was unable to make the meeting and a Special Permit vote must be unanimous. A new hearing date will be published online at [www.sandisfieldma.gov](http://www.sandisfieldma.gov)

### **3. Review and Approve Annual Town Business Licenses**

- Farmington River General Store, LLC
- DayDreamz Estates, LLC

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve business licenses for Farmington River General Store and DayDreamz Estates contingent that their taxes are current.

Steve Seddon	Aye
John Field	Aye

### **4. Budget Policy Discussion**

Jonathan reviews some key points to consider during the budget process. Currently, the school operating budget is flat. However, transportation for vocational students was underbudgeted in FY24 and will need to increase by \$10,000. Additionally, MIIA has estimated an 8% increase in health insurance, increasing the Insurance/Benefits line by almost \$14,000.

Due to the updates to the union contract to increase the wage schedule of the DPW employees, there will be approximately a \$60,000 increase in DPW salaries if fully staffed. The Town Manager salary will increase as per his contract as well. The budget does not yet include the 3% COLA raises for any nonunion employees, or other merit raises. In total the operating budget is currently set at a 4% increase.

The Select Board may consider paid Fire and EMS training, which would amount to \$10,000 to pay firefighters \$25 per hour for training and \$5,000 to pay EMTs \$25 per hour for training.

Jonathan reviews the levy and the steps the Town can take to lower it. He goes on to review the capital fleet plan, which indicates the 2017 Freightliner Dump Truck needs to be replaced. John Field will look into replacement vehicles. A new ambulance is also in need of replacement soon, which would likely require borrowing. There is a brief discussion when to replace this vehicle, as ambulances can take upwards of a year to be made and delivered after ordering.

Cash will be certified very soon. Jonathan estimates that there will be around \$400,000 in free cash to use at Town Meeting. Currently, there are only a few small items requesting to be paid out of free cash.

Jonathan suggests including a legal services budget for the Planning Board, as they often need to communicate with the lawyers to review their new zoning bylaws and amendments. Planning Board Chair, Barbara Cormier expresses concern that giving the PB authority to call the lawyer may result in abuse of that privilege. Jonathan notes a policy can be put in place which requires permission from the Select Board **prior** to any communication with the lawyer. The policy can also authorize only the Planning Board Chair to communicate with the lawyer.

The Select Board is agreeable to a 3% COLA increase and a target of no more than a \$150,000 increase to the operating budget.

## **5. Town Manager Updates/Project List**

The Town was awarded the \$2,500 Emergency Management Grant and has applied for a \$25,000 Hazard Mitigation Plan Grant.

Another inspection was conducted at Jennifer Pilbin's property and in her trailer. Her court hearing is tomorrow, 1/17. The inspection proved she was not in compliance with the injunction.

## **6. Select Board Updates**

The roofs at the Library and Old Town Hall/Police Station have been completed. The backup generator has been installed at Town Hall. The heat pump installation will begin Wednesday, 1/17 at Town Hall.

John Field assisted in plowing the Town Buildings during the snowstorm on 1/13. Jonathan notes the Town is advertising a request for bids to plow the Town Buildings and cemeteries. Bid information is available on the website at <https://www.sandisfieldma.gov/home/news/seasonal-employment-opportunity-plowing-and-snow-maintenance> and bids can be submitted to jbeardsley@sandisfieldma.gov

## **7. Future Agenda Items**

- Town Counsel Policy
- RAAC Appointment

**8. Topics Not Anticipated**

**9. Public Comment**

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

A motion was made, seconded and so voted to approve minutes of meeting for 12/18.

Steve Seddon	Aye
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John Field	Aye
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**11. Review and sign purchase orders, warrants, and mail**

**12. Adjourn Meeting**

Meeting adjourned at 7:27pm

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Steve Seddon

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John Field