

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board
October 22, 2021

Minutes for Select Board Executive Session held on Friday, October 22, 2021 at 5:00p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: George Riley, Alex Bowman, Steve Seddon

Called to order at 5:00PM

1. Vote to enter Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel [viz. terms of contract agreement with the Town Manager]

George motions to enter Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel. George notes that an open meeting session would have a detrimental effect on these negotiations.

Roll-call vote: Alex, yes. Steve, yes. George, yes.

George explains their Town Manager candidate expressed some concerns with the contract the Select Board presented to him. The first concern being the proposed one to three months of severance pay, and the second being the fact it was only a one-year contract, which would be renewed annually.

The Town Manager candidate expressed he would like the town to reciprocate the commitment he was giving, considering he planned to sell his current home and move closer to Sandisfield, by offering him at least a three-year contract. George told the candidate he believed that was a reasonable expectation and he would discuss that with the other Select Board members.

Alex requests clarification on the \$83,460 salary presented in the contract. George explains there is \$76,500 budgeted for the Town Manager salary, but the Select Board is able to increase the offered salary because the candidate does not require health insurance. Currently, the Select Board is waiting to hear from Town Counsel to authorize the decision to move the money from insurance benefits to Town Manager salary. Alex suggests they create a separate waiver that states in the event the Town Manager ever chooses to utilize the town insurance, any money for the insurance policy would be subtracted from their salary.

Alex expresses concerns in the suspension policy within the contract. Currently it is written that the Town Manager may not be suspended until a hearing has been conducted. However, Alex suggests they alter this so the Select Board may suspend the Town Manager with pay before an investigation is conducted to prepare for a public hearing. George suggests they rewrite the policy in the contract to state that the town can suspend the Town Manager immediately *with* full

pay and benefits, and then continue to suspend the position *without* pay after a public hearing is conducted.

Alex suggests removing the policy that would provide the Town Manager with any severance pay if Select Board provides six months notice that the contract will not be renewed. He believes six months is adequate time and a severance is unnecessary. The Town Manager will still receive any unused sick or vacation pay.

Currently, the Select Board only requires 45 days notice from the Town Manager upon their resignation. However, Alex suggests increasing that to at least 90 days, which is the same amount of notice the Select Board will provide to the Town Manager should their contract not be renewed. A resignation or retirement without 90 days notice can be considered just cause of termination and the town has no severance obligation.

Alex suggests adding to the contract that the Town Manager's commute will not be reimbursed. He also suggests adding that all dues and subscriptions the Town Manager might sign up for must stay within the budget.

George will make the discussed changes to the document and send the contract to the Town Manager candidate as soon as possible.

George motions to exit Executive Session.

Roll-call vote: Alex, yes. Steve, yes. George, yes.

Meeting adjourned at 6:17pm

George Riley

Alex Bowman

Steve Seddon