

Select Board's minutes of meeting August 9, 2021

Members Present: George Riley, Alex Bowman by remote

Called to order at 7:00pm

Remote participation information provided to the public.

Reviewed and signed minutes of meetings

Reviewed and signed purchase orders.

Points to minutes

George Riley asks Ralph Morrison if money has gone into retirement funds for employees over the age of 65. If they have, those funds may need to be taken out. However, the Town Treasurer does not have the authority to do so. Roger Brown suggests the town self-reports any money that has gone towards retirement for these employees.

3. Discuss plan for records management. Vote to contract with King Information Systems

Report from King Information Systems is published on the town website. Some files have been lost; however, the most important files have been stored inside in fire proof cabinets and have stayed intact. The program will perform an entire archive program, which includes equipment (\$4,360), supplies (\$3,080), and labor (\$8,023) for a grand total of \$15,463.

Town meeting had appropriated \$25,000 for this project, of which \$12,500 has already been spent on the office trailer, which will provide King with a place to work and store the files. This leaves \$12,500. While the project is said to cost \$15,463, George proposes the town pays for the equipment and labor out of remaining \$12,500, and the remaining \$3,080 is paid for out of the towns regular supply account.

George makes a point that typically a project like this would require competitive bids. However, there is an exception if there are no other options. While other companies will do portions of this project, King Information Systems is the only company that will conduct the entire project from start to finish.

Roger asks if the town plans to sell the original trailer. George states Brad Curry expressed interest in it.

Ralph Morrison asks if the trailer will have enough room for future record storage. George says to an extent. Alex Bowman explains there is more room for storage inside the town hall.

George motions to contract with King Information Systems for the archives project for the total amount of \$15,463, and this amount will come out of the amount appropriated for the archive records in the town meeting, plus \$3,080 out of the maintenance and operations supply account. Alex seconds.

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

4. Discuss and clarify Finance Committee vote to increase limit on Building Inspector Revolving Account

The Finance Committee does not have to revote on their vote to increase the revolving account to \$21,000 because only the Select Board needed to vote on that matter. The Select Board voted to increase it to \$12,000, which will stand.

Alex asks if this revolving account should be increased. George explains it was agreed the account would be increased to \$12,000 this year, and during the following fiscal year the Select Board would submit it to a town meeting vote to increase it to \$18,000.

5. Discussion and vote to appoint a temporary Town Administrator

George explains a discussion occurred a week ago that George would be appointed as temporary Town Administrator. George requested the opinion of town counsel. Town counsel states the Rule of Necessity can only be used if legally necessary.

The Rule of Necessity does not cover a vacancy. Town Counsel does not believe it necessary to appoint George as a temporary Town Administrator.

The best option would be to have George take over as unofficial Town Administrator and then after September 25, when another Select Board member has been elected, they could then vote to compensate George for operating as temporary Town Administrator.

6. Discuss and vote to appoint Rita Kasky to the Town Administrator Search Committee

George motions to appoint Rita Kasky to the Town Administrator Search Committee. Alex seconds.

Roll-call Vote: Alex, yes. George, yes.

7. Discuss and vote to appoint Larry Dwyer as Town Webmaster

George motions to appoint Larry Dwyer as volunteer Town Webmaster. Alex seconds.

Roll-call Vote: Alex, yes. George, yes..

8. Statement of appreciation for Town Hall employees

George states that while he's been dealing with issues around town hall, he has neglected areas that have been doing well. He makes a point to acknowledge Jacki Bitso and Margaret McClellan for their great work.

9. Discuss and vote on salary increase for Principal Assessor

George discusses a recent meeting with Jacki Bitso. Jacki has over 30 year of experience within her field, and has been working with the town for over 14 years, and over that time she has only received one raise. George proposes raising her salary from \$31/hr to \$35/hr, which is about a 10% increase.

George also states the Select Board will conduct research into what certified Principal Assessors typically make, and if \$35/hr is on the lower side, they will bring it to Town Meeting to further increase her salary.

George motions to increase the Principal Assessor's salary to \$35/hr. Alex seconds.

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

10. Discuss FRRSD FY2021 spending and potential year-end transactions and the impact to the Town of Sandisfield

Roger Brown explains FRSD didn't spend over 10% of their budget. FRSD now intends to use this money to fund unbudgeted/unauthorized items. This unspent money should instead be returned to Sandisfield and Otis in their future FRSD assessment.

Roger proposes the Finance Committee speak to the Town Counsel about how to proceed, what the challenges are, and discuss the contract that binds the school.

Ralph Morrison suggests Roger explain the issue to Town Counsel himself rather than the Select Board.

Alex asks what the other School Committee members' opinions were. Carl Nett explains they questioned the legality of the transaction as well. Carl Nett put together a proposal on how to spend this money with a modified fiscal year 2022 budget. Jennifer Hibbins motioned to add this proposal to the agenda at the last School Committee meeting as a way to conduct the projects legally and still return \$200,000 to the towns. The Otis School Committee voted the proposal down in a 4-3 vote.

Alex questions how this affects the bottomline. Carl explains he believes there is a way to propose the fiscal year 2022 budget that will fund all the projects, give the school a \$200,000 emergency fund, and return \$200,000 to the towns that would be split equally between Otis and Sandisfield. If the School Committee is allowed to vote and expend the leftover fiscal year 2021 funds, Carl estimates no money will be returned to the towns, therefore losing the town at least \$100,000.

Roger reiterates it is unknown what exactly FRSD has done with the money yet.

The Select Board will schedule a meeting with Town Counsel and Roger Brown.

11. Discuss and vote on possible adjustments to purchase order limits for DPW and Fire Co.

Ralph asks to include the Police Department in this adjustment discussion. George states that they typically do not receive many Police Department purchase orders.

Current purchase order limit is \$250. If a department wishes to spend over that, they would submit a purchase order request for approval by the Select Board prior to spending this money.

These departments routinely spend significant amounts of money on equipment or items like stone and gravel. George suggested increasing the purchase order limit to \$500 for the Fire Co., and \$1,000 for the DPW. Brad Curry requests an increase to \$2,500 for the DPW.

George motions to increase the purchase order limit for the fire department to \$1,000 and increase the limit to \$2,000 for the DPW. Alex seconds.

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

12. Discuss and vote on conducting a technology audit. Website (CivicPlus) alternatives

Alex suggests having a conversation with Sandisfield's IT personnel, John Shannon to discuss what could be better. George explains the town has money in the budget to bring in a specialist to determine if the town hall's software is cohesive. Alex briefly discusses changing the platform of the town's website to a more user friendly site.

COA member mentions looking for new IT personnel due to poor experience with him in the past.

Alex plans to ask our providers how they support the technology in the town.

Carl recommends filling the vacant positions within the town with technologically savvy employees, instead of conducting a third-party audit.

13. Discuss and vote on sales tax purchase reimbursement policy

George motions to approve sales tax purchase reimbursement policy. Alex seconds.

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

14. Future agenda items

Carl Nett would like more information to be made to the public about uncollected taxes.

Roger would like to sit down with the Select Board to go over budget in a work session

Town Administrator Search Committee would like to have a work session with the Select Board

15. Review mail

16. Review and sign warrants

17. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting

Motion to appoint temporary registrars to serve until April 30, 2022. John Burrows as a registered Republican and Analee Dickson-Riley as a registered Democrat.

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

Select Board responded to Mark Newman’s open-meeting law complaint response. The notice in question was properly given, therefore making the complaint invalid.

Theresa Spohnholz submitted her resignation letter as Town Treasurer/ Tax Collector.

Meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

George Riley

Alex Bowman