

# Town of Sandisfield

Select Board  
April 11, 2022

Minutes for Select Board meeting held on Monday, April 11, 2022 at 7:00p.m. at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Alex Bowman, Jonathan Sylbert

Called to order at 7:00PM

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

**2. Review and sign minutes of meetings. Points to minutes**

- Correct misidentified budget line in March 15, 2022 minutes to read 60220.25 (Fire/EMS Compensation)

There was an error in the March 15 minutes: Fire Department Ambulance Maintenance should read "Fire/EMS Compensation."

**3. Review and sign purchase orders**

**4. Wylie Goodman in to discuss Berkshire Regional Planning Commission's upcoming update to its five-year Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report**

Wylie Goodman, Senior Planner of Economic Development at Berkshire Regional Planning Commission conducts a presentation. She notes the BRPC Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy report is important in identifying the priority issues in Berkshire County's economic development and what the towns in the county can do to achieve these goals.

Previous projects have been connecting high school students with a pathway to work through internships, connect students to STEM programs, and connect Broadband to all towns. Other projects include growing the future food economy, berkshire skills cabinet and transition to digital means to reach customers. Large capital projects are also considered.

The BRPC requests Sandisfield's stories of economic resilience, any strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats in the town, feedback on priority projects, and ARPA allocation plans.

Larry Dwyer questions Wylie's opinion on Airbnb in the town. She notes that while it can be a good way to create income, it also raises the possibility of investors buying homes and property that could have been used for new families. She notes the importance of having bylaws which can create restrictions that may prevent these types of issues.

Restrictions may include requiring the homeowner to be present or only renting a home out for a specific number of weeks a year.

## **5. Discuss printing and mailing of Annual Town Report**

Steve notes this ties into discussing strategy for implementing senior and veteran tax work off programs. He reports Barbara Cormier suggested asking all committees and boards to establish a list of tasks that could be done by seniors and veterans. The Select Board has made this program possible, but has yet to determine what the tasks would be and a time commitment for any of them.

Douglas Miner reports he has almost everything to compile the Annual Town Report. However, he notes there is a lot of duplicate information included in the previous Town Reports; excluding the duplications would allow it to go from 80 pages to 40 and save a significant amount of money for mailing. A letter explaining why these pages were removed would be included in the Report.

Previous Town Clerk, Dolores Harasyko claims that a few years ago the bylaw was reviewed and a ruling was made which allowed the Annual Town Report to only be available in town building and upon request. Steve requests Douglas find this ruling, otherwise they are obligated to send it to every voter household this year. An amendment to this bylaw has been drafted to officially only require the Annual Town Report be made available in town buildings and upon request by March 1. This will be reflected in the Annual Town Meeting warrant.

## **6. Discuss conditions of storage container at Town Hall**

Douglas reports the storage container is not in good condition. There was a leak which caused two large books to be iced over, and other documents have begun to get damp and moldy. Douglas suggests moving the shelves into the Town Hall, getting rid of the container, and coming up with a long-term digitization plan.

Steve reports the storage container door was damaged upon delivery which lets in water when it rains. Snow is entering through the roof, which the Highway Superintendent has addressed. Since the container was said to be waterproof and climate controlled, Ralph questions why the town isn't going after the container company. The main concern is preserving the documents before action is taken against the company. A cord will be run to turn on the AC to dehumidify the area in the meantime.

## **7. Discuss Broadband perimeters of installation**

Steve summarizes this issue was brought up after residents became aware Spectrum would only be servicing 96% of Sandisfield households, and they did not fall within the percentage. Dolores, who is a property owner outside the Spectrum limits, expresses concern that they weren't notified sooner. If she had been, there may have been an

opportunity to negotiate with Otis to continue their Broadband lines since her home is closer to the Otis town line. She also notes she will be paying taxes on a service she does not receive.

Alex reports the Select Board was given information about the outlying homes, but were waiting on a quote to share with the property owners for the installation costs from the Broadband Committee before moving forward, which fell through the cracks. The Select Board has since reached out to Otis again for the cost of installing Broadband at these outlying homes.

#### **8. Discuss and vote on overtime restrictions in Personnel Policy**

There is a contradiction in the Personnel Policy about overtime. There are two sections where one defines overtime as after 32 hours/week, and other states 40 hours/week. Steve believes it has been protocol that overtime begins after 40 hours, this will remain policy. After the budget is taken care of, the Select Board will dedicate time to work through the Personal Policy in its entirety, for there are numerous inconsistencies.

#### **9. Discuss and vote on Public Safety Officer health insurance requirements**

Steve reports that while this position is not currently filled, health insurance still must be budgeted in case the position is filled in FY23. Michael Morrison is interested in keeping this position available.

#### **10. Discuss strategy for implementing senior and veteran tax work off program**

This was discussed during item #5

#### **11. Discuss enforcement of Dilapidated Vehicle bylaw: Chapter VIII, Section 11**

Alex reads the bylaw which states that unregistered dilapidated vehicles must be removed four weeks after receiving a letter from the Select Board or Chief of Police. Alex suggests alerting town residents that while this bylaw has not been enforced in the past, they will begin to do so. The fine will not exceed \$20 per offense; each day after the four week mark can be considered a separate offense. The Chief of Police will enforce this bylaw and each situation will be addressed case by case. Alex notes other towns have exceptions to these types of vehicles should a sufficient screen be used to hide it from the road and abutters.

#### **12. Discuss enforcement of Travel Trailer, Mobile Home bylaw: Chapter IX, Section 8, Item F**

Alex reads the zoning bylaw which states that property owners may live in a travel trailer or mobile home for one year so long as they are in the process of building a permanent dwelling. A Special Permit can be issued should they need to stay in the travel trailer or mobile home for longer. The Building Inspector will enforce this bylaw. Already he has

written a letter to the occupant of a trailer on West Hubbard Road notifying them of the bylaw violation. Steve reads the letter and notes that he is unsure how much time will be allotted between the first and second notice or when the fines begin thereafter, which are \$100 a day.

Jennifer Pilbin, occupant of the West Hubbard Road trailer reports she is building a home and had an agreement with a previous Select Board. The agreement gave Jennifer permission to tend to her animals in the trailer, so long as she did not occupy the trailer from 10pm to 6am. Alex notes that regardless of the agreement, one year has passed. Jennifer requests COVID be considered as a factor in lengthening agreement. She states that a septic system will be installed soon, which will provide her with a new building permit.

Steve states that the case will need to be reviewed again since one year has expired, and asks if Jennifer received the letter from the Building Inspector; she confirms. Anina Carr notes that when Jennifer originally brought the issue up to the Select Board, she stated that her home would be built “before the snow flies.” It has since been three years, and the issue began before the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **13. Interim Town Manager Updates**

Jonathan notes that he and the Select Board are working diligently on the budget. They are making formatted changes in order to showcase the prior year compared to the current year to see the difference in the operating budget. Jonathan anticipates disclosing at Town Meeting the implications the warrant items will have on property taxes.

There is \$7.5 million in storm damage ARPA funds to be distributed among towns, and Sandisfield is one of them. An award of \$2,500 was given to Sandisfield for a defibrillator to be kept in the ambulance. It's suggested that defibrillator training be conducted in the Town Hall since one is located in the hallway.

Jonathan recommended to the Select Board they conduct an IT audit. This would determine the age of all the software and machinery and figure when items should be replaced. They will also review security strength.

When Jonathan accepted the position of Interim Town Manager, he wanted to make sure the town felt due diligence was done in finding a permanent Town Manager, which is why he recommended the Collins Center. The Collins Center will profile the town, establish a competitive salary range, conduct alongside the Town Manager Search Committee the networking, recruitment, and screening of candidates, and present the best options. Jonathan cannot assist in the process, for he may apply for the position as well. Contracting with the Collins Center would be \$9,500. Jonathan has recommended the Select Board put this on the warrant as a special article and allow the voters to decide if they would like to utilize this search method.

Reserve Funds transfers are in the works because the Fuel account and Operations, Maintenance and Repair have both been overspent. These transfers will almost entirely deplete the Reserve Fund, so Jonathan recommends increasing this budget the next fiscal year. Beginning May 1, interdepartmental transfers can be made.

The Sandisfield vocational student transferred schools in April. Sandisfield will receive a prorated bill, but still need to reimburse for transportation. The Select Board will need to decide whether to budget for a vocational student regardless of not currently having one.

#### **14. Select Board Updates**

A PermitEyes demonstration was held earlier today to familiarize the departments with the program.

Alex spoke to Jim Wilusz, Director of Tri-Town Health about getting Sandisfield to join Southern Berkshire Collaborative. Anina Carr notes that their current provider, the Public Health Alliance, has not provided the amount or quality of services the COA or BOH would prefer. It takes a year to withdraw from their current contract, but Sandisfield can still receive services from both. Alex suggests that the complications that would come with trying to leave the contract sooner outweighs the fee of continuing the contract for the additional year.

The Select Board will follow up on the two tabled articles from the Special Town Meeting, including the discontinuing of part of West Street and selling a portion of land to the Rudolph's at the top of the dump hill on Route 57.

Carl Nett reports that the estimate of the current year school budget is about \$300,000, and expects it to increase to \$400,000 by June.

Jonathan recommends using ARPA funds to lower the cost and term and renegotiate the interest rate when paying for Broadband. Alex notes that it is likely they will be granted an extension which will determine when the first payment for his project will begin.

#### **15. Future agenda items**

##### **16. Review mail**

##### **17. Review and sign warrants**

##### **18. Topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair 48 hours in advance of the meeting**

Ralph requests clarification on the Shared Driveway bylaw and the frontage requirements. Alex confirms the bylaw does not change any frontage or setback requirements. Barbara questions if there is a limit as to how many homes can share a driveway. There is no limit written into the bylaw, but it would be up to the property owner to decide how many houses they would allow.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

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Steve Seddon

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Alex Bowman