

Town of Sandisfield

Select Board

April 7, 2022

Minutes for Select Board Work Session held on Thursday, April 7, 2022 at 7:00PM at the Town Hall Annex, 66 Sandisfield Road, Sandisfield, MA

Members present: Steve Seddon, Alex Bowman, Jonathan Sylbert, Brad Curry

1. Bid opening and acceptance for Highway Department Truck

Alex opens the bid for a 2022 Ford F-550 4x4 regular cab and chassis for \$70,525. The vehicle is in stock and available for delivery within 24 hours. They review the accessories included in the truck. Brad is happy with the truck and price.

Alex motions to accept the bid from Serat Ford Lincoln of Agawam, MA. Steve seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

With the purchase of this truck, all DPW employees will have an operable vehicle. Brad notes that while they do have enough vehicles per employee, another new truck should be considered for purchase based on the condition of some of their other vehicles. Brad discusses the process of getting the GPS installed in the trucks.

2. Request bid from MIIA for our employee health insurance

A letter to MIIA was written on Town letterhead to request a bid for employee health, dental and life insurance. The Select Board signs the letter.

3. Review and discuss FY23 budget

Select Board and Town Manager Assistant, Janey Beardsley sent a letter requesting consideration for a salary increase. Currently, Janey makes \$20.17/hour. Steve proposes increasing her to \$21.50/hour, for she is a quality employee and an investment to the town. This would be a 3.7% increase with a 3% COLA. The Select Board agrees with this change and Jonathan will reflect this in the budget.

Stipends for boards/committees are discussed. Currently, there are boards/committees that have budgeted salaries for secretaries, but many are without stipends for members. The Select Board agrees to budget \$400 for each Planning Board member, and \$500 for their Chair. Conservation Commission, Finance Committee, and Board of Health will receive a stipend of \$250 for each member, and \$350 for the Chair.

The Select Board goes over Fire/EMT training, Jonathan proposes creating another line dedicated to Fire Department Training, which should be more active this year.

It's reported the town likely does not get billed for Ederly Transportation, for this is run by volunteers. The COA would like to hold onto their budgeted \$5,000 while they develop a plan for a permanent means of transportation. Jonathan suggests putting the \$5,000 into Free Cash until the plan is established.

With the substantial increase in fuel and uncertainty when it will decline, the Select Board agrees to increase the Vehicle Fuel account to \$50,000.

Michael Morrison requests the Public Safety Officer position be kept open, should they find a viable candidate to fill it. Jonathan explains this position affects how Employee Benefits are budgeted for. Regardless if a position is vacant or the employee chooses not to take the benefits, the benefits need to be budgeted for in the instance someone new takes over and requires them. However, this point is ultimately moot because the Town Clerk will not be receiving benefits and those allotted benefits will be dedicated to the PSO.

The Town Clerk position will be operating at 19 hours a week at \$28.80/hour, and their Assistant at six hours for \$25/hour. Jonathan will reflect this in the budget. Alex suggests hiring Mary as a consultant for her agreed upon \$25/hour for three hours and an Assistant Town Clerk for an additional three hours at a lower rate, possibly \$20/hour.

It's noted that the Treasurer/ Tax Collector received around a \$10,000 increase in salary when she was hired. She now has budgeted for an Assistant and a payroll company in FY23, and it's questioned whether she still requires this significant pay increase. It's reported that part of this increase is because she no longer receives the fees and penalties for taxes. Jonathan notes that the position is very busy, and does not anticipate it slowing down anytime soon.

Alex reports he had a discussion with the Principal Assessor about her salary increase. He claims it was agreed upon that the position will receive its obligatory 3% COLA and she will begin to decline working on any projects that are not in her scope of work. Instead, if a task is asked of her, she will come up with a project budget and/or increase her hours. The Assessor Clerk will be increased to \$19/hour.

Alex reviews the hourly wages of the DPW employees: Keith Larson \$21.88, Ralph Leavensworth \$24.45, David McCuin \$27.51, Tony Soares \$25.75. The salary of Brad Curry and Tegan Abear need to be confirmed. Solid Waste Disposal Salary will receive

an increase as well. However, the DPW will be actively looking to replace Keith as the Transfer Station Attendant, so he can focus on regular DPW tasks. A new line item for the DPW Administrative Assistant is created with a budget of \$16,640. The Custodian Town Buildings Salary will increase by \$900.

A utility line item will be created. Previously, these expenses came out of Operations, Maintenance and Repair, which will now decrease. The Select Board approves the Recreation Committee and Historical Commission budget requests.

Jonathan reports that their vocational student is no longer a Sandisfield resident, and therefore does not need to be budgeted for. However, the parents should be contacted about reimbursement for transportation.

Jonathan runs through the other warrant articles. The fire truck still needs to be included on the warrant. Jonathan will get the number in free cash and stabilization to determine the appropriate amount to budget for the fire truck. There is a brief discussion about the capital stabilization and how to use it. It's proposed to move \$100,000 from Free Cash into Stabilization at Town Meeting dedicated to repairing and maintaining roads. This proposal has yet to be approved for the warrant.

A budget meeting with the Finance Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 13 at 7:00PM.

Meeting adjourned at 9:45PM

Steve Seddon

Alex Bowman