



TOWN OF SANDISFIELD
MASSACHUSETTS

ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE TOWN OFFICERS
2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
ELECTED TOWN OFFICIALS	1
APPOINTED TOWN OFFICIALS	2 - 5
SELECT BOARD	6
TOWN MANAGER	7
TREASURER/COLLECTOR	8-9
ACCOUNTANT	10
BOARD OF ASSESSORS	11
BUILDING DEPARTMENT	12
CEMETERY COMMITTEE	13
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE	14
COUNCIL ON AGING	15
CULTURAL COUNCIL	16
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS	17
FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT	18-21
FINANCE COMMITTEE	22
FIRE DEPARTMENT	23
GREEN COMMITTEE	24
BOARD OF HEALTH	25
HISTORICAL COMMISSION	26
LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES	27
PLANNING BOARD	28
POLICE DEPARTMENT	29
RECREATION COMMITTEE	30
TOWN CLERK	31
ELECTION RESULTS 2023	32
YANNER PARK COMMITTEE	33

ELECTED TOWN OFFICIALS

POSITION TITLE/MEMBER	CONTACT	TERM EXPIRATION
MODERATOR		
Dominic Konstam		2024
TOWN CLERK		
Douglas Miner	258-4711 Ext. 2	2026
SELECT BOARD		
Robert Fedell		2024
John Field		2025
Steven Seddon		2026
BOARD OF ASSESSORS		
Kathie Burrows	258-4711 Ext. 5	2024
Vacant		2025
Roger Brown		2026
SCHOOL COMMITTEE		
Carl Nett		2024
Douglas Miner	258-4711 Ext. 2	2025
Melissa Bye		2026
BOARD OF HEALTH		
Keith Larson		2024
Stephen Rubenstein		2025
Brigitte Ruthman		2026
PLANNING BOARD		
Paul Gaudette		2024
William Taylor		2025
Lisa Leavenworth		2026
Barbara Cormier		2027
Jeffrey Bye		2028
LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES		
Kathie Burrows	258-4711 Ext. 5	2026
Mary Turek	258-4430	2027
Clare English	258-4901	2028
CONSTABLE		
Dana Beardsley		2026
Vacant		2026

APPOINTED TOWN OFFICIALS

POSITION TITLE/MEMBER	CONTACT	TERM EXPIRATION
TOWN MANAGER		
Jonathan Sylbert	258-4711 Ext. 1	
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT		
Janey Beardsley	258-4711 Ext. 3	
PRINCIPAL ASSESSOR		
Vacant	258-4711 Ext. 6	
ASSESSOR CLERK		
Kathie Burrows	258-4711 Ext. 5	
TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR		
Gina Campbell	258-4711 Ext. 4	
ASSISTANT TREASURER/TAX COLLECTOR		
Janey Beardsley		
TOWN ACCOUNTANT		
Margaret McClellan	413-258 Ext. 5	
HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT	258-4711 Ext. 7	
Brad Curry	Cell: 717-7627	
VETERAN SERVICE DIRECTOR		
Thomas Beasley	528-1580	2024
LOCAL TOWN REPRESENTATIVE		
Peter Levine	258-2861	
ANIMAL INSPECTOR		
Kim Spring	258-4450	2024
TOWN COUNSEL		
KP Law		2024
POLICE CHIEF		
Michael Morrison	258-4742	2024
ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF		
Ralph Morrison	258-4742	2024
FIRE CHIEF		
Ralph Morrison	258-4742	2024
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR		
Michael Morrison	258-4742	2024

BUILDING INSPECTOR		
Paul Greene	446-0964	2024
ALTERNATE BUILDING INSPECTOR		
Don Torrico	356-8509	2024
PLUMBING INSPECTOR		
Charles Pease	394-0213	2024
ASSISTANT PLUMBING INSPECTOR		
Brian Middleton	269-7269	2024
WIRING INSPECTOR		
Jay Reynolds	860-798-2578	2024
ASSISTANT WIRING INSPECTOR		
Jeffrey Aloisi	229-3696	2024
ASSISTANT WIRING INSPECTOR		
Robert Kimberley		2024
BOARD OF REGISTRARS		
Anna Lee Riley		2024
Barbara Cormier		2025
John Burrows		2026
Douglas Miner, Town Clerk		By Law
CEMETERY COMMITTEE		
Lynn Rubenstein		2024
Brenda Larson		2024
Tegan Abear		2025
Keith Larson		2025
Mary-Anne Grammer		2026
CONSERVATION COMMISSION		
Eric Hartshorn		2024
Clare English	258-4901	2025
Theresa Spohnholz		2026
Paul Gaudette	429-1058	2027
Mary Turek	258-4430	2028
COUNCIL ON AGING		
Ann Wald	258-4415	2024
Anina Carr	258-3314	2025
Linda Riiska	258-4816	2026
Barbara Cormier	258-4402	2026
Shirley Spring	258-4450	2026

CULTURAL COUNCIL		
Connie Canty-Donaldson	258-4941	2024
Jennifer Hibbins	258-2863	2025
Karema Almeida		2025
Jennifer Lenzi		2025
Alexcia Adams		2025
Ellen Croibier Fischman	258-2861	2026
ELECTION OFFICIALS		
Shirley McArthur	Clerk/Warden	2024
Laura Rogers-Castro	Inspector	2024
Mario Castro, Jr.	Inspector	2024
Connie Canty-Donaldson		2024
Anina Carr		2024
Brenda Larson		2024
Kathie Burrows		2024
FINANCE COMMITTEE		
Olivia Konstam		2025
William Newsome		2025
Mike Lutynski		2026
Vacant		2026
Vacant		2027
GREEN COMMITTEE		
Vacant		2024
Vacant		2025
Anina Carr		2026
HISTORICAL COMMISSION		
Mike Loglisci		2024
Roseanne Hoekstra	258-4968	2024
Ron Bernard	269-0012	2025
Connie Canty-Donaldson	258-4941	2026
Liana Toscanini		2026
RECREATION COMMITTEE		
Lynn Rubenstein		2024
Laurie Seddon		2024
Anina Carr		2025
Katie Murray		2025
Laura Zeigler		2026

YANNER PARK COMMITTEE		
Adam Brown		2024
Emily Gallagher		2024
Kathy Jacobs		2025
Roger Kohler		2025
Sue Tarasuk		2026

Select Board

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the Select Board welcomed John Field, who won his seat against incumbent George Riley. Immediately, one of our first tasks was to fill our vacant Town Manager position. The Town was fortunate to have found and contracted Jonathan Sylbert for the interim position, who did a great job helping us through the budget process and gave the Board and Town Manager Search Committee confidence in hiring him for the full-time position a few months later. Jonathan was able to continue building momentum of the Town's first Capital Plan, equipment replacement schedule, and establishing strong relationships the Town employees.

The Select Board adopted the recommended Financial Policies from the Division of Local Services with percentages to suit Sandisfield's needs, as an effort to create consistency with how the Town handles financial matters. Additionally, we created a Building Code Violation Policy and Zoning Bylaw Violation Policy. All policies can be found on the town's website at www.sandisfieldma.gov for review.

The Select Board called for a Special Town Meeting on November 17, 2022. The meeting was successful, and Sandisfield voters approved many items that will better the Town, including asking the School Committee to draft an amendment to set the terms *if* a member town decided to withdrawal from the school district, adoption of a Special Act Legislation that affirms the duties and responsibilities of the Town Manager and Select Board, adoption of MGL authorizing the Treasurer to grant payment agreements on properties in tax title, and adoption of MGL 40U, which gives the Town the authority to attach the fees from citations to properties as tax liens.

The Select Board and Town Manager rounded off the fiscal year by taking an early and thorough look at the FY24 budget and creation of the Annual Town Meeting warrant. All departments were asked to level fund and all budget increases would need solid justification for doing so. This proved a great method for a successful budget season.

At the 2023 elections the Select Board welcomed another new member; Robert Fedell was elected to the remaining one-year seat that Alex Bowman resigned from after two years of service.

We would like to thank all our Town staff, Board, and Committee members for a productive and successful fiscal year.

Please subscribe to E-Alerts on our website to receive important Town news and updates!

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Seddon Sr
John W Field
Robert Fedell

Town Manager

It has been a pleasure to serve Sandisfield as your Town Manager since coming on board in late March, 2022. Improvements in day-to-day operations and a deep dive into the town's financials have yielded good results for residents and taxpayers.

The FY23 operating budget returned \$133,000 to taxpayers and reduced the tax levy to a level below FY20, and we continue to reduce excess cash holdings in free cash and various stabilization funds in order to release those funds back to taxpayers for their own more productive use.

In addition, over \$6,000 in savings was realized during an audit of our insured fleet (some listed vehicles had burned in the DPW fire); \$187,767.39 was returned to the taxpayers in back taxes and interest on the Minery estate after six months of, at times, difficult negotiations (instead of the \$20,000 originally sought); an additional \$352,000 in grant monies was provided to complete the culvert replacement on Route 57 after a thorough analysis of the town's long-term obligations and a plea to MassDOT (for which we are grateful); \$96,942.40 in surplus vehicles and equipment was auctioned, most of which had been sitting in various yards; \$266,000 of ARPA funds was put to good use, mostly upgrading our fleet and equipment; \$270,000 in WRAP funds was expended on roads and equipment; and grants were secured to create a Town Charter (\$16,500), to implement an EMS feasibility study (\$36,000), to fund security upgrades on town properties (\$75,000), and to install GPS tracking and cameras on town vehicles to improve efficiency (\$3,600).

Capital plans were created and implemented for our fleet and our facilities; financial policies that had been recommended to the town in 2017 were finally reviewed and approved; job descriptions were updated and/or created; the union contract was negotiated; and the financial team caught up on various outstanding issues—only the town audit remains to be conducted when availability permits.

The FY24 operating budget passed at town meeting last May was up nearly four percent, and taxes are expected to reflect this. Note that all but roughly \$35,000 of the \$129,500 increase was due to the school budget—the town operational budget was lean—and that our school committee was able to return \$57,298 of last year's school budget to the town. The FY24 tax levy is projected to remain below the level of FY22.

Despite all this good work, the challenges facing the town remain. Infrastructure in Sandisfield is a considerable obligation (we have nearly 90 miles of roads, 25 bridges, and neglected buildings), the population is aging and growth is stagnant, home prices and general living costs are increasing, and our tax base, which is almost entirely residential, remains an inadequate revenue source to run the town as well as we'd like to. State aid has remained flat for many years now (decades, in some cases), interest rates for bonds and borrowing have increased dramatically, and municipalities in western Massachusetts face a staffing crisis as we lose talent and experience to retirement or to more competitive employment opportunities that beckon from the state and private sector—and from beyond our borders, where opportunities come with lower living costs.

The next five years will be critical for the economy, for the Berkshires, and for Sandisfield.

In the meantime, faithfully yours,
Jonathan Sylbert
Town Manager

Treasurer

Yet to be Submitted

Tax Collector

	Balance 7/1/2022	Commitments (+)	Collected (-)	Abatements Exemptions(-)	Refunds Issued (+)	Credit(+) Adjustments	Tax Title Adjustment (-)	Balance 6/30/2023
Real Estate								
All Prior Years	\$ 20,635.15		\$ 9,138.23		\$ 246.81	\$ 0.27	\$ 2,975.39	\$ 8,768.61
2018	\$ 16,731.57		\$ 7,264.94	\$ -			\$ 2,609.31	\$ 6,857.32
2019	\$ 21,167.24		\$ 12,323.86		\$ 2.29	\$ 0.56	\$ 3,015.92	\$ 5,830.31
2020	\$ 41,437.94		\$ 30,325.80			\$ 23.48	\$ 3,682.60	\$ 7,453.02
2021	\$ 70,148.42		\$ 50,827.16		\$ 7.18	\$ 12.18	\$ 4,501.64	\$ 14,838.98
2022	\$ 145,571.41		\$ 103,530.43	\$ 819.14	\$ 2,245.13		\$ 4,587.22	\$ 38,879.75
2023		\$ 2,837,582.22	\$ 2,691,962.36	\$ 9,700.00	\$ 9,101.19		\$ 7,375.90	\$ 137,645.15
TOTALS	\$ 315,691.73	\$ 2,837,582.22	\$ 2,905,372.78	\$ 10,519.14	\$ 11,602.60	\$ 36.49	\$ 28,747.98	\$ 220,273.14

PERSONAL PROPERTY								
All prior years	\$ 5,611.11		\$ 735.50	\$ 3,770.07				\$ 1,105.54
2018	\$ 3,080.15		\$ 271.96	\$ 2,455.82				\$ 352.37
2019	\$ 956.59		\$ 175.60	\$ 391.20				\$ 389.79
2020	\$ 1,496.20		\$ 348.17	\$ 677.97				\$ 470.06
2021	\$ 2,229.62		\$ 533.16	\$ 1,124.91	\$ 206.98			\$ 778.53
2022	\$ 2,656.17		\$ 1,261.22		\$ 89.46			\$ 1,484.41
2023		\$ 324,129.00	\$ 317,944.10	\$ 2,045.12	\$ 235.91			\$ 4,375.69
TOTALS	\$ 16,029.84	\$ 324,129.00	\$ 321,269.71	\$ 10,465.09	\$ 532.35			\$ 8,956.39

Motor Vehicle								
2008	\$ (387.48)							\$ (387.48)
2011	733.96							\$ 733.96
2012	\$ 1,109.17							\$ 1,109.17
2013	\$ 833.54							\$ 833.54
2014	\$ 551.25							\$ 551.25
2015	\$ 1,315.11							\$ 1,315.11
2016	\$ 1,076.25			\$ -				\$ 1,076.25
2017	\$ 1,458.65		\$ 283.75					\$ 1,174.90
2018	\$ 855.00							\$ 855.00
2019	\$ 1,027.16		\$ 61.67					\$ 965.49
2020	\$ 1,020.76		\$ 72.05					\$ 948.71
2021	\$ 4,103.48		\$ 2,985.77	\$ 112.19	\$ 112.19			\$ 1,117.71
2022	\$ 19,767.72		\$ 29,669.60	\$ 7,245.85	\$ 1,571.28			\$ 3,493.25
2023		\$ 135,345.08	\$ 112,908.62	\$ 3,492.82	\$ 443.73			\$ 19,387.37
TOTALS	\$ 33,464.57	\$ 154,414.78	\$ 145,981.46	\$ 10,850.86	\$ 2,127.20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 33,174.23

GRAND TOTALS	\$ 365,186.14	\$ 3,316,126.00	\$ 3,372,623.95	\$ 31,835.09	\$ 14,262.15	\$ 36.49	\$ 28,747.98	\$ 262,403.76
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INTEREST \$ 56,338.02
 FEES \$ 6,702.47

GRAND TOTAL COLLECTED	\$ 3,435,664.44
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Respectfully Submitted: Gina Campbell, Tax Collector

Accountant

Yet to be submitted

Board of Assessors

SANDISFIELD BOARD OF ASSESSORS
66 SANDISFIELD RD SUITE #4 SANDISFIELD, MA 01255
E-mail:Assessors@sandisfieldma.gov
Phone 413-258-4711X6 Fax 413-288-4225

Members: (as of June 30, 2023) Bethany Perry (Chair), Kathleen Burrows, Roger Brown

The Recapitulation (Tax Rate) process for Fiscal Year 2023 was completed with the support of the Town Accountant, Tax Collector/ Treasurer and Town Clerk. Tax Rate Fiscal Year 2023; \$10.59 per thousand of assessed value.

Total Valuation (Real and Personal Property) of Town of Sandisfield for Fiscal Year 2023 was \$298,556,698 which represents nearly a 17% increase in value from Fiscal Year 2022 primarily driven by the nearly 19% increase in residential properties which is by far the largest property class (87%).

The Assessors are required by Massachusetts General Law to value all Real and Personal Property within their community as of a January 1st each year. The Assessors do not determine taxes. The “levy” (the amount to be raised by taxes) is established at the Town Meeting and this amount is adjusted for the state aid and local miscellaneous receipts. The adjusted amount is allocated to Taxpayers proportionately according to the valuation of their property.

Fiscal Year 2024 represents a “revaluation year” when the Department of Revenue’s Bureau of Local Assessment every five year conducts a certification review. This process, is a more in-depth review than that conducted annually by the Commonwealth. The results of the revaluation will be posted on the Town’s website.

To compensate for a lower level of property inspection as a result of COVID restrictions and concerns, our provider Mayflower Valuation LTD, have substantially increased their inspection activity in FY23 that will continue in FY24. Please be courteous if you encounter them during their activity. This keeps our data current and within the mandated state requirements. Please contact the Assessor’s office with any questions that you may have.

Respectfully Submitted, The Board of Assessors

Building Department

For the Fiscal Year 2023, the Building Department issued a total of 58 permits, with a total of \$34,989.00 collected in fees.

<u>Qty.</u>	<u>Type</u>
3	New Construction
15	Roofs
6	Additions
4	Solar
6	Accessory Buildings
5	Insulation
8	Siding/Windows
2	Sheet Metal
4	Other

Cemetery Committee

The Sandisfield Cemetery Committee is a five-member group. Our directive is to maintain and preserve the Town's five cemeteries. Our Cemetery Superintendent is Rich Atwood of A&A Cemetery Services. He handles all the sales of lots/plots, or if you need burial information, he can be reached at 413-329-3672. Cemetery locations as well as the rules and regulations can be found on the Town website.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Rubenstein

Keith Larson

Tegan Abear

Maryanne Grammer

Ron Pachulski (resigned)

Brenda Larson (resigned)

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission meets on the third Tuesday of every month at 7:00 P.M. Meetings are held at Old Town Hall, 3 Silverbrook Road. If you wish to be on the agenda, please call 413-429-1058 and speak to our Chairman. We always welcome involvement and support from the public.

The Conservation Commission administers the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, as well as the Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act. In that capacity, the Commission processes surface waters and other resource areas. We also act in a planning and advisory capacity with other Municipal Boards on conservation issues. If you have any questions or concerns about work in any of the protected resource areas named above, please contact our Administrative Assistant, Theresa Spohnholz at 907-244-6466. We always prefer to work with the townspeople than confront problems down the road.

For the period of January 1, 2023 through September 30th, 2023 the Commission processed six Requests for Determination of Applicability, three Orders of Conditions, one emergency certification, and three Certificates of Compliance. The Commission held six public hearings and went on multiple site visits.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Gaudette, Chair
Clare English
Mary Turek
Theresa Spohnholz
Eric Hartshorn

Council on Aging

The Board of the Council on Aging continues to try and reach out to help as many seniors as possible in Town. We also try to collaborate with nearby towns, since we have so many issues in common.

Healthcare and transportation tend to be an issue for seniors, but our partnership with Southern Berkshire Health Collaborative has worked out very well, and we enjoy seeing our nurse, Jill Sweet, every month. Additionally, the SBHC offers both flu and COVID-19 vaccine clinics right here in Sandisfield, as well as monthly blood pressure checks.

Home healthcare, however, continues to be a major concern, which only seems to be getting worse due to some recent policy changes by Berkshire Health Systems. These new changes will affect all the small towns in our area. The COA has reached out to State Representative, Smitty Pignatelli on this matter of visiting nurses, but so far there has been no resolution.

Members of the COA continue to provide volunteer transportation to seniors for doctor's appointments and shopping. However, Sandisfield's transportation needs will not be fulfilled entirely until we are able to purchase and operate our own van. The Town's administration is researching grants that may be available for this purpose.

Socialization is one of the biggest parts of what the COA offers. We have resumed monthly lunches and had a very successful picnic at the end of June 2023 for our town employees and seniors. Our Chair Yoga classes also continue to be well attended. Additionally, we get together every Wednesday morning for Coffee Hour and try to help our seniors connect to the services available, such as Elder Services in Pittsfield.

We appreciate all the support we get from the Town.

Sandisfield Cultural Council

Mission: to broaden and enhance the cultural life available to the town of Sandisfield and its residents through grantmaking. The Council will encourage and promote all forms of cultural activities. The Council will act as a bridge connecting the arts, business, government and educational institutions and help support communication and cooperation in our community.

Vision: The Cultural Council will serve as an advocate for the public by encouraging efforts within the local community and educating policymakers about the benefits of the arts.

Priorities: the following priorities will be considered when reviewing applications: The venue should reach a large group in the community. Community-wide gatherings are desired. School children and activities related to learning are a high priority, as well as events for senior citizens in town. Local presenters dealing with the arts, humanities and sciences are encouraged.

The Sandisfield Cultural Council received 31 grant applications for the fiscal 2023 year. The members met and reviewed all applications, utilizing the priorities when considering grants. Twelve applications were denied as they did not best meet the criteria and 19 applications were granted funding, for a total of \$7,200. Grantees included Berkshire South Community Center, Blandford Historical Society, Farmington River Elementary School, Festival Latino, Flying Cloud Farm, Music Dance.edu, the Sandisfield Arts Center, Sandisfield Library, Sandisfield Recreation Committee, Sculpture Now and WAM Theatre.

For the second year in a row, the Council contributed to the Sandisfield Memorial Day Parade and Community BBQ by funding desserts, as well as decorations for the children's bike brigade.

Our local members for 2023 were Karema Almeida, Connie Canty, Ellen Croibier, Jennifer Hibbins, Barbara Kershner, and Jennifer Lenzi.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Hibbins, Chair
Sandisfield Cultural Council

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works would like to thank the residents of Sandisfield for their ongoing support throughout the year.

This year began with repairs to Rt. 57 starting with milling and paving of Tolland Hill on Rt. 57, and moving on to a mile of Rt. 57 by the Transfer Station with full depth reclamation and sub drainage asphalt injection paving base and top culvert replacement and ditch work. The work then moved to Rt. 183 and did full depth reclamation and culvert replacement and paving. Chapter 90 Funds were used to overlay 2" a section of Town Hill and Cold Spring Roads. State funded WRAP money was also used for paving on Town Hill Road.

We applied 3,473 tons of dense grade crushed stone to a number of gravel roads during the year.

The engineering plan for No Name Brook Bridge was changed and the engineering plan for two bridges on Rt. 57 was completed. We received a grant on the Silver Brook bridge.

Line painting on roads was also completed with Chapter 90 Funds.

Speed signs on Route 57 and 183 were finished from the Complete Street Grant. Tree work is continuing throughout town; Norther working for Eversource, and John Fields for the Town. The Town has lost a number of trees due to the Emerald Ash Borer.

Several pieces of equipment were obtained through the Town's new capital plan. The new grader arrived mid-summer plus the roller, small plow truck, and a replacement plow. We placed all of the surplus equipment on an auction and brought in \$92,872.00 for the Town.

The Highway crew continue to maintain their annual required licenses and training.

The Transfer Station also had a productive year with disposal of trash and expansion of recycling. We re-bid the hauling contract to save money. We're happy to provide this service to Town residents.

Sincerely,

Brad Curry
Highway Superintendent

FARMINGTON RIVER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

OTIS & SANDISFIELD



ANNUAL REPORT: FY 2023 - 2024

TOTAL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT (*Pre-K – Gr. 12, see breakdown below: lines A+B*) **TOTAL:** 206 students

**Based on October 1st, 2023 Student Information Management System Data*

A. Total Enrollment for Pre-K – Gr. 6 In-District: **TOTAL:** 129 students

a. FRRES Enrollment by Town for Pre-K – Gr. 6 **TOTAL:** 129 students

– Otis:	<u>69</u>	students
– Sandisfield:	<u>42</u>	students
– From Other Towns (School Choice <u>into</u> FRRSD):	<u>18</u>	students

b. FRRES Enrollment by Grade: **TOTAL:** 129 students

– Pre-School <u>20</u> students	– Grade 3 <u>19</u> students
– Kindergarten <u>13</u> students	– Grade 4 <u>17</u> students
Grade 1 <u>15</u> students	– Grade 5 <u>11</u> students
– Grade 2 <u>18</u> students	– Grade 6 <u>16</u> students

B. Total Enrollment for Gr. 7 – 12 Tuition Contracts: **TOTAL:** 77 students

a. Berkshire Hills Regional School District: **TOTAL:** 46 students

– Otis Tuition (Gr. 7 – 12) <u>22</u>	
– Sandisfield Tuition (Gr. 7 – 12) <u>24</u>	

b. Lee Public Schools District: **TOTAL:** 31 students

– Otis Tuition (Gr. 7 – 12) <u>23</u>	
– Sandisfield Tuition (Gr. 7 – 12) <u>8</u>	

C. Total Students Out-of-District / School Choice out of FRRSD: **TOTAL:** 37 students

a. Berkshire Hills Regional School District: **TOTAL:** 6 students

– Otis (PK – 6) <u>4</u>	– Sandisfield (PK – 6) <u>2</u>	
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b. Lee Public Schools District: **TOTAL:** 10 students

– Otis (PK – 6) <u>4</u>	– Sandisfield (PK – 6) <u>6</u>	
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c. Central Berkshire Regional School District: **TOTAL:** 1 students

– Otis (PK – 12) <u>0</u>	– Sandisfield (PK – 12) <u>0</u>	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	

d. Lenox Public Schools District: **TOTAL:** 5 students

– Otis (PK – 12) <u>3</u>	– Sandisfield (PK – 12) <u>2</u>	
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e. Southern Berkshire Regional School District: **TOTAL:** 14 students

– Otis (PK – 12) <u>2</u>	– Sandisfield (PK – 12) <u>12</u>	
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- f. Gateway Regional School District: TOTAL: 1 students
 – Otis (PK – 12) 1 – Sandisfield (PK – 12) 0
- g. Westfield Public Schools: TOTAL: 0 students
 – Otis (PK – 12) ^ – Sandisfield (PK – 12) ^
- h. TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School: TOTAL: 0 students
 – Otis (K – 12) ^ – Sandisfield (K – 12) ^

^ this information is not confirmed as of 11/17/2023

** ALL VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS ARE MANAGED THROUGH THE PARTICIPANT'S TOWN, NOT THE SCHOOL DISTRICT. **

D. FRRSD School Committee:

- FRRSD School Committee was comprised of members: *(as of November 3rd, 2023)*
 - CHAIR: Denise Hardie VICE CHAIR: Carl Nett
 - Otis Members: Deb Fogel, Denise Hardie, Carol Lombardo, Phil Magovern
 - Sandisfield Members: Melissa Bye, Douglas Miner, Carl Nett

E. FRRSD School Administration:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Superintendent: | <u>Timothy Lee</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Principal/Tech Director: | <u>Laurie Flower</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Director of Student Services: | <u>Michael Saporito</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| District Business Manager: | <u>TMS, Carol Sauerhauser</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |

F. FRRSD Clerical Staff:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Principal & Supt. Assistant: | <u>Caroline Stamm</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Business Office Assistant: | <u>Heidi Utenis</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |

G. FRRSD Teaching Staff:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Half-Day Pre-School: | <u>Jana Bush</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Full-Day Pre-School: | <u>Rebecca Hamill</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Kindergarten: | <u>Amy Maxton</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 1: | <u>Meaghan Martin</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 2: | <u>Sarah Tracy</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 3: | <u>Katherine Silk</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 4: | <u>Bethany Mielke</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 5: | <u>Christopher Keller</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Grade 6: | <u>James Foster</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Special Education: | <u>Jonina Decker</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Special Education: | <u>Ellen Cotler</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Art: | <u>Laura Catullo</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Music: | <u>Michael Flower</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Health/Physical Ed.: | <u>Jenna Daley</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| Instructional Technology: | <u>Laurie Flower</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |
| School Adjustment Counselor: | <u>Terri DiGriglio</u> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Full Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time |

H. FRRSD Paraprofessionals:

- Notes: The district employed 7.5 Paraprofessionals in Grades Pre-K through 6 to address the needs of special education, disabled, and regular education students in all settings. The district also employs several Paraprofessionals in "out-of-district" public placements to meet IEP requirements.

I. FRRSD School Nurse:

School Nurse: Grace Terry Full Time Part Time

- Notes: The district employs a registered nurse to serve as school nurse for the district. Responsibilities of the nurse are varied and range from daily operation of the school health office, records maintenance, updating and monitoring the school's wellness plan. The school nurse also serves as an important member of the school operations team.

J. FRRSD Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Psychological Services:

- Notes: To address the therapeutic needs of students as defined through their Individualized Education Plans, Section 504 Accommodations agreements, or by other recommendations, the District engaged the services of therapists, as needed, on a consultant basis.



K. FRRSD Cafeteria Staff:

Director: Sarah Hopkins Full Time Part Time
Cafeteria Helper: Samantha Gale Full Time Part Time

- Notes: Breakfast and Lunch were served daily to students, in accordance with state and federal guidelines for healthy meals.

L. FRRSD Maintenance Staff:

Head of Maintenance: Chris Graceffa Full Time Part Time
Custodian (evenings): Michelle Cloran Full Time Part Time
Custodian (evenings): Elena Starr Full Time Part Time

- Notes: Chris Graceffa was named lead custodian in the spring of 2023. The Maintenance team manages daily cleaning of the school's spaces and cares for the outside areas and grounds. Several maintenance and physical plant needs are being addressed by order of operational priority.

M. FRRSD Transportation Services:

- Notes: The District has a multi-year bus contract with Dufour, Inc. to transport District students in Grades K-12 to the Farmington River Regional School, Berkshire Hills Regional School District and Lee Public Schools. Additionally, to access students in outlying areas in both communities, the District employed its own drivers and three District vans to transport students in both towns. School Choice students are not transported.

N. FRRSD Tuition Agreements for Students in Grade 7-12:

- Notes: In order to provide a free and appropriate public education for District students in Grades 7-12, the District maintains tuition agreements with Berkshire Hills Regional School District (2023-2028) and the Lee Public Schools (2022 - 2025). These tuition agreements enable all parties to budget and plan ahead financially, based upon these agreements. Parents and students can choose which of these two school districts they wish to attend after they leave Grade 6 at Farmington River Regional Elementary School.

O. FRRSD Parent Teacher Association (PTA):

- Notes: The PTA has national membership and affiliations as a not for profit organization, very active in many aspects of the District. The PTA provided information on school events to all District parents. They arranged for Room Parents for all classrooms. The PTA held many creative fund-raising activities, such as the Cash Calendars, to raise funds for school equipment and opportunities (smart boards, classroom materials, field trips, and in-school programs, etc.). PTA members also helped with Field Day, the Holiday Shoppe, and other family events. They have contributed tens of thousands of dollars to the students' education, enrichment, and recreation opportunities that could not be accommodated in the regular school budget.
-

P. FRRSD Volunteers and Collaborations:

- Notes: The District students benefited from many family and community volunteers who spent time in the classrooms and at the Otis Library working with children and doing projects with them. The Otis Cultural Council, Sandisfield Cultural Council, The FIRE Fund (Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation) provided support the school for in-school enrichment programs and field trips.
-

Q. Collaboration with District Police and Fire Departments:

- Notes: Otis and Sandisfield Police and Fire Chiefs, along with staff members from their respective departments, have worked closely with the school administration to develop and implement lock-down procedures with the State Police. Training of all staff members and students in lock-down and shelter-in-place procedures takes place on a regular and ongoing basis. Our lock-down drills continue to be successful because of the partnership.
-

R. Use of District Facilities:

- Notes: The District facilities remain available to both Towns that comprise the District. The Otis Fire Department utilizes the school for training purposes, and the Kiwanis Club's annual Pancake Breakfast for Veteran's Day is here in the cafeteria. The Regional Agreement Committee uses the school as its meeting location.
-

Respectfully Submitted:

Timothy Lee
Superintendent

Finance Committee

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 93, Section 16, requires towns with a total valuation of \$1,000,000 or more to have a Finance or Advisory Committee. The Town of Sandisfield's By-Laws require that the Finance Committee review the budget presented by the Select Board and make recommendations to the Town Meeting relative to all appropriations. As such, the Finance Committee's major responsibility and focus is promoting a balanced and fiscally sound budget for the town. Additionally, the Finance Committee makes recommendations to the Town Meeting regarding appropriations to the Reserve Fund and the general and specialized stabilization funds.

The Finance Committee meets regularly during the year, monitoring operational and capital budgets, approving transfers from the Reserve Fund and conducting reviews of town finances on the behalf of town residents. Between January 19, 2023 and July 13, 2023, the Finance Committee and Select Board had a total of \$20,000 in Reserve Fund Transfers and a total of \$40,398.56 in Year-End Transfers.

Respectively submitted,

Olivia Konstam, Chair

William Newsome

Michael Lutynski

Sandisfield Fire Department and Ambulance Squad

During Fiscal Year 2023, July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023, the Fire Department responded to 70 incidents and the ambulance responded to 217 incidents.

The EMT's must take 20 hours of continuing education each year. Additionally, they must take a DOT refresher course every two years. A total of 40 hours, plus AED, CPR & LUCAS training.

During October, Fire personnel completed driver training on the new engine #1, which included starting and shut down procedures, equipment operations, and pump and drafting procedures. The training will continue until all have been qualified to operate the new engine. On 11/13/22 the Fire Dept attended a class at the CT State Fire Academy regarding extinguishing a structure fire.

The following MIIA training for both Fire & EMT personnel was completed at Station #1:
02/23/23 - Hazard Communications, Emergency Action Plans.
03/23/23 - Personal Protective Equipment, Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus.
03/30/23 - Ladder Safety, Fall Protection.
04/06/23 - Bloodborne Pathogens, Chain Saw Safety, Trenching & Excavations
04/13/23 - Electrical Safety, Lock Out, Powered Industrial Trucks
04/27/23 - Traffic Incident Management

Fire personnel attended "Basics of Interior Fire Fighting" at Monterey Fire Dept, which included PPE on 2/28/23, SCBA on 3/7/23, Ladders on 3/14/23 Ladders, Hose Operations on 3/21/23, Searching on 3/28/23, and Window Bail Outs on 4/4/23.

Other trainings included Sandisfield Fire Dept participation in a live burn in Otis on 5/5/23. On 5/9/23 Kinder Morgan held a class at the Tolland Fire Dept regarding pipeline safety. From 5/5 to 5/6/23, six members participated in Rescue Task Force Training (Active Shooter). Finally, on 6/6/23 and 6/20/23 the EMT'S started Continuing Education Classes.

As a reminder, please post your house number so it will be visible in case of an emergency. Call 911 for any type of emergency.

We would like to thank the Sandisfield Police & Highway Departments, MA State Police, DCR, Environmental Police, and our Select Board for their assistance and support this past year.

As always, we are in need of volunteers for the Fire Department and Ambulance Squad. Training for EMT classes will be paid for by the Town. Please call Fire Chief Morrison at 413-258-4742 for additional information.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ralph E. Morrison, Fire Chief

Green Committee

Thus far, Town has benefitted greatly from the solar panels installed on the Town Hall and the DPW buildings as part of our previous designation grant. The solar array was designed to create roughly \$231,000 in savings over 25 years for the two buildings combined or \$9,240.00 annually. This designation grant was a great stepping-stone towards the Green Team's Energy Reduction Plan for Sandisfield.

Additionally, the solar arrays were the perfect prerequisite for attaining a designation grant for heat pump projects, as they run off electricity. In Fy23, the Green Team did just that by applying and receiving a heat pump grant for Town Hall. The heat pumps will provide efficient heat and A/C for the building. The project is expected to save 1,069 gallons of oil annually or \$5,386.00 annually. The winning bidder of the project was local company, H.B. Fosters who will be commencing the work in late November 2023.

Moving forward the Green Team is going to focus on these entanglement grants that work together to create the best combined results to realize Sandisfield's Energy Reduction Plan!

Respectfully submitted,
Sandisfield Green Team

Board of Health

FY23 was a year of transition for the Sandisfield Board of Health as they bid farewell to long-time member Kim Spring, who had served on the Board in multiple capacities for the last 10 years and welcomed Brigitte Ruthman who brought her perspective as an EMT to the Board.

The town continues to see an increase of land development and selling of property as property owners took advantage of inflated real estate prices, that stemmed from the COVID pandemic, combined with low interest rates. This has resulted in increased work and a related increase in fees collected for the Board of Health. During FY23, the BOH collected \$8790.00 in fees from the various permits and activities listed below. These funds helped offset the cost of providing public health services.

The responsibilities and activities for the Board of health include, but are not limited to, septic witnessing and permits, well permits, food permits and inspection of food establishments, issuing emergency beaver permits, issuing septic installer, septage hauler, garbage hauler permits, receiving and responding to housing and nuisance complaints, and any other emerging issue that impacts that public health of the Town of Sandisfield.

The Town of Sandisfield has decided to have the Southern Berkshire Public Health Collaborative (SBPHC) to take over the agent and inspection services for the Board of Health starting on July 1, 2023. These services are in addition to their existing SBPHC contract for a public health nursing services that provide Sandisfield with Flu and COVID clinics, monthly blood pressure clinics, monitoring the State MAVEN program and following up on infectious diseases. The SBPHC is a 12-Town Collaborative that was formed as part of the Public Health Excellence Grant intended to help all local boards of health meet the multitude of state requirements and standards.

As COVID begins to wind down and become part of everyday life in Sandisfield, the Board of Health remains committed to keeping the residents healthy and safe. The Board of Health wishes to thank Jayne Smith for applying her professionalism and knowledge to the Board of Health activities for the Town of Sandisfield.

Respectively submitted,

Keith Larson, Chair

Brigitte Ruthman, Vice Chair

Steve Rubenstein, Clerk

Historical Commission

The Knox Trail, an 18th century “war road” which runs for five miles through Sandisfield forests continuing into Otis, was submitted for nomination to the NRHP jointly by the Historical Commissions of Sandisfield and Otis in 2021. The MHC initially turned down the application on grounds that the Knox Trail was a continuous asset that ran for hundreds of miles, not just a small section across two towns. Later, the MHC agreed to review the concept to see if there might be a way forward. At a meeting attended by Otis and Sandisfield commissioners, the MHC asked for additional information and supporting documentation which will be supplied in FY23/24. Although chances are improved, the process would still take several years.

New Boston National Register Historic District road signage was designed by the commission and will be installed in FY23/24.

Town Historical Commissions have several purposes, including coordinating NRHP nominations, raising awareness of the need for preservation of town character and advising Select Boards about potential threats to defined historic and architecturally significant assets. These commissions are different than local historic district commissions which are established by a town’s bylaws with certain defined powers. There are no local historic districts in Sandisfield.

Ronald M. Bernard, Chairman
Sandisfield Historical Commission

Library Board of Trustees

FY2023 saw the return to normal at the library with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. The doors were open all year round and it was wonderful to have our patient and understanding patrons back at the library. The library also welcomed fourteen new patrons and added 110 new adult books, 16 new children's books (including several VOX books that "read" the story), and six new young adult books.

The Sandisfield Library continues to grow its patrons, although we are a small-town library. Our library director attended several Farmington River School literary events and showcased our children's section of the library and the Summer Reading Bingo Blitz.

During the summer we also featured story hour in the Gazebo with sweet treats and several arts and crafts days.

Our Library Director, Theresa Spohnholz, continues to create exciting programs for young and old to make Sandisfield's Library community oriented. New programs this year include a pinochle card night, story hours, as well as holiday themed events.

We are grateful for Clare's continued guidance in the library. Her knowledge and expertise are invaluable. Kathie Burrows continues to serve as Library secretary and this year we are pleased to welcome the addition of Deidre Pytel as our alternate librarian.

Our library would not be able to do all this without the participation of our generous and faithful patrons. The Library Trustees meet once a month and always welcome community involvement.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary L. Turek, Chair
Clare English
Kathie Burrows

Planning Board

Over Fiscal Year 2023, the Planning Board worked diligently on a number of bylaws and amendments, all of which passed at Town Meeting in May 2023.

The Accessory Dwelling Unit bylaw is brand new to Sandisfield and provides homeowners with a means of obtaining rental income, companionship, security, and services, adds moderately priced rental units to the housing stock, develops housing units in single-family neighborhoods, provides housing units for people with disabilities, and protects stability, property values, and the residential character of a neighborhood. This bylaw has been approved by the Attorney General.

The Shared Driveway bylaw amendment was also approved and creates firm rules and regulations for sharing driveways. These include a limit of no more than 3 approved building lots being eligible to be served by one shared driveway, installation of a turnout every 500 feet of the driveway, and acquirement of a written agreement between the landowners to be recorded on the deeds of all properties sharing the driveway, which shall include maintenance and financial responsibilities. This amendment has been approved by the Attorney General.

Lastly, the Short Term Rental bylaw will likely be approved in Fall 2023. This bylaw enables residents to earn extra money from their properties, minimizes public safety and health risks, and deters commercial interests from buying housing to use primarily as short-term rental businesses.

The approved bylaws and amendments have been updated in the Sandisfield Zoning Bylaws, which can be found on the Town website under the “Citizen Action Center.”

In addition, we have approved several Form As, reviewed many driveway and building permits, and made recommendations on a few Special Permits.

The Planning Board has already begun drafting a Tenting Bylaw and establishing Business Districts. A Public Hearing will be held for these propositions in FY24.

Thank you to the Town for its continued support.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandisfield Planning Board

Barbara Cormier, Chair
Paul Gaudette
Bill Taylor
Lisa Leavenworth
Jeff Bye
Gina Colelli, Secretary

Police Department

During Fiscal Year 22-23, the Sandisfield Police Department received over 1,000 calls for service.

Our Officers participated in the state-mandated Bridge Academy, which helps align Sandisfield with the majority of other states. Police Chief Michael Morrison, Adam Gonska, and Mary Bredenfoerder have completed the Bridge Academy. Both Assistant Police Chief, Ralph Morrison and Dana Beardsley opted not to complete the training.

Mary Bredenfoerder took on the full-time position of Public Safety Officer. Mary works 40 hours per week, Monday-Friday, where she engages in a combination of police and EMT duties.

Thank you to all our Officers for their service to our Town. And special thanks to John Burrows who helps with all our clerical work.

We can all make Sandisfield a better and safer place to live with a few crucial principles:

- See something, say something
- Post house numbers where they are clearly visible at all times

Feel free to contact the Police to Department any time.

911 for Emergencies

Non-emergencies call the Office at 413-258-4742 or 413-441-2129 for Chief Morrison's cellphone, who is readily available 24/7. Emails can be sent to PoliceChief@sandisfieldma.gov

Thank you all for your continued support of the Sandisfield Police Department.

Respectfully,
Michael Morrison, Chief of Police

Recreation Committee

The Sandisfield Recreation Committee is currently a five-member group, looking to fill two vacant seats. We happily serve our community, providing a variety of innovative programs and activities designed to stimulate the minds and bodies to all those who wish to participate in our monthly, sometimes bi-monthly offerings. All of our programs are open to all ages, all the time.

Our FY23 activities started off with “Minute to Win It” game day, Free Ice Cream every Saturday in August, and Birds of Prey in September. In October we had a trifecta with Sample Sandisfield, Oktoberfest (we were invited to participate by Looking Glass Gardens) and the Town wide Trick or Treat Trail. In the fall, we offered Autumnal crafting, cupcake decorating and letters to Santa, while enjoying a hot chocolate bar. Santa was up next at the Annual Town Holiday Fair and a week later, co-sponsoring with the Historical Society, a Holiday Lighting at the Rehab Center, complete with Farmington River Elementary students serenading the crowd. We held our first Winter Dance in February, “floated” into March with Root Beer Ice Cream Floats (with crafts and cupcakes), “hopped” into spring with Berkshire Bunnies (with crafts, seed plantings and pot painting), and co-sponsored the Memorial Day Parade/BBQ with the Fire and Police Departments along with the Cultural Council. What was to be our second annual Family Fun Day, unfortunately had to be cancelled, due to the Canadian wild fire smoke. The Cultural Council helped us make lemonade with those lemons and agreed to let us use their grant funding for the band and bounce house used at the Community Pig Roast this past September.

We would like to thank all those involved with helping us in achieving our goal of providing high quality recreation while delivering the bright smiles we believe our community deserves.

Respectfully submitted,
Lynn Rubenstein, Chair
Anina Carr
Laura Messina
Laurie Seddon
Katie Murray

Town Clerk

It's been an amazing year, and I'm excited to share some incredible updates from the Town Clerk's office. Let's dive into the highlights of Fiscal Year 2024.

1. Embracing Technology: This year, we took a big step into the future by implementing Poll Pads. These nifty devices have revolutionized our town meetings and elections, making check-ins more accurate and efficient. No more long lines – just smooth processes for everyone! These devices also help ensure our elections and town meetings are FRAUD free. There is nothing more important than FRAUD-FREE elections with paper ballots and hand counting – the Gold Standard!

2. Unlocking the Past: We're thrilled to announce a groundbreaking partnership with the Boston Public Library and Archive.org. Together, we've digitized the entire town archive from 1762 to 1972, with more recent records coming soon. Now, you can explore the rich history of Sandisfield, from meetings to vital statistics, over the last two centuries. Visit the archive at <https://archive.org/details/townofsandisfield> or access it through the Town Clerk's webpage on the town website. This project and the hosting of the archive does not cost the town a dime, everything is funded by the state.

3. Going Digital with Dog Licenses: In our pursuit of a more streamlined and tech-savvy approach, we've begun digitizing the dog licensing process. While there were a few bumps along the way, and we apologize to those who may have fallen through the cracks, we're working hard to ensure everyone is accounted for. If you haven't received your dog license yet, contact us ASAP by email or phone – we're here to help!

4. Financial Efficiency: Through careful planning and hard work, we're also proud to share that the Town Clerk's office achieved an impressive feat this year. We successfully decreased our year-over-year budget by over 18%, all while increasing the range and quality of services provided to our community. It's a testament to our commitment to financial responsibility and service excellence.

As your Town Clerk, I'm honored to serve the wonderful community of Sandisfield. This year's accomplishments are a result of collaboration, dedication, and the spirit of progress that defines our town. Thank you for your ongoing support, and here's to another fantastic year ahead!

Working for you,

Douglas Miner
Sandisfield Town Clerk

2023 Election Results

Moderator

Dominic Konstam 74

Blank 17

Town Clerk

Douglas T. Miner 75

Blank 16

Board of Assessors

Roger Brown 79

Blank 12

Select Board – 3 Year

Steven Seddon 74

Blank 11

Write-Ins 6

Select Board – 1 Year

Robert Fedell 58

Write-Ins 6

Board of Health

Brigitte Ruthman 15

(Write-In)

Write-Ins 4

Planning Board

Paul Adams 17

Jefferey Bye 65

Blank 9

School Committee

Melissa Bye 76

Blanks 13

Write-Ins 2

Library Trustee

Clare English 73

Blank 16

Write-Ins 2

Constable

Blank 80

Dana Beardsley 8
(Write-In)

Write-Ins 3

Yanner Park Committee

The Yanner Park Committee, begun in 2018, is tasked with recommending to the selectboard necessary improvements and maintenance for the 275-acre town-owned property.

For fiscal year 2023 the Yanner Park Committee focused on planning and details associated with future construction of a pavilion. A design was rendered by town resident and timber framer Kevin Kiwak, a professional engineer certified the plans, and site visits were held with potential contractors. As actual construction costs and logistics became apparent, state procurement policies were reviewed, and after conversations with the Town Manager, it was decided to delay further planning until FY24. These efforts, if continued, will likely be re-directed at finding a builder that can complete all required phases of the project under one general contract.

In early July of the fiscal year, the non-profit youth environmental organization Greenagers Inc. began the long-awaited construction of the first phase of the Yanner Park hiking trail. This project is funded through a \$50K grant from Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR) through their Recreational Trails Program. The trail begins at Town Hill Road just beyond the kiosk/picnic tables and travels east up to and around the high point of the property. After this initial phase was completed, an excavator was hired to do some grading of the beginning part of the trail to smooth out ruts that were left behind after the logging was done in 2018. Phase 2 trail construction will commence early in FY24 and will see the remainder of the trail built from the high point east across the park, then across land owned by Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC), and then down to Hammertown Road, where visitors will be able to then access the Clam River Reserve trails on BNRC land. As part of that phase, a vista will be made and a bench installed at the high point to take advantage of long-range eastern views.

Other improvements at the park during FY23 include having a contractor with a forestry mower reclaim the meadow area east of the parking on Town Hill Road. This will be done every few years to prevent the area from reverting back to forest and offer habitat that is desirable for native pollinator species (bees, butterflies, etc.).

We look forward to continuing our work at the park to make it a functional space for the entire community to enjoy.

Respectfully submitted by the Yanner Park Committee:

Adam Brown (chair)
Emily Gallagher
Paul Gaudette
Kathy Jacobs
Roger Kohler
Sue Tarasuk (secretary)