

STATEMENT OF THE SANDISFIELD SELECT BOARD

Regarding the Conclusion of the Fire/Police Payroll Investigation

The Sandisfield Select Board is issuing this statement to inform the public of the conclusion of the investigation into payroll practices within the Town's Fire/EMS and Police Departments and the resulting personnel action.

In July, the Select Board received a formal complaint concerning Mr. Michael Morrison and potential payroll discrepancies affecting both departments. In response, the Board placed Mr. Morrison on paid administrative leave while an independent investigation was conducted. To ensure that public safety operations continued without interruption during this period, the Board appointed Monterey Police Chief Brian Fahey to serve as Interim Police Chief. Interim Chief Fahey continues to serve in that role as the Town navigates next steps.

Because Mr. Morrison held dual roles as Assistant Fire Chief and Police Chief, the Select Board authorized an independent investigation through KP Law to review payroll submissions, dispatch logs, and related documentation for both the Fire/EMS and Police Departments. The investigatory process included a review of one full year of Fire/EMS and Police payroll records, Fire/EMS and Police dispatch logs, police detail logs, and communications from Town-issued devices. The purpose of the review was to determine whether reported hours were supported by call activity and whether any duplicate or unsupported payments had been made.

The investigation found significant discrepancies within the Fire/EMS payroll, including the repeated submission and approval of hours not supported by dispatch records, the use of an undocumented "minimum call hours" practice, and duplicate or excessive payments issued for individual calls. In addition, due to Mr. Morrison's dual roles, the investigation identified instances in which hours he submitted or approved for Fire/EMS overlapped with or duplicated hours recorded for his Police duties, resulting in improper compensation across departments.

Mr. Morrison was provided the opportunity to review the investigation report and respond. Following that process, and after meeting in Executive Session to consider the findings and Mr. Morrison's response, the Select Board voted to recommend termination of his employment. The Town Manager accepted that recommendation, and Mr. Morrison's employment with the Town has been terminated.

Consistent with the Town's Special Act, *An Act Creating the Office of the Select Board and Town Manager in the Town of Sandisfield*, and with the Town's obligation to ensure proper oversight and accountability, the Select Board will be submitting the investigatory report to the State Ethics Commission and the Berkshire District Attorney's Office for their review.

The investigatory report is now available on the Select Board webpage, attached to the Executive Session minutes. To maintain patient confidentiality, dispatch records reviewed as part of the investigation have been excluded.

The Board appreciates the community's patience while this process was completed thoroughly and in accordance with the law.