



TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
Board of Selectmen Minutes  
January 9, 2017

1. OPEN SESSION - 6:59 pm

Present were Adam Dolby, Andy Montanaro, and William Levakis.

The Chair, A. Dolby, opened the meeting by highlighting the new agenda format recommended by town legal counsel. The intent of the new format is to identify specific action items and listing them separately so they can be acted upon. If anyone has an agenda item that needs to be acted upon, it needs to be on the agenda as a separate item.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a. Minutes of the January 4, 2017 meeting were not available and tabled for the next meeting

3. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE

- a. Budget goals for departments - The Recreation Committee, Cemetery Commission and Planning Board are all level funding their budgets for FY18.
- b. Presentations: Accountant, Tax Collector and Treasurer presented and explained their initial budget requests and goals to the Board. The TA clarified that she will be sending the budgets to the Finance Committee after the Selectmen's review.

Accountant: Requested level funding except for the salary to bring the working hours up from 5 to 20 hours per week to include all the responsibilities of the office; expenses are \$500.

Tax Collector: A 2.5% budget increase was requested to cover the increase in the cost of stamps and fees for training programs. A salary increase of 2.5% was requested. The special projects budget was requested to be level funded at \$10,000; there were no capital items. A change from fee-based to straight salary was proposed.

Treasurer: The appropriation for the Hampden County Retirement was presented. Tax title legal fees are \$10,000 and level funding was requested. A 2.5% salary increase; expenses of \$600 to cover the increase in payroll fees and postage were requested.

- c. Selectboard Budget – Changes include Selectmen's Secretary hours increased from 13 to 15 hours per week.

Networking – budget will need to accommodate potential changes in services needed to support the current needs of the town hall.

Building – a line item needs to be established and funded for the fire department and/or highway department buildings upgrade or build

- d. 14 Kaolin Road (2 parcels) – property is being auctioned by bank on January 10, 2017. The town is owed back taxes, penalty and interest, which will be paid to the town by the bank or attorney by January 15, 2017.

#### 4. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Designation of Animal Control Officer per MDAR – signing of form
- b. Tracking Town Administrator's working and non-working hours – the TA will keep track of her hours and inform payroll of any uses of personal, vacation or sick time. The contract outlines the accumulation of time.
- c. Town Administrator reporting protocol – per legal counsel, most towns have adopted protocols requiring that communication with the Town Administrator be undertaken through the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen. This process is intended to avoid conflicting direction, waste of Town resources, and possible violation of the Open Meeting Law. It was proposed that this structure be considered for Blandford.

**MOTION: A. Dolby moved that the Board of Selectmen adopt the following protocol for access to the Town Administrator:**

The Town Administrator shall act on matters at the direction of the Chair of the Board of Selectmen. All requests for action by the Town Administrator shall be presented to the Chair for consideration. The Chair may determine, at his/her discretion, to submit any request for action by the Town Administrator for consideration by the Board of Selectmen.

B. Levakis seconded the motion.

The motion was adopted unanimously with progress to be reviewed in one month.

#### 5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

- a. High Speed Internet – Wired West is out of the picture. Mass Broadband is now requiring each town to find their own provider. A meeting is coming up at the end of the month to discuss.
- b. Turnpike Access – A. Montanaro again requested approval of the letter to the Lieutenant Governor requesting assistance in moving forward the turnpike access. He presented a letter and petition from 2014 with B. Levakis' signature, showing his support of the initiative.

**MOTION: A. Dolby made a motion to send the letter to the Lieutenant Governor.**

A. Montanaro seconded the motion:

In the discussion phase, B. Levakis indicated that in light of resident input, he has changed his position on the matter. He felt the town needs to be informed of the full ramifications of a turnpike access and would like it discussed at a town meeting.

Motion was retracted and the item was tabled until the next Selectboard meeting.

#### 6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Watson Park – the water commissioners have decided to bill 6 years of back fees. The annual rate is \$766 per year, totaling \$5,268. The Selectmen would like to discuss this as trustees for Watson Park. The Town Administrator will respond to the water department.

Someone is seeking permission to hold a wedding in Watson Park. The BOS indicated there is no charge for this event.

- b. The highway department full time new hires are eligible to receive holiday pay after a 90-day probation period. Per the union agreement, there is no restriction on holiday pay. If they work the holiday, they are to receive time-and-a-half. They must work a minimum of 3 hours and must work the schedule work day before and after the holiday.
- c. Wi-Fi is available in half the town hall; the other half is not operating. The quote received for Wi-Fi upgrade was high, and we are looking at other options.
- d. Burn permits are available on the Fire Department's website. A paper form is also available at the Fire Department.
- e. The next Selectboard meeting will be January 17, due to the Martin Luther King holiday on Monday.
- f. Security at town hall – the DVR for the camera system needs to be replaced. The Town Administrator has asked the Police Chief to look into it and security of the building.
- g. Highway Goals and Objectives – A. Montanaro brought a sample of past goals for the department and requested their current goals, measurable and time outlined. The TA explained that she is working closely with highway to move them from a reactive position to a proactive stance She requested a longer time period to expand the process and establish goals based on the development of the department.

#### 7. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The Town Administrator will attend the Massachusetts Municipal Association conference in Boston on January 19-21.
- b. Conservation Commission and Council on Aging are now on the town hall network
- c. A Glasgow Lands potluck will be held on January 28 from 6-8:30 p.m. All are invited. Call the Historical Society at 413-848-0108 for more information.
- d. Earth Day is April 22. The Historical Society and Recreation Committee are planning events. More information to come!

#### 8. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. No discussion

#### 9. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION – 10:08 p.m.

Pursuant to G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1) - To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

**MOTION: A. Dolby moved to enter into executive session; B. Levakis seconded the motion.** The motion was adopted unanimously on a roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote

A. Dolby – Yes

A. Montanaro – Yes

B. Levakis – Yes

Submitted by: Sue Streeter, Selectmen Secretary

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Adam Dolby – Chair



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William Levakis – Member



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Andrew Montanaro - Clerk