



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Board of Selectmen Minutes
March 27, 2017

1. OPEN SESSION - 7:05 pm
Present were Adam Dolby, Andy Montanaro and William Levakis.
2. PLANNING BOARD: GREEN COMMUNITY
 - a. The BOS and Planning Board held a joint meeting to discuss the Green community grant. Energy Source came and met with the Planning Board. It was recommended that the town take the estimated incentives and use those projects first.
 - b. Measure Cost \$208,259.00, Estimated Incentive \$500,855.00, Net Cost of 157,404.00. The three highest costing projects would be the Highway Garage, Town Office and Water Treatment Plant, coming in at \$142,436.00. Town would need to come up with 4,011.00. The cost would cover the heating controls, LED lightings, windows and doors for Town Office. All LED lighting for the Water Treatment Plant and the same for the highway. Energy source did the audit. Estimated net savings \$15,000.00 per year.
MOTION: To authorize Ted Cousineau to execute application for Green Community Program
B. Levakis seconded the motion.
Abstained: A. Montanaro; Two in Favor
3. TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S UPDATE
 - a. Jennifer Girard will take on the BOS meeting minutes temporarily for Sue Streeter.
 - b. Police Association requested to place a vending machine in lobby. Proceeds will go to the association but town would like to receive a percentage to cover the costs it may incur.
 - c. Schedule A has been filed. Free cash has been verified. DLS had send out an email confirming the amounts.. Fiscal Year 2016 is officially completed and closed.
 - d. Brad Curry, Highway Super on March 24th, went to a parade in memory of the PDW worker killed in Longmeadow.
 - e. ADA Grant up to \$250,000.00 available to improve access features for handicap. Library ramp was suggested.
 - f. On-duty insurance premium quotes for police and fire need to be processed
 - g. Finance team met to establish preventative measures and streamline processes for the new fiscal year.
 - h. Beaver Deceivers were not taken but deteriorated and then removed. Brad Curry will follow up to see if they can be donated again
 - i. The town designation as a Green Community opens up many opportunities and inquiries from solar companies. Gate Pine Solar Farm requested a 20.5 year lease program for property on North Blandford Road. Town Administrator will review and look at other options and companies.
 - j. Community computer is up and running for use by Town Boards and Committees.

- k. The Town Administrator needs assistance in clarification and responsibilities of the Accountant and Assistant Account positions. The Accountant's hours should be 5 hours and only doing warrants while the Assistant Accountant is only doing the reconciliation. There are multitude of other functions that are not being done. A. Dolby suggested to bring Josephine Sarnelli before the Board to address these issues..

4. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Hilltown Ambulance:

Tom Ackley requested that the town sign the contract and the addendum. Contract is a two year term.

MOTION: To accept the Hilltown Ambulance Contract with Addendum by B. Levakis

B. Levakis seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously

- b. Treasurer computer needs to be replaced. Received quotes for a new monitor, micro-soft licenses and 8 GB hard drive.

MOTION: To approve a new computer in the amount of \$1,792.00 for the Treasurer's Office, A. Dolby

B. Levakis seconded the motion

The motion was passed unanimously

- c. After conferring with Town Council, Knox Trail Riders at Blandford Ski Club permit issue was deferred to Zoning Board of Appeals

- d. Resignation of Jeffrey Bacon

MOTION: To accept the resignation of Jeffrey Bacon effective May 31, 2017, by A. Dolby

B. Levakis seconded the motion

The motion was passed unanimously

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

- a. Board of Selectmen Annual Report – Changes have been proposed.
- b. Bond remuneration: Traveler's insurance – process is moving forward
- c. PVPC agreement – Send Electronically
- d. TA Evaluation – Tabled

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. A. Montanaro requested that Brad Curry, highway Superintendent to the BOS meeting to discuss roads that will be repaired under Chapter 90.
- b. Wired West \$1,000.00 invoice will be processed and paid. There is a line item for this expense.

7. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. Ski Club wine tasting on April 8, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. Walk the mountain, sample wines and entertainment.

MOTION: To approve one day permit for event, A. Dolby

B. Levakis seconded the motion

The motion was passed unanimously

b. Town Administrator read a statement (see attached) regarding her position, micromanagement and moving forward.

8. ADJOURN MEETING – 9:06 p.m.

MOTION: A. Dolby moved to adjourn the meeting.

B. Levakis seconded the motion.

The motion was passed unanimously.

Submitted by: Jennifer Girard, Secretary

Adam Dolby – Chair

Andrew Montanaro - Clerk

William Levakis – Member

Angeline Ellison- Statement for March 27, 2017

It is with great regret I find myself writing and addressing the board and the residents of Blandford in such a place of total dismay.

I started working in Blandford on September 12, 2016 with the understanding and commitment that the town needed a professional manager to help them move forward and resolve systemic issues, create procedures and protocol as well as supervising staff. My expertise in process improvement, management, policies and procedure development, as well as holding staff accountable, was an integral part of the transition. I accepted the position with a clear understanding that the Selectboard supported change and having a strong manager in place. That is what I did.

Through my job description and via votes of the BOS, I was authorized to fulfill that mission. (Please see my job description and the authority assigned to me).

Within my first 3-8 days, I set up 1-1 with staff members and board members to establish expectations and introduce my style of management. I also met with BOS members to establish priorities and goals. (With no preconceived notions) All members were in concurrence that staff development and accountability was priority. In addition, I was given the directive to make sure people were not doing what was outside the scope of their responsibilities.

On September 27, 2017 (only 6 days into my position), Tony Van Werkhoven resigned stating “The driving force for my resignation is related to the Town Administrator (TA) and the major deficiencies that I perceive in her performance and what appears to be unwillingness on the part of the BoS as a whole to recognize this and take action.” THIS IS 6 DAYS INTO MY POSITION! 6 DAYS! I still cannot fathom why. I was only meeting with staff and establishing protocols: I was not here long enough to make any significant impact. I did however challenge the status quo, as would any good manager creating a system of checks and balances. My methodology prevented any entity absolute authority beyond the systems of checks and balances.

I had staff meetings weekly, then bi and now monthly. I established a team that would work well together. Changing the prior dynamics was met with challenges from a staff member who did not want to conform. The perpetual insubordination and the continued support by one particular board member made the task almost impossible. If there were uniform collaboration and support, the transition period would have run a lot smoother.

The constant undermining and micromanagement of Selectmen Montanaro created a divisive and antagonistic environment between me and those who now perceived my authority as something that can be challenged. I am not here to appease anyone’s ego or his or her political agenda. I was hired to do a job (and to take a line from Yoda) - “do it well I will”. I set expectations as any good manager does (see attached) to help staff transition to the next level. I hold all departments accountable- not just those that meet my favor and ostracize those that present a discord to someone’s agenda.

It is my personal opinion that Selectmen Montanaro is not working in the best interest of the Town but rather is pushing an agenda that reflects a cohort, which I am terming a “clique”- they refuse to accept change; advocating insubordination, bullying and intimidation to get what they want. They refuse to accept change, they refuse to accept that the Town Administrator is responsible for the day to day operations and that the Selectboard is the only entity – AS A WHOLE and not as individuals, who can make decisions for the town.

On two occasions, I was informed that two members of the finance committee and Hilltown Collaborative were negotiating decisions without direction or instruction from the BOS, which was beyond their scope of responsibility, statute or their “advisory” role. I addressed it privately.

At any point -if you think you can do the job better within this position or any other staff position, please apply for the position and do the job- otherwise allow me the opportunity to supervise the staff as I see fit. Do not micromanage and be a Monday night quarterback.

There are things that I have accomplished above and beyond that expected within a 6 month period, on a part time basis, with my time being constantly monitored (challenged) and my work and integrity being challenged: If I am incompetent, tell me so. You NEVER EVER CHALLENGE MY INTREGRITY OR MY WORK EITHIC. I will not tolerate or accept any more of this behavior, in any shape or form. Before you tell me, I am not performing to expectations, please look at each weeks agenda since September 19 under Town Administrator updates to see what I have been doing. Here are a few examples

- 1- Rebuilding of the highway department- personnel, moral and functionality that was constantly micromanaged
- 2- Professionalizing the departments-, no one should be yelling at each other.
- 3- Presenting Town Hall to residents as a resource rather than an enemy or adversarial entity
- 4- Grants: Small Bridge Grant and collaborated with Green Community Grant

Collaborations:

1. worked to get staff meetings and having different departments to work in collaboration now monthly
2. Worked with the water department to resolve 2 disputes beyond the scope of the BoS
3. Worked with Nye Brook, Ski Club and outside entity to resolve disputes and create systems for better communications
4. Worked with Planning Board to complete the Green Community Grant
5. Technical assistants to the different departments
6. Facilities management
7. Procurement officer

The list goes on. I am all things to all the people in Blandford yet my integrity is challenged The town can have a positive outlook and this is the opportunity to do so. It is unfortunate that I hear “oh you’re from Blandford” as a response to outsiders. This should never be the image or perception for the town. It should never be adversarial, we work as a team and the response people get from interaction in town hall should be positive.

I will not allow you or anyone to defame my character or integrity. I do my job with the upmost respect, dignity and accountability—but only for the truth... I refute any lies your clique is spreading about me; you sit here and present half-truths and lies. I was not responsible for any resignations: your pervasive lies and to term it as Donald Trump would “alternative fact” is not only depicting lies but also hurting this community. The only person listed that resigned was highway personnel who I tried to convince not to go. When asked what I could do to make him stay, “he responded, not to be micromanaged by Andy Montanaro and you being hired two years ago”. I will not be the scapegoat for anyone’s ill comings. The most recent changes and resignations during my tenure has been received well; the staff and boards have embraced the new perspective and are working towards helping each other. We have a good team, we communicate, and we help each other. No one is beyond reproach and everyone is held to the same standard.

I have and set high expectations, I know that. I create a team that will produce at that level, if it is not sabotaged and circumvented at every step. When that happens it only further undermines my authority; there are numerous occasions I could elaborate upon but it is a moot point.

Unfortunately, it appears any effort to mend or discuss these shortcomings falls on deaf ears. With that said, I can release my executive session minutes to demonstrate the attempts at vilifying me and the pernicious behavior that will destroy the town and its attempt to move forward, reflective of all opinions and views.

Overall, circumventing me and asking me to accomplish tasks without the collective vote is in total contradiction to the BoS vote: we took a vote that stated all decisions or directives for the town administrator will come from the Selectboard as a whole. Mr. Montanaro continues to circumvent the board and now me, with the staff. They continue to question the chain of command as well as my authority. He is creating an environment where insubordination is pervasive, and where he can undermine the will and vote of the BoS and the integrity of the residents of Blandford.

I will answer and address any issues and concerns anyone has relating to this pervasive character assassination. I will make myself available via office hours, cell phone, etc...

I refuse to and will not be micromanaged and I will not allow any of the staff to be crippled by a destructive form of management. Nevertheless, I will not quit. I will not quit; you have to fire me (or do something drastic, which is already in the works- sabotaging the town) for me to leave this position.

I am working for the greater good of Blandford and I hope to continue to do so.

-The following was added after a brief statement by A. Dolby at the meeting:

I am not looking for a retort from the selectman but rather wanted to provide my statement to the blatant lies projected against my performance when in fact it is based on subjective issues and character assassination. Many resignations have been attributed to me (from Mr. Montanaro and his "clique") one within a month or so of my arrival was Bobby Holmes, who (as I had mentioned) attributed his departure to the micromanaging style of Mr. Montanaro and wishing I had been placed in the position two years earlier. It is not right to just lie.

I will claim one resignation during my tenure in Blandford. For better or worse, the person leaving has been a positive change to the department, our staff, and town hall. We are working stronger and more as a functional team

I will share anything, outside of executive session information, to anyone.