



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Board of Selectmen, Minutes
February 29, 2016

Attendance: Andrew Montanaro, Bill Levakis and Cara Letendre - Secretary

Open Meeting:

7:00 p.m. Mr. Montanaro called meeting to order, provided notice that meeting may be recorded.

New Business:

1. Shepard Farm: next week the Board will hear a report from Mick Brennan on behalf of the Historical Commission regarding the progress for allowing tenants into the Shepard Farm property. There will also be a farmer present who has expressed interest.
2. Minutes: Mr. Levakis motion to accept the minutes of February 22, 2016, Mr. Montanaro second, unanimous vote.
3. Tax Collector Regarding Closing:
 - a. June Masee:
 - i. Balancing for FY14 and FY15 is done. I am working on FY11, FY12, and FY13 to be done on Thursday.
 - ii. Have to clean accounts receivable.
 - iii. Looking into 2 undetermined receipt accounts, believe to have determined the source.
 - iv. July of FY16 is reconciled
 - v. Will be closing the Treasurer's account and transferring it into a local bank account.
 - b. Mr. Montanaro: it is essential for us to reconcile the bank statements.
 - i. Ms. Masee- I started reconciling FY11 and am now up to FY12.
 - ii. Mr. Montanaro- once this is accomplished, are we looking for variances?
 - iii. Ms. Masee- yes, we are looking and have also found a few things we haven't anticipated.
 - c. Board asked if 1 of 3 financial officers are not available one week please reschedule for another day, do not just cancel a meeting.
 - d. Mr. Montanaro- please get current with banks statements by a week from today.
 - i. Ms. Masee- yes, not a problem. Mine are current. Recently I learned that I have to balance packets to the deposits and payments. I can either do the real estate project or this project. I

can't do both at the same time. So I did the reconciliations first then the taxes. Everyone was aware of that.

- e. Mr. Montanaro – the Schedule A is due, we need your documentation by Monday.
 - i. Ms. Masee – yes, we need Brenda's work as well.
 - ii. Mr. Montanaro – get your part done by Monday please.
- f. Mrs. Smith – You (Ms. Masee) and Josephine agree that no more money would be entered at this time.
 - i. Ms. Masee – no, there are a few things pending.
 - ii. Mrs. Smith – you are not to enter any new checks, they go to Brenda.
 - iii. Ms. Masee – that is not my understanding. I will check with Josephine, maybe she changed her mind.
 - iv. Mrs. Smith – I spoke with her this evening and she wants you to give any checks to Brenda at this point.
 - v. Mr. Montanaro – Ms. Masee you can go ahead and clarify that with Josephine.
- g. Mrs. Smith – where are the TD bank statements that you can't find?
 - i. Ms. Masee – They are missing, but it's ok because Josephine already balanced them.
 - ii. Mrs. Smith – according to Josephine it's a problem.
 - iii. Ms. Masee – I can't find them, my office was open last week and now they are missing.
 - iv. Mrs. Smith – how long will it take to get second copies from the bank?
 - v. Ms. Masee – it took 2.5 weeks to get the first copies.
 - vi. Mr. Montanaro – is this the same account you said you could get done by Monday?
 - vii. Ms. Masee – yes, but I had already worked on that part. The old check stubs are missing too.
 - viii. Mrs. Smith- you balanced but the way you balanced in the past was incorrect.
 - ix. Ms. Masee – I balanced this the new way.
 - x. Mrs. Smith – they need to be added to the spreadsheets.
 - xi. Board will address the security issue.
 - xii. Mr. Montanaro – please re-check the office and if not call the bank and re-order.
- h. Mrs. Smith – it is embarrassing at this time of year that the books are still not closed. Thank goodness for Josephine correcting the process. Even if it is done by Monday it gives the Accountant and the Treasurer very little time to complete. On two occasions Josephine came up on a Thursday to meet with the Financial Officers and now one was here to meet her. I am not hearing the urgency from you that I should be hearing at this point. If you knew the TD statements were missing you should have notified us immediately.
 - i. Ms. Masee- I just found out this afternoon.

- ii. Mrs. Smith – you guys are waiting too long to ask for help. We realize that we are asking you to bring several years of errors into compliance and do your daily job at the same time. But you have to ask for help sooner. Josephine is going to meet with the Treasurer now and make sure that she is balancing correctly.
 - iii. Ms. Masee – Josephine didn't ask me the right questions. It's a communication problem, it is not just my fault.
 - iv. Mr. Montanaro – it is critical that we have a written policy.
 - v. Ms. Masee – municipal accounting is very different from regular accounting.
 - vi. Mrs. Smith – going forward there can be no more blaming each other.
 - vii. Ms. Masee – we should be able to work it out between us.
 - viii. Mrs. Smith – but not at the luxury that it drags on and is not addressed.
- i. Mr. Levakis – I would like to enforce that the Finance Officers and Committee be at every Selectboard meeting.
- j. Mr. Montanaro – would like a check list of pending tasks for closing and who is accountable for each, as well as when they need to be complete.
 - i. Mrs. Smith – the finance committee has this and will provide it to the Selectboard.
- k. Mr. Levakis – the Accountant and Treasurer's salaries are running low, why are there so many hours?
 - i. Mrs. Smith – Janet has been pulling reports to get information that she needed from June.
 - 1. Ms. Masee – those reports are not accurate.
 - 2. Mrs. Smith – Josephine says that they are and recommends that she pull them. Each one of you thinks that the other is doing something wrong. Going forward when Josephine clarifies something that is the final say. – the Board agreed.
- l. Mrs. Smith – the Financial Officers keep finding more and more obstacles in the system as they are completing tasks. That is not their fault and it makes the job more difficult. We are looking for honesty and a sense of urgency. The town has run for years with no controls, no back-ups and giant holes exist.
- m. Mr. Montanaro – the Selectboard has not received any reports on progress.
 - i. Ms. Masee – the Finance Committee asked us not to share information as to stop gossip.
- 4. Id Machine: Cara presented two quotes to the Board. Mr. Montanaro asked for samples and references for both.
 - a. Finance Committee approved spending \$1,300 - \$1,500 out of capitol.
- 5. Baseball Field- will be in rotation for games this year.
- 6. New Resident, Mr. Quinn – thank the board for Welcome Committee sending basket.

Old Business:

1. Special Town Employees:
 - a. Mr. Levakis motion to make the election officer position a special town employee position, Mr. Montanaro second (invoking the order of necessity as Mrs. Montanaro serves as an election officer and he would otherwise abstain if Mr. Dolby were present to vote), unanimous vote.
2. Library Employees Pay Rate:
 - a. Mr. Montanaro – checked with legal regarding this issue and has not heard back yet. He will abstain from voting on the issue as Mrs. Montanaro is a library employee.
 - b. Mr. Levakis- feels that the library employees should be paid minimum wage. He also feels that the Selectboard has the power to make this decision.
 - c. Mr. Levakis motion to give the library employees a raise of \$1.00 per/hr.
 - i. Mr. Montanaro – I have no reason to object to the increase, however I want to have an evaluation from the Finance Committee first as to how it plays into pay rates for the whole town as well as the entire budget increase.
 - d. Finance Committee-
 - i. Mrs. Kronholm has stated that she is currently working on some alternatives.
 - ii. Mrs. Smith agrees with the raise, however the discussion mid-year is inappropriate. Willing to meet half way and bring those under \$10.00 up to \$10.00. The trustees would like to increase all employees by \$1.00.
 - iii. The total library salaries for FY16 was \$26,000 which led to a \$9,123 increase in book funding. The total requested salaries for FY17 is \$37,366 (a 43.7% increase) which would lead to a 12.2% increase in book funding. The entire budget for the Chester Library is \$35,000.
 - iv. Mrs. Smith- the Selectboard is setting a precedent, we are keeping pay raises equal across the town employees. We don't have a slush fund to draw from. This can wait until we vote the budget.
 - v. Mr. Montanaro asked Mrs. Smith to try to come to an agreement with the Library Trustees and the Director on the number. Please discuss other options with them as well.
 - vi. Mr. Montanaro- table the issue for now while we wait for a response from legal.
3. Old Town Hall – Sale of
 - a. Deeds sent to Town Council for review

Submitted by:
Cara Letendre

Andrew Montanaro – Acting Chair

William Levakis - Member