



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Board of Selectmen, Minutes
May 23, 2016

Attendance: Adam Dolby, William Levakis, and Andrew Montanaro, Cara Letendre - Secretary

Open Meeting:

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

Executive Session: Anticipated executive session in accordance with the provisions of G.L. c. 30A, sec. 21(a)(1), to discuss complaints against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

1. Mr. Levakis chose to hold the discussion in open meeting.
2. Mr. Dolby made it clear that people can only speak when he, as the chair, calls on them.
3. Mr. Dolby: there have been a number of texts and emails from Mr. Levakis that have been very angry in tone.
4. Mr. Levakis interrupting: motion to table until he gets written complaints signed and notarized to the Town Clerk and Police Chief to file in Boston with an impartial board. Feels that the Selectboard didn't take the proper steps and get him a summons with 48 hrs notice.
 - a. No second.
 - b. Mr. Levakis: will protest in Boston. Left the room.
5. Mr. Dolby: well that undermines the purpose of why we wanted to have this meeting. This is an example of why we were planning to have it in executive session. My hope was to handle it informally without spectacle. The challenge is that on a number of occasions it has been made clear in writing that my performance as chair is not up to standards for Mr. Levakis. He believes that there is some sort of conspiracy. My hopes are to resolve those issues and be productive as a Board.
 - a. Mr. Levakis was given 48 hours notice in the form of a legal summons.
 - b. This is not a legal proceeding, no charges have been filed, there is no reason to file with the police.

- c. The intent is to air grievances and find out why there is so much pent up hostility and get past it. That is hard to do now with a Board of two.
6. Mr. Montanaro: I had prepared a document with a complaint signed by me for Mr. Levakis and the Board to discuss with aim to resolve. My intent is not to humiliate. I was hoping that by pointing out the petulant behavior through the last few months/years we could get past it, work together, air our differences and be civil. When someone is instigating and bullying someone has to stand up and say "stop" so that it doesn't continue. When Mr. Levakis is ready to address the issue, we are ready to work with him.
7. Mr. Steve Jemiolo repeated outbursts from the audience. Mr. Dolby asked him to remain quiet and when he did not, Mr. Dolby asked the Police to please escort Mr. Jemiolo from the premises. The police officers present did not act to do so and constable Mr. Curry removed Mr. Jemiolo. Mr. Jemiolo commented that this was "the most corrupt Board ever"
8. Mr. Dolby- Cara please put it on the agenda weekly until it is concluded. I am the Chief Executive and when a complaint is made to me I have to act as it is potentially a liability and see it to a level of closure.

New Business: (Mr. Levakis returned to the meeting)

1. Chief Hennessey: Pay rates FY17
 - a. Mr. Hennessey provided a packet of police activity log for the past year as requested by the Finance Committee with the understanding that it was a factor in terms of pay raises.
 - i. It took one month to get the activity log and I am still working on access to the server. There are things missing from the log as I can't always get a hold of Berkshire and some calls go through the State Police.
 - b. The police vehicles are back in town. 3 cruisers are at Town Hall and one is at Mr. Cooley's house as he does nightly checks of the municipal buildings. The policy regarding vehicles was previously presented to the Selectboard which we follow. The law says that the Selectboard oversees the Police Chief and the Chief is in direct control of the equipment.
 - i. When there is an issue in town I can go straight to the call when I have the vehicle at my house. One of the vehicles doesn't always start. I'm concerned about damage if we keep the vehicles at Town Hall.
 - ii. Mr. Dolby: are the vehicles where you want them?
 - iii. Chief Hennessey: yes, but I would like them covered.
 - iv. Mr. Montanaro: Are you keeping mileage logs?
 1. Chief Hennessey: no we have not had an issue. We have logs of who's on control.

- c. Mr. Dolby: at this point we have the activity log and the Chief is fine with where the vehicles are and I'm fine with that. That meets what was asked for regarding the pay increase.
- d. Finance: we never said they shouldn't get the raise, our point was that we requested information and it is a challenge to present what is fiscally best for the Town when we are missing information. Is it fiscally responsible for the Town to provide transportation for the Police officers to and from work from a financial standpoint? Has gone too far, all we needed was clarity.
- e. Mr. Dolby: for the last 8 months or so this has gotten very difficult. Meeting are strained. I encourage communication to avoid drama.
- f. Mr. Dolby motion to implement and approve the pay increase for the police department as of July 1, 2016 in line with the rest of the Town, Mr. Montanaro second, unanimous vote.
- g. Chief Hennessey: I am trying to provide the Town with a good police department. I have been sick and we have had server issues. To hear that we shouldn't have a police department was a slap in the face. We can only do so much with what we have.

2. Finance Committee:

- i. Finance Committee has been short one member for awhile. No one has applied for the position.
 - 1. Dale Miller stated that she would re-apply.
 - 2. Mr. Levakis asked her for her letter.
- ii. Mr. Levakis: I would like to attack this problem cause I see it fuming. Mr. van Werkhoven got issued a speeding ticket by the town police and that fueled a feud on the job site (Highway).
- iii. Mr. Dolby: Mr. van Werkhoven wasn't serving as a Finance Committee member at the time, so why are we discussing this under Finance?
- iv. Mr. Levakis: Mr. van Werkhoven was intercepted by the Police at the salt shed and it's all wrong and has to stop. This is harrassment.
- v. Mr. Dolby: How does this involve the Finance Committee?
- vi. Mr. Levakis: Mr. van Werkhoven is a public official and to harrass Mr. Curry on the work site is retaliation.
- vii. Mr. Dolby: Brad, were you harrassed?
- viii. Mr. Curry: No I was not. Bits and pieces of this are right and wrong. Tony and I settled the issue with the Town Clerk. I thought he was coming up as Finance. Then Mr. Levakis summoned me to the Police Department to further discuss the issue that had been resolved.
- ix. Mr. Dolby: let's move on then.

x. Mr. Levakis: Mrs. Smith is working outside of the Finance Box. What gives you the right to call the Russell Police and talk to them about shared services?

1. Mrs. Smith: as a private citizen I can call whomever I like. As a GTAC member we signed a community contract to look into share services to collectively save money.
2. Mr. Levakis: you're a public official, you can't negotiate.
3. Mrs. Smith: I left a message, there was no negotiating.
4. Mr. Levakis: you can't be on GTAC.
5. Mrs. Smith: You weren't listening. I can be on GTAC, Town Counsel has cleared this.
6. Mr. Dolby: Towns are going to discuss consolidation and we need an organized approach. When we approach towns we should do so in an organized manner. I have no issue with you calling, it's just good to know when it's initiated.
7. Mr. Levakis: as a representative of this Town it is a disgrace to mention in public that we don't need a police department. It is such a violation I can't explain it. You're gonna get in trouble that way.
8. Mr. Dolby: whether or not we have a police department is not an immediate problem.
9. Mr. Bacon: none of these issues are regarding the Finance Committee, why am I here?
10. Mr. van Werkhoven: we do not work for the Selectboard, we are an advisory committee to the town. To sit here and listen to Mr. Levakis sit here and make a number of erroneous accusations about me making a scene is absolutely false. I went to Julius Hall road because I received a ticket for an issue which the Highway Department has the same deficiency.

3. Highway Department List of Vehicles: Mr. Curry

- a. like to get rid of the 99 National and the 84 Cargo Truck. Reviewed mileage of each.
- b. Trying to avoid renting an excavator. The one we own is waiting on tracks.
- c. The Kabodas both need to be replaced.
- d. Mr. Montanaro: if we sell all four vehicles will we have enough to buy a new excavator? We can add the Fire Truck to sell as well.
- e. Mr. Curry: we have been getting rid of equipment over the past several years and putting the money in the general fund.
 - i. Mr. Dolby: keep records to track the funds so we can set them aside. Please ask Mrs. Lombardo to keep a separate fund.

- f. The grader is in rough shape. We worked on it for 3 weeks before we could get it running.
 - g. Mr. Dolby: whatever we don't use, let's sell and put towards what we need.
4. Highway Department Secretary:
- a. Lisa emailed the Board and Mr. Curry to let them know that because her hours are packed to pre-project status she has accepted another position which will pull her out of this office more.
 - i. Mr. Dolby: Mr. Curry, are you happy with what she can still provide?
 - ii. Mr. Curry: yes, we will try it out at first and see how it goes. I like working with Lisa. She is a good worker and has valuable knowledge.
 - iii. Mr. Dolby: what level of compensation would she need to make it work/viable? Mr. Curry will ask if this isn't working.
5. Highway Department Update:
- a. We just replaced a culvert on Julius Hall road. Now we are on Beulah Land Road. We will be replacing another culvert. Then we will be on Gibbs Road working on potholes. We plan to get the hotbox out and fill more potholes.
 - b. North Blandford Road Complaints Truck Speed:
 - i. Mr. Curry called the quarry and Tonlinos and was told it is up to the drivers. Chief Hennessey has been out there this week with the radar. The trucks are driving fast and in the middle of the road.
 - ii. The quarry pays taxes to Otis, why not use their roads?
 - iii. Chief Hennessey will put more officers out to enforce the speed limits and contact DOT about calling in a truck team. He is setting up a date for DOT about a sign for no commercial vehicles.
 - iv. Mr. Dolby: please write a ticket every time you see an infraction and visit the quarry again.
 - v. Put up signs, speed limit is strictly enforced.
 - vi. The bridge inspector is scheduled to check the weight limits.
6. Minutes: Mr. Dolby motion to approve meeting minutes of May 16, 2016 as amended, Mr. Montanaro second, unanimous vote.
7. Watson Park: Mr. Levakis asked the Board permission to order 2 loads of sand for the volleyball court. The sand has already been ordered and delivered.
8. Hill by the Historical Commission: Mr. Levakis asked for quotes from 3 landscapers. 2 did not want to provide quotes. One quote received from Letendre Lawncare for \$1,498.00, slightly lower than last year. Board could not find funds and didn't accept the quote.

Old Business:

- 1. Chester Road:
 - a. Ch 90 project 1 is in the registry. The bid opening is June 14.

- b. Ch 90 project 2 is being reviewed by Kathy at DOT and Lisa is working on the bid package.
- 2. Vacation Time: recommend allowing for some roll over and using some before the end of the year.
- 3. Highway Superintendent: Brad will get a letter of intent and updates in certification to Cara. The appointment is up in August.
- 4. Cemetery Commission: Mr. Cousineau has an attorney, recommended by the Tax Collector, to do the title search and appraisal. The cost will be about \$750.00. The Board reviewed and signed the quote.
- 5. Employee Evaluations: Town Counsel response (see attached)
 - a. The Board can give feedback to Cara to compose and aggregate a review. If the feedback doesn't match we can have a meeting about the review of the employee and then have a meeting to present the review to the employee. All in open session, without public comment.
 - b. Cara can't send each review to the Board to review but has to put it on the agenda to discuss in open meeting.
 - c. Will continue to work with Counsel to ensure proper process.
 - d. Board will set a date and get it to Cara.
- 6. Insurance: invited MIIA Rep to a BOS meeting. But he has no new information to supply. Mr. Montanaro is looking into alternatives. Mr. Dolby will follow-up.
- 7. ID Policy: Cara presented draft. Cara will revise and revisit.
- 8. Town Administrator: tabled
- 9. Personnel Bylaw: Cara provided meeting minutes as demanded of her. The minutes stated that the Board(including Mr. Levakis) asked Mr. Montanaro to seek Counsel to draft the policy. On March 26 the policy was distributed and reviewed by the Board (including Mr. Levakis). They asked questions and amendments were made.
 - a. Mr. Montanaro will get Mrs. Kronholm a statement about the Personnel Policy. The special town meeting is scheduled for June 27.
- 10. Closing of Books: not complete. Tabled.

9:38 p.m. Mr. Dolby motion to go into executive session to discuss ongoing union negotiations, Mr. Montanaro second, Cara roll call vote - Mr. Levakis - yes, Mr. Dolby - yes, Mr. Montanaro - yes, unanimous vote.

Submitted by:
Cara Letendre

Adam Dolby - Chair

Andrew Montanaro - Clerk

William Levakis - Member

