



TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
SELECTBOARD

Blandford Town Hall  
1 Russell Stage Road, Suite 1  
Blandford, MA 01008

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING WITH ASSESSORS  
October 16, 2017**

**1. OPEN SESSION 6:58 p.m.**

Present were Adam Dolby, William Levakis and Cara Letendre  
Meeting is being recorded

**2. OLD BUSINESS**

June Masee, Peter Langmore and James Bergland of the Municipal Light Board appeared before the Board to discuss the Broadband initiative; they have received the green light letter from Locke Lord for \$1,750,000 in telecommunications system bonds. This will be used to assess the Town's readiness for fiber optics. A question was asked as to when this could be in place and in response it was stated should work start on August 1, 2018 then January 1, 2019 would be feasible. The kickoff meeting is scheduled for November 28<sup>th</sup>: a meeting with Westfield Gas & Electric to discuss make ready work is tentatively scheduled for week of October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Work will need to be done on the intergovernmental agreement as well. the broadband project will initially cost the Town however this will be offset by rates to subscribers and long term the Town will recoup the expense. It is noted that money residents paid to Wired West will not be lost (is being held in an escrow account with interest) and will be reflected in upcoming charges when all is in place. C. Letendre inquired about press coverage and was advised something will be published in the Country Journal. Eric McVey brought up possible USDA grants which will be pursued.

**3. 3. (a) Eric Kinscherf Report**

Eric Kinscherf, CPA and Joshua Garcia of the PVPC (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission) appeared before the Board. Eric Kinscherf discussed the Municipal Accounting Evaluation conducted by his firm. He noted improvements found since a prior evaluation, approximately 3 years prior. He mentioned over the past several years certified free cash showing positive numbers.

Training and a set routine and procedure to be followed would be helpful to the current staff. He is recommending the best way to assist the Town would be to offer special project services to improve the overall operations with an eye toward outsourcing the accounting functions. They would set up weekly training sessions with the Town Accountant and Treasurer and act as a resource for the Tax Collector as issues arise.

An eye toward being part of a collaborative was discussed and will be looked into.

Discussion ensued as to the method of contracting with Eric Kinscherf, CPA firm and the time line. They will assist in the FY 2017 close out through closing and reconciliation.

**A. Dolby was called out of the meeting at 7:26 p.m.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept Eric Kinscherf's proposal to complete necessary reports for \$5,000 to close out FY 2017.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to allow the Town Administrator to work with the PVPC to contract accountant services for FY 2018 for \$19,000.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

#### **4. Appointment of Water Commissioners and Assessors**

Water Commissioners Gordon Avery and Florentino Vasquez while in their Commission's open meeting appeared before the Selectboard to appoint Brian Champiney to the Water Commission. As to the length of the term, if the term of the prior commissioner is past the half way mark Brian's appointment will finish at the end of the prior commissioner's term.

**MOTION: Gordon Avery of the Water Commission made a motion to accept Brian Champiney as a Water Commissioner for the remainder of the term unless the time is less than a year and a half.**

**C. Letendre seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**Water Commissioners left the meeting at 9:15 p.m.**

#### **5. Renewal of Liquor License: Blandford Country Store**

Representatives of the Blandford Country Store, Inc. appeared before the Board of a liquor license approval.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the liquor license for the Blandford Country Store, Inc. for one year to expire December 31, 2018.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

#### **6. Margit Mikuski Emergency Management appointment**

Margit Mikuski advised she is not interested in an Emergency Management appoint but rather to be kept informed of any emergency management issues. In regards to the empty seat discussion followed regarding the appointment of the Town Administrator in this position. C. Letendre expressed she felt it was important to have the Town Administrator as a member of the Emergency Management team in her capacity of Town Administrator.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint the Town Administrator to the Emergency Management team.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

#### **7. Fire Truck purchase: Ed Harvey**

Chief Harvey appeared before the board to recommend the purchase of a fire truck that has been used as a demo at the cost of \$280,000 which would replace a present truck which is 30 years old. He provided

a thorough description of the attributes of this truck and distributed pertinent technical information as to improvements over the existing vehicle. He discussed the other two vehicles and their condition. The 1988 vehicle did not pass inspection and the 1997 vehicle did. He advised he would continue to look at additional firetrucks that may be offered and would like to know when the possible procurement of a firetruck could go to a Special Town Meeting.

Discussion followed regarding a date for a Special Town Meeting for this and several other items including Water Department, Zoning Board and possibly Highway. Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup> is the recommended date which would need to be posted by November 6<sup>th</sup>. Special Town Meetings are basically for the movement of funds so this will be determined. Notification will be sent to all Boards of the Special Town Meeting.

The Chief mentioned the addition of a certified firefighter at the end of the month graduating from the fire academy. Another interested individual met with the Chief and two applicants from Westfield State.

A pancake breakfast is planned for the first Saturday in December. Advertisement of the event was discussed.

The Chief updated that he has heard from Tighe and Bond regarding engineering costs for the proposed building that has come in at \$21,000. The USDA (United State Department of Agriculture) should be considered for a grant.

#### **8. AKUITY Ubiquity WAPs (QTY 2) quote**

The Town Administrator updated the Board. W. Levakis advised two additional Ubiquity Wireless Access Points are required to extend the wireless coverage.. Akuity does not mount Wireless Access Points.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to have the TA follow up with Akuity regarding the need for two more WAPs.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

#### **9. Akuity Support Agreement Renewal**

The Town Administrator reviewed a quote from Akuity to replace the firewall. While there is interest in including the Fire and Police Departments it was established Police Department server cannot be included as part of the package.

In further discussion W. Levakis expressed concern that passwords are not routinely changed and the changing of passwords on a regular basis is a key part of maintaining security. It is felt that Akuity serves in the capacity of IT Administrator and has the ability to perform the password change. Eric McVey reviewed the difference between the administrative function and the service function as relates to IT as it has. A review of the contract may be required to determine exactly what Akuity is supplying. The T.A. advised she needs direction from the Board as she is no longer the IT person.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint the Town Administrator as the Information Security Officer for a term ending June 30, 2017.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion for discussion.**

Discussion: TA will be able to handle issues dealing with IT and Akuity without a Board of Selectmen vote.

**All in favor.**

Discussion: In addition, a vote is required by the Board for replacement of the firewall by Akuity and their quote was reviewed. Akuity's quote was provided. With the implementation of this equipment and the services provided it is recommended a more specific breakdown be supplied by Akuity. As a separate part, working remotely was also discussed.

**10. Wi-fi access point for staff and guests**

Town Administrator reported that Wi-fi and accompanying passwords have been set up and are in place. Passwords will be broken down between Blandford Town staff and public guests using two separate passwords and she is looking for direction for implementation.

The distribution of these passwords for staff and the public was discussed. Wi-fi for the lobby would be kept in the lobby and the password supplied there. It is important the distribution of the staff password be in line with security protocols. All Town Boards will be directed to use the guest wi-fi password.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to distribute wi-fi password to staff as well as post to guests for wi-fi access in the lobby.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**11. Draft Hilltown IT Assessment review**

The Town Administrator reiterated this is a draft and they are looking for feedback. She advised Molly Goren-Watts as she was hoping to get something last week, schedule wise the Board was meeting this evening and she is hopeful to pass on feedback to her next week. She is looking for comments, otherwise whatever is in Blandford's section is golden. C. Letendre commented that Blandford's standing as relates to the other towns was positive. Molly reviewed the material with Cara and Bill at the hilltown collaborative meeting and they had any questions addressed then. This will go to the community compact and is a positive direction.

**12. Conservation Commission Land Acquisition**

The Town Administrator is seeking the Board's thoughts as the Conservation Commission possible acquisition of land. There is a proposal for a solar farm on a North Blandford Road property. She was at the last Conservation Commission meeting and the company showed up, however it wasn't addressed as they were not on the Agenda. They did mention that whatever property they did not use for solar panels, they would be willing to give to the Conservation Commission as preservation land. Discussion followed that it would be better to issue a permit to construct the panels but have them retain ownership of the land as it is part of the Town's tax base. It was unanimously agreed by the Board to handle it in this manner. Adding qualifiers such as perhaps plantings which would be beneficial to pollinators and wildlife would be beneficial, but cannot be mandatory without creating a bylaw. A review by the Zoning Board may be a good direction to move in.

**13. Hazardous Mitigation Notice**

The Town Administrator advises AECOM is required to inform the town if there is any gasoline spill and the Town has been informed. This is an FYI public record and notices need to be sent out.

**14. Boiler Services; Price to be Determined; Need New One**

The Town Administrator reported that the boiler is close to obsolete and there is someone coming in to service it to determine what can be done in lieu of bandaging it. The expense will run approximately

\$500 for the company to evaluate it. W. Levakis is questioning the obsolescence of the equipment, and is aware it is desirable to seek out a more efficient way to heat this space but does not see a rush. He questions the expenditure to evaluate as it has been recently done. As maintenance of the boiler is required yearly and will be accomplished in conjunction with the evaluation, this will go forward. Discussion of the pros and cons of replacing the boiler in the future and certain stopgap strategies for the present system.

**15. Regional Accounting Program; PVPC – Questionnaire**

The Town Administrator presented the Questionnaire to the Board for review and signing. C. Letendre discussed the parallels of Eric McVey's position on the Finance Board and the Hilltown Collaborative. Should enough towns be on board, there are grant possibilities as well. Several additional areas were checked off on the questionnaire and signed for mailing.

**16. Appointment of Water Commissioners and Assessors**

Assessor position has to be confirmed and verified by the Board of Selectmen.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to confirm Frank Lucia's appointment to the Board of Assessor.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**17. Appointment dates**

The appointment for the ZBA members should be staggered and at present are the same for each member. They are also up for reappointment. T.A. recommended the reappointments be staggered.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Donald Brainerd to the position of Zoning Board of Appeals for the term of 3 years.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Jim Kronholm to the position of Zoning Board of Appeals for the term of 2 years.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Sumner Robbins to the position of Zoning Board of Appeals for the term of 1 years.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**18. Resignation of Sue Streeter, Treasurer**

Board acknowledges the resignation of Ms. Streeter effective October 20, 2017.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the resignation letter from Sue Streeter from the position of Treasurer effective October 20, 2017.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

Discussion: The position of Treasurer and a replacement was discussed. The T.A would like to address the acquisition of an interim replacement until a permanent replacement is hired. Remote access for an interim Treasurer was discussed.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to have the Town Administrator look at alternatives for an interim Treasurer to present to the Board.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

### **19. Election Workers Appointments**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint the following people as election workers for the term of one year.**

**Pliny Norcross  
Linda Barnard  
Shannon Kopacz  
Lynn McCann (Election Warden)  
Richard Hamel  
Jeri Hamel  
Susan Bloomrose  
TJ Cousineau  
CO Cousineau  
Kris Smith  
Chris Mikesh**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

### **20. Special Town Employees**

The TA alluded to an email received from Timothy Zessin of KP Law defining the circumstances for special town employees. There are several scopes of definition, one of which is if you have a certain job classification, i.e., engineer and you are on the planning board, you can represent the Town as an engineer. C. Letendre is still questioning if there are limits to the number of positions an individual can hold and can the Town limit the number of positions a person can hold.

This will be placed on the Agenda once more information is available.

### **21. Town Hall Hours of Operation**

W. Levakis would like a list of scheduled staff hours. TA is in the process of gathering information.

### **22. Staff Supervision**

Tabled.

### **23. Constables**

W. Levakis questioned the process of appointing constables. The Town Administrator reiterated MGL, Ch41 sec 91B: Selectboard is the appointing authority and the Chief of Police will investigate accordingly.

**24. Russell Pond Proposal**

Proposal for the Town of Blandford to aid in the maintenance of Russell Pond in the amount of \$5,000 to be matched by the Town of Russell with the goal of coming up with a collaboration of a maintenance and improvement plan.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept this proposal to the Town of Russell for the purpose of joining in the maintenance and usage of Russell Pond to be presented to Jeanne LeClair.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**Motion carries.**

**25. Benefits to elected officials**

The Board has the responsibility to authorize benefits to elected officials. A decision needs to be made whether to allow officials to receive these benefits. There is a possibility a decision has been rendered on this issue during a prior Board meeting. The Town Administrator will request the Town Clerk to search the minutes of prior Board of Selectmen meetings to determine if this issue was voted on.

**26. TA expectations and hours**

The Town Administrator advised the formulation of goals and objectives should be mutually agreed upon by the Selectboard and her. She advised the present list appears as a day to day operation, what to do and how; clearly micromanagement versus a set of goals and objectives. She recommends that each Selectboard member come up with one item or they mutually agree upon 2 or 3 to discuss. This will be tabled to the next meeting.

**MOTION: W. Levakis made a motion to meet every week until further notice.**

**C. Letendre seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to close the meeting at 10:02.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to reconvene to accept the minutes of previous meetings.**

**Reconvene at 10:05 p.m.**

**C. Letendre, yes.**

**W. Levakis, yes.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the Board of Selectmen minutes of August 21, 2017 as amended.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the Board of Selectmen minutes of September 18, 2017 as written.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the Board of Selectmen Executive Session minutes of September 18, 2017 as written.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the Board of Selectmen minutes of October 2, 2017 as written.**

**W. Levakis seconded the motion.**

**All in favor.**

Submitted by: Karen Shaw

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Adam Dolby – Chair

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Cara Letendre - Clerk

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William Levakis – Member