



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD
POSTED: April 26, 2018 by 7pm

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

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
JOINT MEETING WITH FINANCE
APPOINTING COMMITTEE
APRIL 30, 2018**

OPEN SESSION 7:03 p.m.

Cara Letendre, William Levakis, Joshua Garcia, David Hopson and Lauri Boucher in attendance.
Meeting is recorded.

Finance Appointing Committee meeting to appoint Paul Martin as a member of the Finance Committee.

C. Letendre nominated Paul Martin to the Finance Committee for a period of 3 years. His qualifications and interest in the position were discussed, questions were asked and answered. Finance Committee members were in agreement with the nomination.

Laurie Boucher, Cara Letendre and Bill Levakis in favor, David Hopson abstained by a prior ruling from the Attorney General's Office, conflict of interest.

Finance Appointing Committee Adjourned.

EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Minutes of April 23, 2018 as written.

**B. Levakis seconded the motion.
All in favor.**

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Board of Selectmen Executive Session Minutes of April 23, 2018 as written.

**B. Levakis seconded the motion.
All in favor.**

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

New Officials Finance Forum

Josh Gilman advised the Division of Local Services is offering a seminar for recently elected or appointed officials that is taking place on Thursday, June 7, 2018 in Worcester. This would be a great

tool to foster a team approach to developing an understanding of responsibilities and duties of local offices as well as their interrelationship.

All agreed it would be worthwhile to attend and a list will be put together of those interested. Further discussion will take place at the next Board Meeting as to who will attend. On line registration by May 21st.

Lynn Russell 26 Birch Hill Road

Mr. and Mrs. Russell presented to the Board the water issues they are experiencing due to the grading and deterioration of the road and the erosion caused by rain. It has resulted in property damage in which they are seeking a resolution to avoid further damage. The Highway Department discussed strategy for renovations to alleviate the problem. The Town in conjunction with the property owner will explore different options as well as review a quote the resident is awaiting and contact Town counsel. Highway will do an on-site visit and compile a quote as well.

Centralized On Line Processing of Plumbing Permits

Aaron Poteat, Plumbing and Gas Inspector, came before the Board to discuss on line processing of payments for plumbing permits. He advised the expense to the Town would be a tablet, however, finance advised there would be an expense involved with an on line service. Research will need to be done to weigh the cost to institute and whether the fees received balances with the cost to administer. Aaron will contact other small towns to get an idea of what type of expenses they have. Joshua mentioned there may be an IT grant possible for this. The Town Administrator will meet with Aaron to further pursue this endeavor.

ACTION ITEMS

Discussion of Community Compact Best Practice Selection

Two of the Financial Management Best Practices have been selected. While all have merit after Finance Committee review, the best fits follow:

(Number 3) Best Practice: Develop and utilize a Long-range Planning/Forecasting Model that assesses both short-term and long-term financial implications of current and proposed policies, programs and assumptions over a multi-year period.

(Number 4) Best Practice: Prepare a Capital Improvement Plan that reflects a community's needs, is reviewed and updated annually, and fits within a financing plan that reflects the community's ability to pay.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to have our Town Administrator move forward with 3 and 4 Financial Management Best Practices.

B. Levakis seconded the motion.

All in favor.

Hilltown Ambulance Contract

The Town Administrator forwarded the contract which was revised by our Town counsel to Hilltown Ambulance who forwarded to their counsel and the revisions were accepted with the suggestion that the following terminology be removed: “Blandford may immediately terminate this Agreement if failure to so terminate would be inconsistent with appropriate patient care or applicable law...” It is felt that appropriate patient care was subjective and could lead to HCAA being held to unclear standards. It is felt state and federal regulations adequately cover this. Cara will forward this to Town counsel to obtain approval. This will be placed on the next meeting’s Agenda in anticipation of it being finalized.

Berkshire County Insurance Group

The Town Administrator and the Interim Treasurer have worked on this and it is recommended to place a No vote which enables keeps the agreement intact with a new affiliate. This group health insurance plan is unchanged from FY 2018 and can be reviewed next year appointing a committee to research costs and coverages. The Board has elected to stay with the present plan and the Town Administrator will submit the signed Agreement to Berkshire County Insurance Group.

Appoint Grounds Keeper for Bicentennial Park

Pat Lucas was receiving a stipend for work in Bicentennial Park and a search is on for a groundskeeper is taking place. This will be revisited next meeting.

Increase for Park Superintendent and Assistant

There has not been a pay increase for the above positions since 2010 which put them to \$13.00 an hour. It is the Board’s option as Trustees to look into this. It is felt it is fair to give an increase. Mick Brennan of the Historical Commission reviewed the responsibilities of the Superintendent and Assistant which shouldn’t deviate from them. It was noted there are several trees that will need to come down and the Select Board Administrative Assistant will contact the Tree Warden to advise.

MOTION: B. Levakis made a motion to increase the Park Superintendent and Assistant to \$15.00 per hour.

C. Letendre seconded the motion.

All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Lawn Maintenance

The Board discussed option of using a large company or several small companies to maintain municipal grounds. Bill Levakis will put a proposal together and has suggested this be tabled until the next meeting.

Quarterly Report from the Municipal Light Board

Peter Langmore was scheduled to present a quarterly report on the Broadband project and it will be moved to the next meeting.

Health Insurance Schedule

Health Insurance benefits and pay scales were discussed. The Town currently offers a 70/30 split

which is a favorable percentage. In discussion with employees due to the pay rate the insurance benefit is a draw to work for the Town. While the wage scale is increasing, the health benefit split seems equitable at this time even though the cost of the insurance is rising. A comparison of pay rate/health insurance benefits will be looked at upon the arrival of a permanent Town Administrator.

Auditorium Scheduling

Presently the Police Chief has been doing the scheduling. This will be moved to a Town Administrator function when a permanent one is hired. Discussion of renting the auditorium to outside groups as a source of revenue determined insurance riders the group would be required to purchase would be cost prohibitive. It is presently open for Town entities.

On an aside regarding the Police Chief resignation, the Board briefly discussed regionalization. The Town Administrator advised of possible DLTA resources and projecting it out to next fiscal year. Further discussion will be required before moving forward but an interim appointment will need to be made for July 1st and research will be done as to whether an executive session will need to be scheduled for that purpose.

COA Space for Storage Request

The Council on Aging is in need of space for storage. Contact will be made with the Library trustees as they have a portion of the adjoining room and perhaps something could be worked out.

Bill Levakis advised of a company he is working with that will work auction off surplus equipment for a percentage of the sale.

Extension for Dog Licenses

Cara advised she has heard from multiple residents the postcard regarding dog license renewal was received just one day before they were due and there is a late fee if not paid timely. The Board would like to see the Town Clerk extend the deadline several weeks. Steve Jemiolo and Bill Levakis will talk with the Town Clerk about it and neither think there will be any problem with it.

Berkshire Radio Control vs. Northampton Radio Control

Hilltown Ambulance notifications are not received timely through Berkshire Radio Control and it is impacting patient care. Generally Northampton Radio Control appears to have a quicker notification time. This needs a thorough review taking all into consideration, including the pricing. In the past, Northampton wasn't able to take Blandford on due to lack of room. Possibly there is availability now.

Announcement on Tax Reimbursement

This is being worked on and prior to any announcement the figures will be compiled and once it is all in place, a meeting will take place.

Town Administrator Search

This will be put on the next Agenda to discuss and develop the process. The position will be posted after the Town Meeting and approval of the FY 19 budget.

Assessor's Office Report

Steve Jemiolo is looking for a line item in the budget for Assessors' attendance at school. He discussed the disparity in assessor's pay rates between Blandford and other towns. While an hourly rate is not a

good option a stipend would be a possible option. Training is done every 3 years. The Assessor's Office and staffing was discussed and will be evaluated.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Submitted by: Karen Shaw
Administrative Assistant to the Board

Cara Letendre - Chairman

William Levakis – Member