



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD

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

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN MINUTES
August 13, 2018**

OPEN SESSION 7:00 p.m.

Cara Letendre, William Levakis, Eric McVey and Joshua Garcia in attendance.
Meeting is recorded.

EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETING

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes from July 30, 2018.

Eric McVey seconded the motion.

All in favor.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT

Residents were permitted to speak or ask questions limited to 2 minutes and allowed to comment on agenda items. If there is a subject not listed on the agenda, speak to the Selectboard Administrative Assistant and the subject will be included on the next meeting agenda. One resident requested to read a prepared statement to the audience and BOS.

ACTION ITEMS

a. Review and approve contract with newly selected TA, Margaret Dean

Tabled to discuss in executive session to review contract negotiations.

b. Appoint Interim Water/Highway Administrative Assistant

Joann Grybosh has agreed to act as Interim Water/Highway Administrative Assistant in this newly formed position. The position will be posted on the Town of Blandford website.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Joanne Gybosh as Interim Water/Highway Administrative Assistant.

Eric McVey: Yes

William Levakis: Yes

Cara Letendre: Abstained

c. Review job description for permanent Water/Highway Administrative Assistant position

The BOS reviewed the job description draft for the new position of Water/Highway Administrative Assistant. The position has also been approved by the Water Department and Highway Department.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the final draft of the Water/Highway Administrative Assistant position after adding a paragraph regarding handling and forwarding grant applications.

Eric McVey seconded the motion.

All in favor with amendments.

d. ID Badges/Swipe Cards

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table ID Badges/Swipe Cards until the August 27, 2018 Selectboard meeting.

All in favor.

e. Request from the Interim Town Administrator to approve permit for a bonfire

The Interim TA is requesting a bonfire permit from Fire Chief Harvey for an August 31, 2018 town bonfire and BBQ. Chief Harvey is handling the details and will issue the permit.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the request for a permit for a bonfire.

All in favor.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

a. Fire Rescue 4 Repairs; Fire Chief and Finance Review

Chief Harvey presented quotes for various types of vehicles to replace the rescue truck that is aging and in need of repair. The intent of this vehicle is mostly for medical calls. The squad truck will still be used for accidents, etc. The BOS and Chief Harvey discussed leasing options as well as purchasing finances. The Chief stressed that the replacement of this emergency vehicle does not preclude the replacement eventually of Engine #1 that is 20 years old. Chief Harvey will meet with the Finance Committee at the BOS meeting on Monday, August 20, 2018. Eric McVey discussed, and Chief Harvey agreed, that he should touch base with the State Bid List to ensure the town is getting the best vehicle for the money.

Chief Harvey mentioned that they are actively looking for volunteers reminding the public that the training is free.

b. Review restructuring plan for financial department

The Interim TA discussed the preliminary plan to move the Assessor's Office along by deciding whether the town should hire a consulting firm versus hiring a new town employee. He stated that the importance of investing in wages so the town is able to hire professionals in these positions is critical to the process of digging out the backlogs that exist in the Assessor's Office. He added that at this time, it is costing the town money. The need for experienced people was stressed to collect the very large amount of unpaid taxes that exist. E. McVey noted that Blandford is one of the very few towns that have an Assessor Clerk on town payroll. Most outsource that position to companies who do random audits which are extremely important to this process. E. McVey is recommending highly that we use an outsource position to fix these problems. The Interim TA noted that the Treasurer and Collector positions need to be sustained as well the Assessors. He explained that the Assessors have been working and willing to explore where the town needs to be. There is currently no budget for these positions. The Finance Committee is working on a restructuring plan with the BOS to be reviewed at a special town meeting. The Interim TA explained the need to educate the public on the

importance of moving along these lines. C. Letendre will work on a date for a special town meeting so the residents can decide on moving these funds. The Interim TA noted that if a town's financial house is not in order, the town cannot focus on anything else. There is a Board of Selectmen meeting Monday, August 20 to discuss this restructuring plan and rough draft of the special town meeting warrant.

c. Pot Whole Damage

Because the BOS is still collecting information, this will be tabled until the August 27, 2018 BOS meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

a. Update on Search for Temporary Police Chief

The BOS is receiving applications for Interim Police chief and Police Officers at this time. This will be on the agenda for August 20, 2018. A team will be set up to interview the candidates. The Interim TA will post the times the Chester Police Chief will be here to process firearm permits. C. Letendre read the letter written by the Board of Selectmen thanking Sheriff Cocchi and his department for taking such good care of the town when we were in need.

b. Vendor Request to use Gym for Craft Fair

W. Levakis will be in charge of scheduling events in the gym until a new Police chief is hired.

C. President Blandford Fair: Summary

The President of the Blandford Fair gave a summary of the 151st Blandford Fair schedule planned for Friday August 31 through Monday September 3, 2018.

d. PILOT Update

E. McVey noted that the PILOT agreed upon by the BOS and Roy Bishop and is ready to be presented to the Town for approval.

e. Historical Commission – Remove Trees

The Trustees of Watson Park addressed the BOS to go over the 2nd installment in a 3-4 phase plan to clean up trees in areas #3 and #4 between the road and the fairgrounds and get rid of any troubled trees. This is scheduled in the fall. The presented estimates for \$1,450 and \$7,300.

The Historical Commission is currently looking into hiring a stone mason to repair various stone walls in town.

There is a problem at the back of the Historical Society Building. The steps are continually being flooded in bad weather and freezing in the winter making the entrance unusable. There is a discussion about what could be done to fix this problem and allow handicap access at the same time. The discussion will continue with the thought that it can be brought up at the town meeting to be put into next year's budget.

Eric McVey asked that the old fire pits in Watson Park be removed and an estimate brought before the BOS to consider replacing them with pedestal-type charcoal BBQ pits for the public to enjoy. This will be on the agenda for next spring.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve both estimates (\$1,450 and \$7,300) for tree work in Watson Park from Liberty Hill Tree Care.
All in favor.**

f. Appointment of Election Workers

M. Kronholm requested the BOS re-appoint the following people as election workers:
Judith Mackinnon Susan Bloomrose Cosette Cousineau Theodore Cousineau
Kris Smith Janet Strasberg Pliny Norcross Linda Barnard
Dale Miller Pamela Darrow, Deputy Warden

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the election workers.
All in favor.**

MOTION: To enter into Executive Session at not to reconvene pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(1) to discuss the negotiations with non-Union personnel.

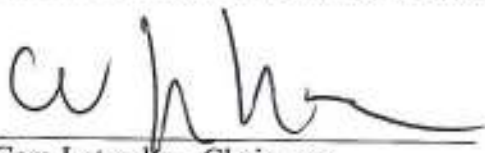
**E. McVey seconded the motion.
All in favor.**

Roll Call Vote taken

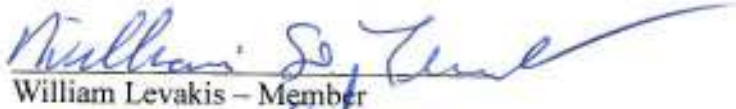
**C. Letendre – yes
E. McVey - yes
W. Levakis-yes**

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. to Executive Session.

Submitted by: Joann Martin
Interim Administrative Assistant to the Board



Cara Letendre - Chairman



William Levakis – Member



Eric McVey - Clerk