



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Board of Selectmen, Minutes
December 7, 2015

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

Open Meeting:

7:03 p.m. Mr. Dolby called meeting to order, provided notice that meeting may be recorded.

New Business:

1. Classification Hearing: Brenda Marra presented the Board with a report from the Assessors for review. The report is an estimate of the tax rate and the actual rate will be set after the recap is complete and approved by DOR.
 - a. Discussion regarding a single tax rate vs a split tax rate.
 - i. Mr. Montanaro – recommends a single rate as it will save costs and time involved in collection process.
 - b. Discussion regarding Chapter land
 - c. Board would like to start the discussion of a split rate at least a month in advance next year.
 - d. Mr. Dolby motion to set a single tax rate for FY16, Mr. Montanaro second, unanimous vote.
2. All Boards Meeting:
 - a. Finance Committee
 - i. Fire Department Fundraiser was very successful. Grossed \$2,889.00.
 - b. Budget: distributed instructions and a budget preparation calendar
 - i. Level Funding for FY17- discussed the situation with the school budget. Next year we will not be receiving any mitigation funds and the request from the School Committee could be an additional 10% if not adjustments are made. Finance Committee asked boards to level fund for next year and then we will increase the budget if possible.
 1. Mr. Dolby- proposed that we have the boards present budgets based on their actual needs. We already know what we can afford to pay for the school budget next year.
 2. Mrs. Smith – it's easier for us to have the budgets level funded and then use the needs lists to increase. We are concerned that if we have the departments increase their budgets 2.5% now we could end up running short half way through the year.

3. Mr. Dolby- we have neglected town infrastructure for so long our budget is way under and it doesn't reflect the true cost of running the Town. The requested line item should reflect what we really need to run the departments successfully to show the perspective of what we need vs. what we receive.
 4. Mr. Montanaro - It is essential that each department request what they need to function. The school is one department that we fund. There are no school committee members present yet they are asking for a very large chunk of our budget. We need to somehow support our infrastructure and balance our other needs.
 5. Mr. van Werkhoven - sent a letter from the Finance Committee to the School Committee letting them know that we can afford what we recommended this year plus 2.5% for next year.
- ii. Water Department: Mr. Levakis – why is the Finance Committee telling the Water Department to level fund our budget? We are an enterprise account and don't effect the general ledger. We are capped at what we take in and pay our own loans.
1. Tony van Werkhoven- the Water Department is part of the Town and we still have the responsibility to provide feedback and ask questions. The financial mess with the town years ago was due to lack of oversight and we would like to avoid that situation. Oversight has provided clarity.
 2. Mrs. McCann: the BOS still has fiduciary responsibility for the Water Department.
- c. Wired West meeting tomorrow with the Finance Committee to discuss MBI pulling their funding.
 - d. Planning Committee: are processing the application for a green community
3. 9/11 Resolution in Support of the Permanent Funding of the Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act. see attached.
 - a. Discussed the importance of the Zadroga Act receiving full funding to provide health care for the first responders from 9/11 who are suffering from exposure to toxins at ground zero.
 - b. Mr. Montanaro motion to accept and affirm the Resolution of Permanent Funding of the Zadroga 9/11 Health and Compensation Act, Mr. Dolby second, unanimous vote.
 4. Emergency Management Shelter: Mr. Levakis - attended meeting last week regarding where the shelter for Blandford should be located. Agreed that Westfield University is the ideal location.

Old Business:

1. Pay Freeze Release: Treasurer and Finance Committee presented Board with spread sheet outlining how much retroactive pay is due to town employees.

- a. The Police Department, Water Department and Transfer Station employees are excluded as they received pay increases.
 - b. Highway Department increases will be held until union negotiation is complete.
 - c. the amount to be paid is pre-taxed.
2. Building Inspector: Board discussed hiring Gary Danko (the Building Inspector Assistant in Becket and Middlefield) to work with Larry Gould to catch up on the work. Once the work load is caught up the goal is to come up with a permanent solution.
- a. Mr. Levakis will contact the Westfield Inspector to see if he is interested.
 - b. Cara will schedule interviews with anyone who has responded to the want ad.
 - c. There is currently no rate listed for solar panel installation. Mr. Dolby motion to set the residential solar inspection rate of \$100 per/installation with a follow-up rate of \$50 effective immediately, Mr. Levakis second, unanimous vote.
 - d. Mr. Dolby motion to make the Building Inspector position an hourly rate paid to the individual who fills the office hours at \$45.00 per/hr plus mileage for inspections (measured from the Town Hall) with a maximum of 4 hours per week, with the salary to be discontinued as a temporary scenario to be revisited next month, Mr. Montanaro second, unanimous vote.
 - e. Board asked that Mr. Danko keep the Board posted as to when he is caught up with the back load of permits.
 - f. Inspections completed will be paid upon completion at the rate of the inspections.
3. Highway Department Priority Lists: Mr. Levakis recommended that Mr. Montanaro review Mr. Curry using the Town Employee Review form. Mr. Montanaro agreed.
4. Town Administrator Search: Board agreed to move forward with hiring. Mr. Montanaro will put together a committee and a job posting.
5. Huntington BOS Meeting on November 30, 2015: basically the agenda was to get all of the Gateway towns on the same page regarding required feedback to DESE.
- 9:45 p.m. Mr. Dolby motion to go into executive session to discuss ongoing litigation regarding the Highway Union not to reconvene, Mr. Montanaro second, Cara called a 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