



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD

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

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD &
TOWN OF CHESTER
JOINT BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2018**

OPEN SESSION 6:00 p.m.

C. Letendre, Blandford BOS Chairman; **E. McVey**, Blandford BOS Clerk; **W. Levakis**, Blandford BOS Member; **J. Garcia**, Blandford Interim Town Administrator; **John Baldasaro**, Chester BOS Chairman; **Barbara Pease Huntoon**, Chester BOS Vice Chairman; **Eric Weiss**, PVPC Municipal Service Coordinator; **William Connors**, Novak Consulting in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. Joint meeting with Chester Board of Selectmen: Review Draft of Police Shared Services Report by Novak Consulting

- Cara Letendre opened the meeting and started with introductions.
- Eric Weiss, of PVPC, shared a brief history of why we are at the table exploring shared policing and the greater potential of cross-collaboration of municipal services. Achieving economies of scale with limited resources are reasons why small towns and small budgets work together. Weiss shared that if designed and executed correctly, the opportunity and result of collaboration can be strong. Sharing police is not necessarily a unique idea as other towns have explored/executed shared policing arrangements. Weiss shared the example of Hardwick and New Braintree. If there is any desire for Blandford and Chester to move forward with the next steps, the PVPC is available and ready to assist with technical assistance as long as there is a shared desire to do so.
- William Connors of Novak Consulting provided an overview of the draft report. He explained that consolidation of services is often talked about and studied but not always carried out for several reasons. An interesting opportunity exists with Chester and Blandford with none of the usual obstacles that take place: No officers at Blandford, therefore, the opportunity for resistance doesn't exist; The current chief is chief of both towns and is accepted and highly regarded in both communities; and Chester officers have been working in Blandford on an as-needed basis, therefore gaining familiarity with the town and its residents. William stated that small-town analysis is more of a challenge than bigger municipalities with lots of police activity. Small towns have a different desire for police presence and not a lot of coverage is necessary but still recognized as an important function for the towns. Although the services of the State Police Barracks are available to the towns, having a local department provides the communities much greater flexibility to

address local conditions that come up which, to the towns, are more important than having no police department at all.

- William shared several options which the communities can pursue which include creation of a single department/district to serve both towns; contracted services through an inter-municipal agreement; consolidation of administration; or a shared police chief. Each of these options is largely laid out in the report.

- John Baldasara of Chester felt the report was very good and agrees town are in unique position that may allow for a shared service arrangement to work instead of creating a single district. Members of both towns agreed that creating a single district is not in their best interest, however, developing an agreed-upon shared service arrangement through an inter-municipal agreement may be of better interest as long as equity is achieved in which both towns are treated fairly. Barbara of Chester asked how one or the other towns benefit through sharing. Joshua, Interim Town Administrator of Blandford said the towns benefit in two ways:

- 1) Both towns will essentially increase current services and have additional coverage for about the same cost towns are paying now; and
- 2) It will help with retention in case the police chief ever moves on; the towns may be able to make the position attractive enough for those qualified enough to want to take on the job.

- Some concern was shared about how the town's people will feel about sharing policing services. It was agreed upon that meetings in the individual communities with the town's people is a necessary next step

MOTION: Eric McVey, Blandford Clerk, make a motion to accept the report drafted by Novak Consulting with inclusion of minor edits.

Cara Letendre, Blandford Chairman Seconded. No further discussion.

All in Favor

b. Blandford's Highway Superintendent's Recommendation to appoint Matthew Perry, Highway Laborer, from part-time to full-time position.

The Highway Superintendent shared with the Board of Selectmen that there were two applicants for this full-time position. Of the two applicants, Matthew Perry was the only internal candidate currently serving as part-time. Per the union contract, internal candidates are prioritized contingent to their skills and qualification to do the job.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Matthew Perry as full-time Highway Laborer per recommendations of the Highway Superintendent.

B. Levakis Seconded. No further discussion.

All in Favor

Meeting Adjourned at 7:25 pm

Submitted by: Joshua A. Garcia
Interim Town Administrator

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Eric McVey, Clerk

William Levakis, Member