



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD

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

**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2019**

OPEN SESSION 7:00 pm

C. Letendre, Chairman; **E. McVey**, Clerk; **W. Levakis**, Member; **J. Garcia**, Interim Town Administrator in attendance.

Meeting called to order at 7:01 pm Meeting is recorded

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

Examination of the meeting minutes of the Board of Selectmen meeting February 11, 2019

MOTION: **C. Letendre** made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of February 5, 2019 as written.

E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor

MOTION: **C. Letendre** made a motion to skip to item 3d-Town Vehicle Usage – **B. Levakis**

E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor

2.*AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION:

None

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. Review and Approve Procurement Conflict of Interest & Reconciliation Policies

The Town Administrator and the Board of Selectmen discussed the changes recommended to the Conflict of Interest and Reconciliation Policies for final approval.

MOTION: **C. Letendre** made a motion to approve the Procurement Conflict of Interest and Reconciliation Policies as amended.

E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor

b. Occupational Health Options – J. Garcia

The Town Administrator presented the BOS with a proposal from MedExpress, Westfield, MA. There was a discussion about the costs and availability of this facility. Joshua talked about the fact that he has had a

lot of positive feedback about MedExpress and the fact that it is located in Westfield which is most convenient for Town employees. Joshua was advised by the Board of Selectmen to move forward with the next steps with MedExpress and report back at the February 25, 2019 BOS meeting.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to enter into executive session and to reconvene to the regular business meeting afterward pursuant to MGL C30A, S21 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

Roll Call Vote out at 7:35 pm: C. Letendre - Yes; E. McVey - Yes; B. Levakis - Yes

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 5e. Update from MA DOT
E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor

c. Appoint Rene Senecal as Highway Superintendent

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Rene Senecal as Highway Superintendent as of March 4, 2019.
E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor

d. Town Vehicle Usage – B. Levakis
Tabled until the 2-25-19 BOS meeting

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS

None

5. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Review Revenue Turnover & Tax Enforcement Policies

Distributed and tabled until the March 4, 2019 BOS meeting for review

b. The Future of Flag Poles by the Highway Department – B. Levakis

B. Levakis had a discussion with the BOS about replacing the aging flag poles in town that are breaking. C. Letendre suggested we look into grants. R. Senecal recommended that the weak poles can be ‘injected’ to add strength. B. Levakis will look into solutions available. This will be discussed at the March 4, 2019 BOS meeting.

c. BOS Approval Policy on Invoices and Payroll – B. Levakis

B. Levakis noted that Joshua Garcia is working on this and will present it to the BOS when completed.

d. Cemetery Commission Update on Water Problem on N. Blandford Road Construction

B. Levakis noted that they are working on drainage in this area and will address the problem to the Cemetery Commissioner upon his return to Town as well as the Highway Department.

e. Update from MA DOT District 1 Concerning Icy Conditions on Russell Stage Road – E. McVey

E. McVey updated the BOS on the discussions he had with MA DOT about the concern that the icy conditions on Russell Stage Road may be caused by MA DOT Interstate 90. Engineers were sent from

DOT; they concluded that the problems are created by several problems on both sides of the road and not by the I90 Interchange above. The details of the problems will be passed on to the new Highway Superintendent and the DOT reported that they are willing to help the Town with these problems.

C. Letendre mentioned her concerns about the ice heave on Russell Stage Road and requested that we work on placing better warning signage so drivers are aware ahead of time of the upcoming bump.

6. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY:

a. Report on Highway Garage DLS Standards – J. Garcia

The Town Administrator presented the inspection report from the Department of Labor Standards which resulted from a resident complaint about the safety conditions of the Highway Garage. There were 5 different complaints; four were found to be unjustified; one problem identified was a missing exit sign above the front entry door. The Town was given some corrective action steps and Joshua forwarded this to the Highway Administrative Assistant to research the cost for repair. B. Levakis stated that there is an ‘employees only’ sign on the door of the Highway Department and questioned why residents are going into the Highway Garage which is a restricted area except for the sand and salt pickup area.

b. Grant Request for Shared Police Departments – Blandford & Chester – J. Garcia

Joshua Garcia distributed the draft grant he developed and wrote for the efficiency and regionalization grant for \$43,400 to help with one-time startup costs for the Pilot Shared Police Project which he has shared with the Town of Chester. Joshua is working on a proposed budget going forward.

Joshua Garcia distributed the draft Efficiency and Regionalization State Grant requesting \$43,400 to help with on-time startup costs for the Pilot Shared Police model. Joshua reported to the BOS that the Board of Selectmen in Chester is also reviewing the draft.

B. Levakis asked what would be the benefit to the Town’s in this Pilot Program. J. Garcia explained:

- Enhanced delivery service:
 - The municipalities will have double the services for roughly the same cost;
 - With expended resources will come greater coordination of coverage for the towns under the supervision and direction of one police chief;
- Efficiencies and cost savings
 - The towns may be able to compete strongly for grants in public safety and emergency management;
 - The towns will benefit from the leadership of one police chief that can provide a greater regional/cross-jurisdictional perspective and services;
 - The municipalities will achieve a cost-savings by sustaining one qualified police chief and may be able to improve retention;
 - Increase in service response time from Blandford by transferring dispatch from Berkshire to Northampton.
- Improved Public Access
 - A shared police service arrangement will be more readily available to address public needs around public safety (i.e. police presence at public functions, police availability to coordinate FID needs, strategic speed traps at town roads, coverage in general during all times of the day, etc.);
 - The towns and the current police chief are committed to implementing Community Policing which is a proactive public safety management tactic that integrates local police to positively interact with members of the public.

- Increase in-service response time for Blandford by transferring dispatch from Berkshire to Northampton.

c. Municipal Light Board Decision on Status of Fiber Hub

C. Letendre spoke of the Municipal Light Board’s questions on cost for the next stage of broadband installation. The MLB needs an answer as to whether the town will rent the fiber hub from Otis or allocate the money to build our own fiber hub. The plus with Otis is an initial cost savings, however, we don’t know what the rental charge will be yet and we will be paying a rental fee every year. Joshua and Cara made a point of noting that if we are going to be paying rent to Otis, this amount can change year to year as well and may eventually cost even more in the long run. This will be discussed with the MLB at the February 25, 2019 BOS meeting. Joshua shared that if there is indeed a major cost difference, a good strategy would be to rent from Otis on the short-term but also work on a budget plan for establishing a hub in town as a longer-term strategy.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion into executive session pursuant to MGL C30A, S21 to discuss strategy with respect to anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L.C.30A, §21(a)(1), to discuss the complaints against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual not to reconvene.

**B. Levakis Seconded
All in Favor**

Roll Call Vote in at 8:22 pm: C. Letendre, Yes; E. McVey, Yes; B. Levakis, Yes

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION: Pursuant to MGL C30A, S21. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining and too:

Anticipated executive session in accordance with G.L.C.30A, §21(a)(1), to discuss the complaints against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

*NOTE: Audience participation / public comment is welcome only when acknowledged by the Chair and is limited to two minutes. Participation / public comment is limited to Blandford residents and can only comment on agenda items.

**NOTE: Agenda may include items not reasonably expected 48 hours before the meeting. At any point, this meeting may go into executive section if the Board of Selectmen find it warranted.

Submitted by: Joann Martin
Administrative Assistant to the Board of Selectmen

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Eric McVey, Clerk

William Levakis, Member