



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD

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

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES
BOARD OF SELECTMEN and WATER
COMMISSION
November 4, 2019**

1. Open Session at 7:00 pm Meeting is recorded Meeting held at Town Hall

C. Letendre, Chairman; ~~E. McVey, Clerk, absent~~; T. Ackley, Member; J. Garcia, Town Administrator; G. Avery, Water Commissioner; B. Champiney, Commissioner in attendance

**MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to move to Action Item 4a. Candidate Joann Martin as Water Commissioner
C. Letendre Seconded
All in Favor**

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2019

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the meeting minutes of October 21, 2019 until Eric McVey returns
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

b. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of October 28, 2019

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 28, 2019 as amended
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

3. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT:

4. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Joint Meeting with Water Commission – Review Candidate Joann Martin Seeking Temporary Appointment as Water Commissioner and Take Action

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Joann Martin as temporary Water Commissioner to complete the term of Florentino Vasquez June 30, 2020
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Municipal Light Board Update – Peter Langmore

No update

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Water Department Update – Strategic Goals, Objectives and Priorities

Gordon Avery, Water Commissioner and Brian Champiney, Water Commissioner addressed the Board of Selectmen to discuss their recent discussion with the Town Administrator on a strategic action plan to reorganize the management of the Water Department, improve the overall day-to-day administration of the Water Department, and to work on infrastructure upgrades of the distribution of water, water plant and pump house. Avery summed up the problems the Water Department building is dealing with. He noted that he has been consulting with an Engineering Firm to help update the Stage 1 Plant, Stage 2 Infrastructure and Pumping System. The priority is updating the Water Plant as soon as possible as most of the equipment is dated. The key items that will be studied:

- Refinancing of loans
- Softright billing program update
- Establish a tiered billing system for water
- Getting payments from delinquent water users
- Offer more training courses for water officials
- Look into the possibility of sharing a water superintendent with another hill town
- Installing meter readers
- Applying for Grants
- Restructure Personnel Department
- Replace old water lines & hydrants
- Produce CCR reports in a timely manner

There was a discussion about the upgrade and installation of the new meter readers and working on making progress with Softright to set up the program needed to convert this information from the meters to the new billing program. Delinquent water users have been identified and the Treasurer is in the process of processing liens against these properties. Letendre talked about the budget and advised the Water Department that this should be examined more closely for 2020.

**MOTION: G. Avery made a motion to invest \$10,000 Plant Assessment for Water Treatment Plant; this discussion will be presented at a Special Town Meeting in January, 2020
B. Champiney Seconded
All in Favor**

b. FY19 Closed – Free Cash Certified and Audit to be Scheduled

Garcia received notice from the Department of Revenue reporting Blandford’s free cash at \$763,146 and the Enterprise Water Department free cash at \$6,251. Now that free cash is certified, the Town is ready to set the tax rate. Team Economics met: Assessor’s, Treasurer/Collector, Accountants. RRG will be working on this report to submit to the DOR and the goal is to have a classification done before Thanksgiving.

c. Tanker for the Fire Department

Garcia mentioned that this was brought to his attention by the Fire Chief. Ackley added that the department is looking for a tanker that holds about 2,000-3,000 gallons. Garcia noted that there are three concerns that come to mind regarding this proposed acquisition suggesting we need to prioritize how we can strategically navigate this request as the Town also needs to replace/repair fire hydrants so a decision needs to be made about which of these two is a higher priority. The third concern is where will this tanker be stored which brings up the subject of completing the new Highway garage so the Fire Department can

move into the existing Highway Building. Ackley believes we need to start with the new Highway garage as a priority.

7. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY:

a. Injured Blandford Fire Fighter – T. Ackley

The Blandford Fire Department was called out to rescue one of their own who fell 20' out of a tree stand. Ackley would like a letter of commendation be sent to the Blandford Fire Department and the two paramedics that were on the Hilltown Ambulance stating that they did a very professional job getting this person out and made him as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to send a letter of commendation to the Blandford Fire Department as well as the Paramedics from the Hilltown Ambulance Service.

C. Letendre Seconded

All in Favor

b. Julius Hall Road Update – Springfield Water

Garcia brought up the previous incident on Julius Hall Road where a resident was given a citation by State Police. He reported that this case was dismissed. Garcia is working with Springfield Water to work out a sensible way to deal with this gate situation. It was suggested by Springfield Water to place a sign stating 'public way – no vehicular access'. Garcia is requesting the approval of the Board.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to post a sign on Julius Hall Road allowing only pedestrian traffic.

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

c. Cobble Mountain Road Gate – Springfield Water

Garcia is currently looking into getting gates removed or open on Cobble Mountain Road. He had conversations with Springfield Water about this. Springfield Water voiced their concerns about regulations that were put in place after 911 and Garcia responded that Homeland Security did, indeed, give the DEP a go-ahead to protect their water resource but not the authority to close down public roads. Garcia confirmed with the Highway Superintendent that Cobble Mountain Road is a public way; an important road that connects Granville with local towns and an emergency shortcut. A measurement was done of the area confirming that over 1 ½ miles after that gate belongs to Blandford. Garcia is working on drafting a letter to be sent to Springfield Water asking them to remove the gate.

7d. Blandford Sun – Otis Stage Road Request to Work on Sunday's and Veteran's Day from 8am to 3pm.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to allow Blandford Sun Solar to work on Sunday's and Holidays from 8am to 3pm.

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

7e. COA Vehicle

Garcia reported that the new Council on Aging vehicle is registered and inspected and at the shop for final minor repairs. The last step will be to have it decal with the Town Seal. The COA didn't have the

funds in their budget to get the decals on the vehicle so Garcia asked whether or not the BOS would will consider paying it for them out of the BOS budget.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to spend \$225 to apply the Town Seal to the new COA vehicle and paid for by the Selectboard Expense.

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

8. TABLED ITEMS:

a. Reorganize Board of Selectmen

No action

b. Review and approve Photovoltaic Solar PILOT Agreement with DG MA Solar, LLC: On-Going

No action

c. Review and Approve Photovoltaic Solar PILOT Agreement with Syncarpha Blandford, LLC: On-going

No action

d. Review and Discuss Comparable Building Fees and Proposed Fee Increases from the Building Commissioner

No action

9. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm

10.*EXECUTIVE SESSION:

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

**NOTE: Agenda may include items not reasonably expected 48 hours before the meeting. At any point this meeting may go into executive section if Selectboard finds it warranted.

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

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Absent

Eric McVey, Clerk

Thomas Akley, Member