



TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
SELECTBOARD

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

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES of the BOARD  
OF SELECTMEN AND WATER  
COMMISSION  
March 9, 2020**

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

~~C. Letendre~~, Chairman—Absent; E. McVey, Clerk; T. Ackley, Member; J. Garcia, Town Administrator; J. Martin, Commissioner; B. Champiney, Commissioner

**2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

*a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2020*

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to accept the meeting minutes of March 2, 2020 as written.  
T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor

*b. Examination of the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of March 2, 2020*

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to accept the executive session meeting minutes of March 2, 2020 as amended.  
T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor

**3. \*AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to recess from the Board of Selectmen meeting and to reconvene after a Public Hearing to be held by the Blandford Board of Selectmen at the Town Hall, 1 Russell Stage Road, Blandford, MA on March 9, 2020 at 7:00 pm on the revised petition for joint or identical pole locations from NSTAR Electric Company DBA as Eversource Energy and Verizon New England, Inc. The petitioners are seeking to be granted joint or identical locations for and permission to construct and maintain a line of poles and their respective wires and cables to be placed thereon, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as may deem necessary, along the southern side of Otis Stage Road, Blandford, MA and to reconvene at the close of the public hearing.

T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor

**4. ACTION ITEMS:**

*a. PUBLIC HEARING – Revised petition for joint or identical pole locations from NSTAR Electric Company DBA Eversource Energy and Verizon New England, Inc. The petitioners are seeking to be granted joint or identical locations for and permission to construct and maintain a line of poles and their respective wires and cables to be placed thereon, together with such sustaining and protecting fixtures as may deem necessary, along the southern side of Otis Stage Road, Blandford, MA*

Representatives from Eversource met with the Board to discuss the latest revised pole placement in Blandford.

**MOTION:** T. Ackley made a motion to accept the Eversource pole placement request.

**E. McVey Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to reconvene to the March 9 regularly scheduled Board of Selectmen meeting at 7:10 pm.

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

*b. Review and accept the appointment of Gordon Avery as Water Superintendent*

The Water Commissioners joined the Board of Selectmen to appoint Gordon Avery as Water Department Superintendent. Avery presented his request to the Board. The Commissioners and the Board discussed Avery's interview and hiring details.

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to accept the appointment of Gordon Avery as Water Department Superintendent at \$37.00 per hour with a \$.50 raise after a 90-day period with no annual pay raise on July 1, 2020 and based on the signing of the contract as a hired employee.

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to revise the previous motion

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to alter the compensation of the existing contract presented by the town Administrator to change Paragraph 4, Item A to \$37.00/hour and paragraph B to \$.50.

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**Roll Call Vote to accept the acceptance of Gordon Avery as Water Commissioner**

Joann Martin – Aye

Brian Champiney – Aye

Eric McVey – Aye

Thomas Ackley – Aye

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:**

None

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

***a. Fire Chief Update & Request***

Fire Chief, Edward Harvey resigned as of June 30, 2020. The Board discussed moving forward in hiring a new Fire Chief. McVey suggested that we include input from the volunteer Fire Fighters. Garcia will organize the scope of this process..

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to accept the resignation of Edward Harvey as Town of Blandford Fire Chief  
**T. Ackley Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

***b. Review the All-Department Expense Summary***

The All-department expense summary was reviewed and it was determined there is nothing out of line.

***c. Budget Update for Gateway Regional School District***

The Board reviewed the updated Gateway Regional School budget presented. The proposed statutory cost for Blandford’s share of the school budget for FY21 is \$1,646,875. This is a 5.51% increase from FY20 which is an increase of \$85,975. The proposed alternative assessment cost would be \$1,591,448 which is an increase of 1.96% or \$30,548. To pay the alternative cost, all 6 towns need to approve the alternative assessment but we are anticipating that 2 of the 6 towns will not support it. This means, we are going to have to budget for worst case scenario – the statutory cost. See the comparison charts below.

**STATUTORY ASSESSMENT METHOD:**

	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>\$ increase</b>	<b>% increase</b>
<b>Blandford</b>	<b>\$1,560,900</b>	<b>\$1,646,875</b>	<b>\$85,975</b>	<b>5.51%</b>
<b>Chester</b>	\$1,581,065	\$1,529,224	-\$51,841	-3.28%
<b>Huntington</b>	\$2,784,289	\$2,925,044	\$140,755	5.06%
<b>Middlefield</b>	\$535,836	\$494,778	-\$41,058	-7.66%
<b>Montgomery</b>	\$907,554	\$990,560	\$83,006	9.15%
<b>Russell</b>	\$2,125,965	\$2,094,966	-\$30,999	-1.46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,495,609</b>	<b>\$9,681,447</b>	<b>\$185,838</b>	<b>1.96%</b>

**ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHOD**

	<b>FY20</b>	<b>FY21</b>	<b>\$ increase</b>	<b>% increase</b>
<b>Blandford</b>	<b>\$1,560,900</b>	<b>\$1,591,448</b>	<b>\$30,548</b>	<b>1.96%</b>
<b>Chester</b>	\$1,581,065	\$1,612,008	\$30,943	1.96%
<b>Huntington</b>	\$2,784,289	\$2,838,780	\$54,491	1.96%
<b>Middlefield</b>	\$535,836	\$546,323	\$10,487	1.96%
<b>Montgomery</b>	\$907,554	\$925,316	\$17,762	1.96%
<b>Russell</b>	\$2,125,965	\$2,167,572	\$41,607	1.96%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,495,609</b>	<b>\$9,681,447</b>	<b>\$185,838</b>	<b>1.96%</b>

***d. Discuss possible local non-binding ballot question/s for November election***

**MOTION:** E. McVey made a motion to table 6d. Discuss possible local non-binding ballot question/s for November election.  
**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**e. Library Furnace Replacement**

M. Kronholm gave the Board an update on the cause of the break-down of the current furnace and possibilities for replacement. The Board discussed the cost and the budget constraints. McVey mentioned that he is hoping that the Library help pay for this loss as well as the Town. Currently, all possible solutions are being explored to proceed with resolving the problem.

**7. TABLED ITEMS:**

- a. Review updated draft policies for personnel handbook – General Administration*
- b. Review draft policies for personnel handbook – Preamble; General Provision; Recruiting; Hiring*
- c. Review draft policies for personal handbook – Standards of Conduct*

**8. MEETING ADJOURNED:**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:06 pm

**9.\*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

---

Eric McVey, Clerk

---

Thomas Akley, Member