



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECTBOARD

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

**MEETING MINUTES
JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
SELECTMEN and FINANCE COMMITTEE
April 22, 2020**

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L.C. 30A, §18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 order imposing strict limitation on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Blandford Board of Selectmen will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Members of the public who wish to listen to the meeting may do so by visiting either of the following options:

- Dial-In Number: (425) 436-6311; Access Code 248324#
- You tube – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjMX9bP223xSJq34P31AVGw>

No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted unless you are on the agenda ahead of time, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post on the Town of Blandford website a transcript or other comprehensive record of proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

If you have any comment regarding items that are on the agenda, please forward to Joann Martin, Administrative Assistant, at Selectboardadmin@townofblandford.com or 413-848-4279 x206.

1. Open Session at 6:32 pm

Meeting is recorded

Meeting held virtually/You Tube

C. Letendre, Chairman; **E. McVey**, Clerk; **T. Ackley**, Member; **T. Ackley**, Member; **J. Garcia**, Town Administrator; **J. Lombardo**, Finance-Conference Call; **J. Bull**, Finance; **K. Smelcer**, Finance; **S. Hunter**, Treasurer-Conference Call

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to 6a. **New Business: Hardship request process created pursuant to MA Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to waive penalties and interest for 30 days for fourth quarter real estate and property tax payments for property owners experiencing hardship due to COVID-19.**

**E. McVey Seconded
All in Favor**

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Examination of the previous Meeting Minutes

None

3. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:

Temporarily Suspended

4. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Review and take action on proposed FY21 budget – BOS & Finance Committee

The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee met to discuss the final draft of the FY21 budget revision that Finance completed as well as Free-Cash needs for the coming year.

MOTION: E. McVey made a motion to request that the board of Assessors to move \$70,000 available Overlay to the Reserve Fund for FY2021.

T. Ackley Seconded

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the FY21 Budget as amended and presented by the Finance Committee

E. McVey Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: J. Lombardo made a motion that the Finance Committee approve the FY21 Budget as amended tonight at the April 22, 2020 Finance/Board of Selectmen meeting.

J. Bull Seconded

All in Favor

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Lee Ann Thompson Case Update

S. Hunter, Treasurer reported that RRG Assessors are still working on the deed research and have done a couple of years. Hunter is expecting RRG will send the report this week. What they have been focusing on is cleaning up all of the outstanding receivables that have been effective so balances will still show on older accounts which they are working on. McVey inquired about how many of the Thompson cases have been resolved. Hunter stated that these are the accounts RRG is still working on and she can't comment on the actual number because there are some instances where properties have changed hands and she doesn't want to send the refund to the wrong people.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to Action Item 4a. Review and take action on proposed FY21 budget – BOS & Finance Committee

E. McVey Seconded

All in Favor

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Hardship request process created pursuant to MA Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 to waive penalties and interest for 30 days for fourth quarter real estate and property tax payments for property owners experiencing hardship due to COVID-19.

S. Hunter, Treasurer for the Town of Blandford, joined our meeting via conference call to discuss resident tax hardships due to COVID-19. Sara presented a form (Excise Tax and 4th Quarter 2020 Real Estate & Property Tax Hardship Request) residents may fill out to waive any interest and fees if payments cannot be made by the May 4th due date as well as establishing a 'tracking' system going forward to manage these requests. The Treasurer/Tax Collector's Office will be pro-active in reaching out and assisting residents in this process. This information has been sent out via Robo Calls, Email, Newsletter and this will be repeated.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move that the Board of Selectmen vote, in accordance with Section 11 of Chapter 53 of the Acts of 2020 entitles, “An Act to Address Challenges Faced by Municipalities and State Authorities Resulting from COVID-19”, to waive the payment of interest and other penalties in the event of the late payment of any real estate, personal property tax not to include excise tax or water tax, for any payments with a due date on or after March 10, 2020 provided, however, that such payment is made no later than June 30, 2020.

T. Ackley Seconded for discussion

All in Favor

MOTION: E. McVey made a motion to amend the previous motion to include Excise Tax.

C. Letendre accepted and Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to go to 5a. Unfinished Business: Lee Ann Thompson Case Update

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

7. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY

a. Quote to Upgrade the Fire Alarm system at the Old Town Hall building

Garcia presented a quote from DAS Alarm to upgrade the fire alarm system at the Old Town Hall building for \$1,669.52. Garcia is requesting that the Finance Committee make a recommendation where to take the funds from. Finance recommended Capital Projects line item.

MOTION: E. McVey made a motion to accept the proposal from DAS Alarm to repair the fire alarms at the Old town Hall building (Post Office).

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

8. 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

9. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Meeting Adjourned at 8:52 pm

10.*EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

*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

and Town Administrator

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Eric McVey, Clerk

Thomas Akley, Member