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:

- **Zoom Video Link:** [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87116077710](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87116077710)
- **Meeting ID:** 871 1607 7710
- **Phone Dial In:** 1-929-205-6099, dial in meeting ID when prompted

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](mailto:Selectboardadmin@townofblandford.com) or 413-848-4279 x206.

1. **Open Session at 7:00 pm**

   **Meeting is recorded**

   **Meeting held virtually/You Tube**

   **In Attendance:** C. Letendre, Chairman; E. McVey, Clerk absent; T. Ackley, Member; J. Garcia, Town Administrator; D. Jemiolo, Town Clerk; M. Kronholm, Assistant Town Clerk; J. Henning, Veteran’s Agent; P. Martin, Member Planning Board; E. Wilander, Member Planning Board; R. Senecal, Highway Superintendent via conference call.

2. **EXAMINATION OF THE MEETING MINUTES:**

   **a. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of August 31, 2020**

   **MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to accept the August 31, 2020 meeting minutes as written.

   T. Ackley Seconded

   All in Favor
3. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:**
None

4. **ACTION ITEMS:**
   a. **Review and take action on draft Request for Price Qualification (RFPQ) to procure services for landscape work at Veteran’s Park at the Town Commons**

   Garcia explained the process set up to procure services for the landscape work needed to be done at Veteran’s Park. $15,000 is available and he is looking for ideas to improve the space. Garcia was contacted by a member of the Historical Commission expressing interest to ensure we maintain the historic nature of the park which Garcia agrees with. Garcia said the intent is to improve the curb appeal of the space available. No action was taken until Garcia brings back a more detailed project scope of what’s looking to be accomplished.

   b. **Issue Executive Order to lower the US Flags within Town borders to half-mast for September 20, 2020 from sunrise to sunset in commemoration of Veteran Susan Barselaar**

   Joseph Henning, Town of Blandford Veteran’s Agent, is requesting that the commemoration for Veteran Susan Barselaar be moved to September 27, 2020 in order to give folks a 2-week notice and is requesting the flags be lowered at 11:00 am on that day and stay at half-mast until sunset. Henning will touch base with D. Emo to assist in the ceremony.

   **MOTION:**  C. Letendre made a motion to issue an executive order to lower the US Flags within Town boundaries to half-mast on September 27, 2020 from 11:00 am to sunset in commemoration of Veteran Susan Barselaar.
   T. Ackley Seconded
   All in Favor

   c. **Review and take action on contract with MA Department of Energy Resources to receive Green Communities Grant Fund of $110,764.00 for energy conservation projects**

   Garcia explained this is the funding for energy conservation efforts at the Town Hall to install an updated control system for the heating of the building as well as weatherization for Porter Memorial Library. This document is the contract between the Town and the Commonwealth so that we can execute the grant. This grant included $99,340 for energy management at town offices, $5,424 for Library weatherization and $6,000 for contract administration.

   **MOTION:**  C. Letendre made a motion to approve the contract with MA Department of Energy Resources to receive Green Communities fund of $110,764.
   T. Ackley Seconded
   All in Favor
   Witnessed and Notarized by D. Jemiolo, Town Clerk

The Board discussed the appointment of Town Administrator as signatory for the Commonweal of MA contracts.

   **MOTION:**  C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Joshua Garcia, Town Administrator, as an authorized signatory for the Green Communities contract with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
   T. Ackley Seconded
   All in Favor
d. Review and take action on contract with MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to receive Massachusetts Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant of $102,824.00 to develop a resilient community-driven master plan

Catherine Ratte of PVPC joined the Board to explain the proposal of the Master Planning process to the Board and the scope involved. The grant is two-fold: 1) an Open space and recreation plan and 2) a master plan for the Town. Garcia explained that the Master Planning process is robust and engaging; the purpose being to map out the future of the Town, control grown and manage open space areas. Through this process, a committee will need to be formed and will meet every month for the next 9 months. The committee will be made up of members from various town departments.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the contract with the MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to receive MA Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Action Grant of $102,824.00 to develop a resilient community-driven master plan.

T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor
Witnessed and Notarized by D. Jemiolo, Town Clerk

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. COVID-19 Update

No update

b. Review draft Blandford Walking Map

Sarah Bankert of Healthy Hampshire Group joined the Board via Zoom to present and talk about the features of the new draft Town of Blandford Walking Map made possible by a grant presented by the State and produced by Healthy Hampshire. Sarah has been working with Blandford on this project for the past six months or so and the map will be available to the public in the next few weeks. The group wants to collect additional feedback prior to finalizing it. The map includes walking routes from easy to moderate for the enjoyment of all levels of exploration and includes the Hill Cemetery and The White Church loop, Watson Park loop, Koalin Road loop, Herrick Road Route, Knittel Western Trail, Knittel Eastern Trail, Cobble Mountain Road loop, Sanderson Brook Falls Trail, Dynamite Box Trail and Observation Hill Trail as well as miles and timing of each walk. The Board is looking forward to the final version by September 28, 2020.

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Highway Department Updates

R. Senecal joined the Board via conference call to present an update of the Highway Department. -Senecal reported on the new Highway employee stating that this person is working extremely well with his co-workers and is proving to be pro-active in his responsibilities. -Transfer station started to have some wash outs which Highway is dealing with. Currently, the Transfer has excessive barriers and the Cemetery is looking for barriers for their new building so they will be repurposed for this reason to avoid additional cost to the Town. -Highway is working on Blair Cemetery to maintain the upkeep of mowing of the embankment. -Hayden Road has been neglected for many years. Highway is currently widening, installing new drainage, grading, raking and rolling. This work should be done within a week -Highway now has the shared mower so workers are taking care of road-side mowing.
-Highway is busy getting ready for winter. The Salt prices are at the lowest price seen in years which was obtained through County Bid. The sand prices went up a bit but with the new processes in place for sanding Highway won’t be using as much sand.

-The flooding and ice issues on Russell Stage Road under the bridge should be solved so we shouldn’t have that ice build-up in the future.

-The ice build-up on North Blandford Road has also been resolved.

-Senecal has been working on getting a contractor to put together a bid for the new Highway building. He is suggesting we put a committee together to work on this. We need to come up with some good specifics before going out to bid to find a general contractor. Committee’s job will be to put together a scope of the work in order to organize such a large scale project.

b. Discuss the need for a Planning Specialist to advise Planning Board responsibilities
Paul Martin and Edna Wilander of the Planning Board joined the Select Board to discuss the need for professional assistance for a number of solar projects they are currently working on. Martin gave his summary of what the Planning Board’s needs are at this time pointing out that they feel they need more professional assistance making these important decisions that will affect the town for many years to come, protect the Town from liability and make sure we get the best results for the Town. He pointed out that we are dealing with multi-billion dollar solar companies and soon marijuana growing companies will be part of the decision process. These companies all have their lawyers and engineers working for them. Martin mentioned that Rick Barnard, Chairman, has devoted so many hours over the past few years and will be retiring soon. Planning is asking for Garcia’s and the Board’s approval to use the current funds they have in their budget to move forward with hiring a planning specialist now rather than wait until the next fiscal year budgeting process. Garcia will assist in the search for this planning specialist. Martin and Wilander agreed to get in contact with an individual at PVPC for Planning and Conservation to utilize when needed and help guide the efforts of these two boards.

c. Appoint Assistant Plumbing Inspector
Garcia was approached by Blandford’s current Plumbing Inspector, Aaron Poteat, presenting a resume of a plumber that he is recommending to act as assistant plumbing inspector for the town in case of his absence. Garcia presented this information to the Board for their review and discussion at the next Select Board meeting on Monday, September 21, 2020.

d. Receive notice from the MA Department of Agricultural Resources postponing routine annual barn inspections/animal census until next fall (2021)
Garcia presented a letter from the MA Department of Agricultural Resources for the Board as communication.

e. Early voting schedule – Town Clerk
D. Jemiolo, Blandford Town Clerk, presented the early voting schedule to the Board:
-October 17, 2020 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
-October 18, 2020 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
-October 19, 2020 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
-October 24, 2020 10:00 am to 12:00 pm
-October 25, 2020 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
-October 26, 2020 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm
-October 29, 2020 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm

-October 24, 2020 is the last day for voter registration.
7. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY

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 personnel handbook – standards of Conduct
   d. Discuss creating a committee to research and provide recommendations for stipends for elected and appointed Town boards, commissions and committees that exist per Town bylaws.

9. **MEETING ADJOURNED:**
Meeting adjourned at 8:35 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
   and Town Administrator

   ____________________________
   Cara Letendre, Chairman

   Absent ______________________________
   Eric McVey, Clerk

   ________________________________
   Thomas Akley, Member