



TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
SELECT BOARD

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

**MEETING MINUTES  
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD  
November 2, 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:

- **Zoom Video Link:** <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 6:00 pm**

**Meeting is recorded**

**Meeting held virtually/You Tube**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to Unfinished Business 5a. COVID-19 Update.  
T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor**

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

***a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2020***

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 26, 2020 with amendments.  
T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to Unfinished Business 6a. Perc test at Salt Shed.  
T. Ackley Seconded  
All in Favor**

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

None

**4. ACTION ITEMS:**

***a. Review and take action on FY20 Green Communities Annual Report to submit to the MA Department of Energy Resource (DOER)***

Garcia explained the information presented regarding the Green Communities Annual Report to the Board which is a report to the Commonwealth of the Town's energy conservation measurer's for Fiscal Year 20.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the FY20 Green Communities Annual Report to be submitted to the MA Department of Energy Resource and to have the Chairman of the Select Board affix her signature of approval for the Town of blandford as well.**

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

***b. Discussion about adjusting Select Board meeting times during COVID-19***

The Board discussed meeting every other week during COVID-19 Phase III, Step 1.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to hold Select Board meetings every other week starting November 2, 2020 until we are out of COVID-19 Phase III, Step 1.**

**T. Ackley Seconded**

**All in Favor**

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

***a. COVID-19 Update***

Jennifer Girard updated the Board on the current concerns of COVID-19 in Massachusetts and Blandford. She reported that on October 25, Blandford became a high-risk community. Residents have tested positively in the past couple weeks which brings us back to Phase III Step 1 and we will stay as high risk until COVID infections slow down. This surge in COVID in our Town is not in one home, it is not a cluster infection and it is of all ages. She emphasized the importance of wearing a mask and made note that Governor Baker has established a curfew from 10:00 pm to 7:00 am. On a positive note, the rate of infection increase in Blandford has slowed with only had one positive case in the past 4 days. Girard is reminding people that group functions in resident homes is limited to 10 and outside function limited to 50.

***b. Overview of FY22 budget Process and timeline including discussion on Select Board budget priorities, goals, objectives for FY22***

Garcia presented an updated FY22 budget setting the timeline to the board. The Finance Committee joined Blandford's accounting firm in developing this budget. The budget submitting instructions will not be sent out to all departments until mid-December. Garcia explained the issues of COVID has backed-up the accountants a bit and expects to receive a budget document from the accountants by early December.

**6. NEW BUSINESS**

***a. Update on Perc Test results at the Salt Shed for new Highway garage***

The Board reviewed the results of the Salt Shed perc test. Resident, Steve Hart joined the Board to voice his concern about the perc test that was done at the Salt Shed in preparation for the new Highway Building. Highway Superintendent, Rene Senecal joined the Board via conference call. Senecal reported that he reviewed the test results, he was present and his opinion is that the test was done professionally and correctly. He also

noted that he was impressed with the thoroughness of the person who did the perc test. The Board agreed that Senecal will contact somebody from the Department of Environmental Protection and share the perc test results with them.

***b. Update on Close of FY20***

Garcia reported the FY20 is officially closed and we have our free-cash report \$567,765 so far (but actually more as we are waiting on a few outstanding reimbursements from grants and Chapter 90 funds). Once we receive these, we can ask DOR to update our free-cash balance. The Board discussed Town capital priorities in the next fiscal year.

***c. Review updated All Department Expense Report***

The Board reviewed the expense report and found no issues.

***d. Town Clerk Update – D. Jemiolo***

Mary Kronholm, Assistant Town Clerk, joined the Board to give an update of the recent account of 2020 voting activities. Kronholm reported 300 mail-in and in-person votes have been received to date. The Town has purchased 12 new voting booths and will concentrate on social distancing in order to keep voters and poll workers safe. Open voting will be Tuesday, November 3, from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm at the Blandford Town Hall.

***e. Library Update – M. Kronholm***

Kronholm gave the Board an update of her progress on collecting quotes for replacing the gutters at the Town Library. Kronholm reported that she reached out to 5 individual vendors and only one presented the Town with a quote. Ackley recommended she reach out for at least one more quote and we can revisit at the next Board meeting. The Board agreed.

***f. Security drop box for mail-in votes – M. Kronholm***

Kronholm reported that the State is now requiring that all municipalities purchase security to monitor drop boxes for future elections. The Town Clerk's office is considering purchasing a mobile lockbox so it can be moved from outside to the inside lobby rather than the bolted-down lock box we use at this time. The Town Clerk will purchase this new lock box for \$2,200 and it will be chained when outside and brought into the building and locked in a secure area when not in use. The cost of this will be reimbursed by the State and must be purchased by November 20, 2020 in order to receive reimbursement.

***g. Trust Account Updates – Garcia***

Watson Park: Garcia spoke of the expendable and non-expendable amounts in this trust account. The Treasurer/Collector, the Town Accountants and Town Counsel reviewed this account and the Trust Agreement and concluded that the non-expendable amount for Waterson Park is \$40,000; the total of the fund being \$364,000 which is expendable. The Board spoke of having the stone wall repaired in the park as well as needing a new mower which is aging and has been repaired many times.

Tiffany Trust: Garcia reported it has been long understood that the account had non-expendable funds of more than \$300,000. The Accountants, along with Town Council, reviewed the Trust Agreement and concluded that all in the Tiffany Account is expendable and nothing in the agreement is identified as a non-expendable amount. With that said, currently the Tiffany account has \$80,821 left that is expendable and nothing more. Roughly \$80,000+ went to build the shed. The remaining has been drawn down during a period of time for mostly salary. The problem realized is this – for many years, we maintained a ledger of what was expended in this account but never balanced our ledger by transferring funds out of the bank from where the Tiffany fund sits. So, when the Cemetery Commissioners would receive the statement from the bank, they will see the funds in

the bank account grew and there remained a perception that Cemetery still had all the money assuming its non-expendable but our Town Ledger was never balanced with the bank ledger therefore creating this confusion. The Board talked about the cost of yearly upkeep on this property and noted the Town will have to start budgeting in the future to take over this cost when the trust is depleted. The yearly cost of maintenance is approximately \$21,000. Garcia and the Treasurer are looking into how to invest these funds in both trusts to maximize the Town's return on investment.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY**

**8. TABLED ITEMS:**

*a. 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 7:34 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 session if Selectboard finds it warranted.

Submitted by: Joann Martin  
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board  
and Town Administrator

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Cara Letendre, Chairman

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Eric McVey, Clerk

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Thomas Ackley, Member