



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECT BOARD

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

**MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
November 16, 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 or 413-848-4279 x206.

1. Open Session at 6:00 pm Meeting is recorded Meeting held virtually/You Tube

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chairman; ~~E. McVey, Member~~ ~~Absent~~; T. Ackley, Member

2. EXAMINATION OF THE MEETING MINUTES:

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of November 2, 2020

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 2, 2020 as written
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor

3. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

4. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Review and take action on agreement between Town and FRCOG for procurement assistance with Request for Information/Statement of Qualifications for Design Services at the Veteran’s Park at the Town Commons

Garcia explained that the advisory committee for this project will work with FRCOG in soliciting qualified vendors who have successfully completed design work with other communities comparable to Blandford. The Board agrees to approve.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the agreement between the Town and FRCOG for procurement assistance with Request for Information/Statement of qualifications for Design Services at the Veteran’s Park at the Town Commons.
T. Ackley Seconded for discussion
All in Favor**

b. Receive letter of resignation from Larry Gresty as Electrical Inspector effective November 28, 2020

The Board received a letter from Larry Gresty resigning as Electrical Inspector for the Town of Blandford effective November 28, 2020. Letendre noted that Gresty has been there when the Town needed him and the Board appreciates his service. Ackley mentioned that he will be missed.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept the resignation letter from Larry Gresty.
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

c. Review and take action on appointing the assistant Electrical Inspector John VanHeynigen as primary Electrical Inspector

Mr. VanHeynigen joined the Board and was sworn in by the Assistant Town Clerk as Blandford’s Primary Electrical Inspector after being appointed by the Board. It was asked if VanHeynigen knows of any back-up inspectors we can work with. VanHeynigen said he will work on recruiting an assistant inspector going forward.

**MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to appoint John VanHeynigen as primary Electrical Inspector for the Town of Blandford as of November 29, 2020.
C. Letendre Seconded
All in Favor**

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. COVID-19 Update

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the COVID-19 update until the next Select Board meeting.
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

b. Library Gutter Replacement quotes - Kronholm

Library Trustee, Mary Kronholm, updated the Board on the search for a company to replace the gutters on the Library building. She reported that she is still waiting for quotes and will join the Board at the next Select Board meeting of November 30, 2020.

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. Logging activities at the end of Huntington Road- Rene Senecal, Highway Superintendent

Rene Senecal, Highway Superintendent, spoke to the Board about the logging approved on Huntington Road for the Russell Watershed area. Senecal is concerned about the fact that these are heavy-duty vehicle traveling up and down Blandford roads that will potentially damage Huntington Road, and other roads, while doing this job with little to no restrictions in place. He is recommending to the Board that a process be put in place whereas any logging approvals in Blandford should be shared with all departments and there should be more restrictions put on these companies in case of damage. He believes this process of securing adequate road bonding, presenting their travel route, among other restrictions, should be an automatic requirement consistent throughout Town departments. Senecal reported that he can't stress enough how much damage these vehicles can do to Town roads. Senecal is asking the board to re-address this process so it is communicated across all departments. At this time, he is currently reaching out to the contractor responsible for this job and explained if he doesn't hear from them, he will shut them down until the Town can sort this out. Letendre asked how the Select Board can support Senecal in this situation. Senecal responded that at the moment, he will work with the contractor and see how much cooperation he receives. Letendre mentioned that our next steps should be 1) changing the bond amount at the next special Town meeting 2) take a look at our current policy to see what we needs to change to adequately protect the Town.

Senecal addressed the concerns of Town residents that a Town truck was being used to transport wood on Sunday, speeding down Town roads. Senecal assured the Board that upon investigation, this was not a Town vehicle and it was reported by one of the town residents that is was not a white truck but an off-white truck and had no town seal on the side. Letendre warned of the dangers of picking up such information from Facebook.

b. Water Department – SCADA Assessment Report – Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent

Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent, joined the Board via conference call to address the SCADA Assessment Report he presented to the Board from Wright & Pierce to get the Water Plant operation system up to par as it has been 20± years since any updating has been done. Avery reported that when there are repairs to be done in the Water Plant, it is difficult to get parts as more and more parts are obsolete and a lot of our computer programs will no longer be supported. Avery explained that this report is broken down into two parts; 1) what is needed immediately and 2) what is recommended. Option 1 would be replacing parts and programs as problems arise and Option 2 means doing what is needed in full which will save the Town money. Avery spoke of the potential cost savings to have better control of the distribution system. Garcia, Avery and the Board spoke of funds available in Retained Earnings among other available funding resources and will work with the Finance Committee for any recommendations. Letendre asked what the time-line is for this project. Garcia reported that this program is contingent on how quickly we can secure the funds. Garcia said that the Water Department has Retained Earnings of approximately \$193,000 and a lot of it is because of the aggressiveness of the Treasurer/Tax Collector in collecting outstanding water bills. The Board and Water Department agreed that this property is an important part of our infrastructure so it should be done right the first time saving money in the long run. Garcia mentioned that this will better control and manage the quality of our water. Letendre asked if there are any grants available he was looking to pursue for upgrading the water infrastructure but not guaranteed. The Board agreed that the Water Department should work with Garcia and move forward with a plan.

c. All Department Expense Report

The Board reviewed this report and found no issues.

d. Waive \$300 Liquor License Fee during COVID-19

Garcia suggested that the Board waive the Liquor License fee during COVID-19 as these small businesses are suffering at this time. Letendre agrees. Ackley agrees. Garcia will draft a letter.

MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to waive the \$300 Liquor License fee due to economic difficulties during COVID-19.

C. Letendre Seconded

All in Favor

e. FY20 Audit

Garcia reported that the FY20 audit has begun. They are hoping to receive a management letter in January 2021.

f. Resilient Master Planning Committee

Garcia announced the first Resilient Master Planning Committee meeting will be November 24, 2020 at 3:00 pm via zoom. The agenda and log-in information is listed on the Town of Blandford web site.

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 7:10 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 Select Board
and Town Administrator

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Absent
Eric McVey, Clerk

Thomas Ackley, Member