



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECT BOARD

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

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES with
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD, FINANCE
COMMITTEE and WATER COMMISSIONERS**

April 12, 2021

6:00 pm

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 Select Board 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. If 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/Zoom

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chairman; E. McVey, Member; T. Ackley, Member; J. Garcia, Town Administrator; K. Smelcer, Finance; J. Lombardo, Finance; D. Champiney, Water Commissioner; M. Keier, Water Commissioner; G. Avery, Water Superintendent; S. Desilets, Water Secretary; M. Kronholm, Asst. Town Clerk

2. EXAMINATION OF THE MEETING MINUTES:

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2021

MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to accept the April 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written
C. Letendre Seconded
All in Favor

3. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION/PUBLIC COMMENT:

Kim Blanchette requested to speak to the Board regarding her neighbor's dog that has been aggressive toward her and her dog on multiple occasions, including physically attacking her dog. An order was issued last September for the homeowner to keep the dog 500 feet away from public ways and to always maintain control of the animal. Blanchette is reporting that this is not the case. She stated she sees the dog loose frequently and the homeowners have not put up the fence they were required to install. Blanchette said on this occasion the dog was loose in the

driveway and the homeowner was present clearing out their car. When the dog spotted her, it chased her and her dog across the street when she was almost hit by a vehicle in the road. During this interaction, the owner, who was in the yard never attempted to come and retrieve the dog. She reported that she called us October 5 and was told the fence had been installed but she said this fence has not been installed stating the fence that was seen was around the homeowner's pool.

MOTION: E. McVey made a motion to accept the formal complaint from Kim Blanchette on behalf of the Animal Control Officer and refer it to the ACO for action.
C. Letendre Seconded
All in Favor

Letendre reported the ACO Officer is aware of this situation and is in the process of reaching out to the dog owners again. Garcia mentioned we will most likely have to hold another hearing with the dog owner to determine if the dog is a nuisance or a dangerous dog. Blanchette noted at the last formal hearing, the dog was considered a nuisance and requested the consequences become more severe this time as the owner is not taking this seriously as they did not conform to the last order from the Select Board.

4. ACTION ITEMS:

a. Review and receive Quarterly Animal Control Activity Report

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to receive the Animal Control Officer (Teresa Donovan) Quarterly Report
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor

b. Review and Take Action on letter from Town to DCAMM Commissioner Gladstone regarding Cobble Mountain Road

Garcia gave the Board a summary of the latest update regarding Cobble Mountain Road. The Select Board reviewed and discussed a letter drafted in response to DCAMM Commissioner Gladstone's previous communication to the Town concluding their decision to keep the road closed. In the follow-up letter to the commissioner, the Town is requesting from Commissioner Gladstone to transfer ownership of the road to the Town from Route 23 to the Town line to resolve an existing conflict regarding management and maintenance. If the request is denied, the letter puts DCAMM on notice that Blandford will no longer deploy resources on a road we do not own. The letter also requests DCAMM to remit payments equaling \$1,745,400.00 for reimbursements for maintaining that road for the past 20 years.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the letter from the Town of Blandford to Commissioner Gladstone regarding Cobble Mountain Road
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 6c. Water Department – Emergency Repair Russell Stage Road
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. COVID-19 Update

No update

b. Sheperd Farm Update

No update

c. FY22 Budget and Capital Request Review – joint meeting with Finance Committee

The Select Board and Finance Committee reviewed the revisions to the FY 22 Draft Budget

6. NEW BUSINESS:

a. Review All Department Expense Report

The Board reviewed the All-Department Expense Report and saw no problems.

b. Review Draft Annual Town Meeting Warrant

The Board reviewed the June 26, 2021 Annual Town Meeting Warrant draft.

c. Emergency Repair – Russell Stage Road – Water Department

The Water Commissioners, Water Superintendent and Mark Boomsma, M&M Site Services joined the Board to talk about the recent water line break on Russell Stage Road and Otis Stage Road. Avery reported: Over the weekend within a 24-hour period, there were two water main breaks simultaneously. The first break took place on Russell Stage Road just underneath the Mass Pike overpass. Typically, when breaks take place, the Water Department simply goes in and repairs within a few short hours. This break on Russell Stage Road requires the line to be replaced rather than repaired because of the location of the old water line, and therefore requires more preparation to take place. A temporary bypass was installed so that residents along the road can get running water into their households. Once the old line is replaced, the new line will be pressure checked and chlorinated before being put into service. The work is expected to begin by April 25. The Water Department anticipates having this resolved in 2-3 weeks. Additionally, the road is expected to be closed for thru traffic during the replacement period. Or local Board of Health has issued a Boil Water Order to residents impacted letting them know to boil water at a rolling boil for one minute before using it for any human consumption or use bottled water from an alternate source. The second water break took place on Otis Stage Road, which has been resolved. The water use for the center of town was shut off at the time to isolate each water breaks so that 1) repair can take place on the Otis Stage Road break and 2) to allow the Water Treatment Plant to recover and refill our clear wells since it had reached extremely low levels due to a massive amount of water loss. The Select Board and Finance Committee discussed financial resolutions and will work with the Water Department on this issue.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to declare a local emergency for the health and safety of residents and of funding the water break on Russell Stage Road. The Select Board authorizes the Town Administrator to request from the Department of Revenue to deficit spend up to \$100,000 for the repairs on Russel and Otis Stage road

E. McVey Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: E. McVey made a motion authorize \$200,000 out of Emergency Stabilization so we can resolve the problem with the water breaks with the understanding the Water Department will take out a loan to pay the Town back

**T. Ackley Seconded
Motion Withdrawn
All in Favor**

Letendre asked why we need to use emergency stabilization from the town account when the Water Department has their own Water Stabilization account. Letendre is concerned that what McVey is suggesting is complicating the issue. Garcia agreed. Taking money out of the Town Stabilization account would require a Town Meeting which will take too long. McVey wondered if this was the case in an emergency as well. Garcia confirmed that yes, even in an emergency which is why he will reach out to the DOR to approve deficit spending to fix the problem now and there will be a warrant article at the next Town Meeting to transfer and balance the account later. McVey withdrew his motion.

7. OTHER BUSINESS, IF ANY:

a. Blandford Day

Garcia announced he is working with the Westfield Starfires to organize a “Blandford Day” on July 17, 2021 at 6:30 pm the Westfield Starfires Baseball Team with many planned activities. More information is forthcoming.

b. Finance Committee Appointment

Garcia reported a letter of interest was received from a town resident requesting an appointment on the Finance Committee. Deborah Brodie is an employee of Westfield State University in the Finance Department. Arrangements will be made to interview and appoint her at a future Select Board meeting.

8. TABLED ITEMS:

9. MEETING ADJOURNED:

Meeting adjourned at 7:51 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

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Eric McVey, Clerk

Thomas Ackley, Member