



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

JOINT MEETING MINUTES
with CHESTER SELECT BOARD
and BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD

January 03, 2022

6:00 pm

Members of the public who wish to dial-in or take part virtually, 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

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 6:02 pm

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chairman; T. Ackley, Member; T. Cousineau, Member; C. Mitchell, Interim Town Administrator

1. CHESTER/BLANDFORD POLICE DEPARTMENT

a. Joint Meeting with Chester and Blandford Select Board followed by Blandford Select Board regularly scheduled meeting

In Attendance: C. Letendre via zoom; T. Ackley, Blandford, T. Cousineau, Blandford, C. Mitchell, Interim Town Administrator Blandford; **Kathe Warden**, Chester Town Administrator; **John Baldasaro**, Chester; **Jason Forgue**, Chester; **Chief Tammy Weidhaas**, Chester/Blandford Police; **Richard Holzman**, Chester

The Blandford Select Board and Chester Board of Selectmen met to discuss the Blandford/Chester Police Department agreement.

John Baldasaro opened the meeting welcoming everyone to the semi-annual Chester/Blandford Police Department Board meeting. Baldasaro stated Chester Board of Selectmen is completely satisfied with the arrangement with Blandford and have no complaints and no changes are recommended at this time. Baldasaro is extremely impressed that our towns made this bold move and three years later, things are moving along smoothly. He believes there is a real feeling of communication between the two towns. T. Ackley spoke for the Town of Blandford. He is happy with the arrangement and the close working arrangement with the Police Department and Fire Department. TJ Cousineau mentioned that a couple other towns are planning to emulate the same thing for their town. Cara Letendre spoke for the Blandford Select Board stating that Blandford is also very satisfied with the way things are going in Blandford and sees no

need to change anything at this point. Chief Weidhaas spoke about her limited budget and details of what she will need for FY23. She also spoke of the person who visited her to say there are residents in Blandford that are unhappy with the joint Police Department. Letendre, Ackley, Cousineau and Martin (Admin at the front desk) all stated they have heard no complaints. Baldasaro and Forgue mentioned they have heard no complaints. Warden said she heard two complaints. Baldasaro and Letendre would like to welcome anybody in the Town of Chester or Blandford to come forward and speak at a Select Board meeting so their complaint can be heard. Letendre confirmed, and Ackley and Cousineau agreed, there has been zero conversation about pulling out of this joint arrangement and unfortunately, we cannot make everybody happy all of the time. Martin reported to the Boards that since Chief Weidhaas has been Acting Chief, she sees more police presence in the Town Hall than she ever has. Chief Weidhaas stated she is available to be present at any meeting, Chester, or Blandford, to talk to residents and clear up any confusion or address problems.

2. **EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

a. *Examination of the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of November 01, 2021*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of November 01, 2021 as written

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

b. *Examination of the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of November 08, 2021*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of November 08, 2021 as written.

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

c. *Examination of the Meeting Minutes of November 22, 2021*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of November 22, 2021 as written

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

d. *Examination of the Meeting Minutes of November 29, 2021*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of November 29, 2021 as written

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

e. *Examination of the Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2021*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 6, 2021 as written

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

f. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2021

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select board Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2021 as written
T. Ackley Seconded
All in Favor**

3. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

4. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

5. ACTION ITEMS

a. Board of Health – Mask Mandate

J. Girard joined the Select Board to discuss the substantial increase in COVID 19 cases in Blandford. Her recommendation is to shut the Town Hall down to local traffic until there is a decrease in these numbers. C. Letendre and T. Ackley agree. T. Cousineau believes it would add to the depression that already exists in our community. Letendre stated that she is more concerned about the personal health crisis that exists in this community, especially with the elderly.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to shut down the Town Hall to the general public until the Board and Health and Select Board feel safe in reversing this decision

T. Ackley Seconded

T. Cousineau Abstained

Motion Passes

Girard summarized the projects the BOH is working on:

-Testing Kits: Ordered personal home testing kits for COVID19

-Vaccine Clinic: Working with the Hilltown Community Center to set up a vaccine clinic. The clinic is February 19, 2022 from 9:00 am to noon and will offer the Pfizer and Moderna shots as well as the booster shots.

-Exercise Class: Girard announced that the Council on Aging has cancelled their ongoing exercise classes until further notice out of concern for the spreading virus.

b. Revised Quarterly Animal Control Report-Board of Health

Animal Control Officer, Teresa Donovan was at the meeting to discuss the Board of Health's ideas regarding a revised reporting tool for her quarterly report to the Select Board. Girard believes the form that is submitted currently is too vague. Donovan addressed the question by stating that she already fills out complete and detailed forms and submits them to the Town Clerk which is pretty similar to what the BOH is suggesting. Donovan explained that she is not comfortable sharing a lot of the information she gets from residents to the general public which is why her report in an open meeting is vague. Donovan and Girard agreed on minor changes to her current reporting form she gives to the Select Board and otherwise, if Girard needs more information, she can reach out to the Town Clerk.

c. Animal Control Officer – Quarterly Report

The Board reviewed the 2nd Quarter Animal Control report.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Animal Control Officer's 2nd Quarter report

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. ARPA Funds

The Board discussed the distribution of ARPA funds that have been made available by the State. The discussion revolved The Blandford Country Store request for \$12,000. It was decided to table the discussion and invite The Blandford Country Store to the 1-10-23 meeting.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the payment of the Broadband Infrastructure invoice in the amount of \$20,550.66 out of ARPA funding

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Town Administrator's Report

Caleb Mitchell's Report

-Better Together Grant: This grant has been extended to March 2023 to give additional time for the Town to hire a new Town Administrator.

-UMass Classification & Compensation Review: This grant allowed the Town to have a study done and new job classifications submitted. We have received the final bill, but it is unclear if we received the final package. Mitchell is looking into this.

-Rapid Recovery Plan: One of the grants for \$50,000 from the MA Department of Housing & Community Development that was approved but has not been received by the Town to date. This grant was submitted in September, and we are still waiting for approval. \$30,000 is intended for brand development; \$10,000 for the formation for a Business Civic Association; \$10,000 for support of ongoing local projects or events in town to increase tourism. Mitchell spoke to PVPC about why we have not received this funding. Mitchell is pursuing this.

-Green Community Program Annual Report: Mitchell reached out to Mark Rabinski asking if the Town had submitted their Annual Report. Rabinski will get back to him.

b. All Department Expense Report

The Board reviewed the latest All Department Expense Report and found no problems.

c. Request from Maple Lane to Plow Winter of 2022-Edna Wilander

The Town of Blandford received a request from a resident of Maple Lane to request the Town take care of plowing for the winter of 2021/2022.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to accept Edna Wilander's request to plow Maple Lane for the 2021-2022 winter season

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

8. TABLED ITEMS:

a. Request from the Building Commissioner to consider seeking appropriate authorization to amend existing unregistered vehicle bylaw

b. Shepard Farm Update

9. **MEETING ADJOURNED:**

Meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm

10. ***EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

None

**NOTE: Agenda may include items not expected 48 hours before the meeting. At any point, this meeting may go into executive section if Selectboard finds it called for...

*NOTE: Audience participation/public comment is welcome only when acknowledged by the Chairperson and limited to two minutes. Participation/public comment is only limited to Blandford residents who may comment on agenda items only.

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

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Thomas Ackley, Member

Theodore Cousineau, Member