



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
February 14, 2022
6:00 pm

OPEN SESSION 6:00 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. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 07, 2022
Tabled until the February 28, 2022 Select Board meeting

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

b. Highway Department Update – Dave Waldron, Superintendent

-Beaver Trapping: Waldron reported he spoke to Town Counsel about the Springfield Water Beaver situation on Blair Road. The Board does not feel it is the Town of Blandford responsibility to pay for something that belongs to Springfield Water & Sewer. She directed Waldron to reach out to Town Council.

-Logging Trucks on Blandford Roads: Waldron spoke to Dick Gates, Chair of the Conservation Commission, asking to forward the information about the companies that are logging in the Blandford area so Waldron can inform them they need a road bond.

-N. Blandford Road Culvert Replacement: Waldron is working on some small bids to replace these culverts. Letendre asked Waldron to mention these things to the Town Administrator, Christopher Dunne as he is interested in helping with these situations.

-GRSD Superintendent/Lecrenski Bussing: Highway was criticized for not being on-site when ice froze over on the roads the morning of February 8, 2022. The Board questioned Waldron about what needs to be done in these situations. Pretreating is the answer which his crew was working on the previous night salting and sanding from 7:00 pm – 1:00 am. He spoke to Gateway Superintendent, Kristen Smidy and Lecrenski Bros about improving communication between the school, bussing company and Blandford Highway Department so hopefully, these incidents will be very rare. Ackley noted because it rained, this would wash away the pre-treatment and cause the roads to freeze over. Ackley also noted that these guys on Highway are doing an excellent job and pointed out that we have not had a school bus mishap like this for many years. Letendre spoke of the Board's follow through about the incident that day and the Board feels Waldron was on top of this situation by the end of the day. In the future, Waldron will encourage communication between the Gateway Superintendent and Lecrenski Bussing company.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. COVID 19 Update-Jennifer Girard

-COVID Update: COVID numbers are down, and the Town Hall doors are open to the public. Future updates will be presented if Blandford's COVID numbers rise again or upon request by the Select Board.

b. BOH – Nursing/Social Worker/Wellness Checks for Town – J. Girard

-Wellness Check Program: The Board of Health has been awarded a 2-year grant to hire a nurse, and social worker for Blandford residents. Girard cleared this project with Town Counsel, with permission from the Board. The next step will be to secure a Wellness-Check person. Girard explained this is not just for seniors but would be a service to all Town residents. The Board gave their blessing to the Board of Health to move forward.

c. ARPA Funds

The Town has received \$187,115.00, expended \$116,558.00 which leaves us with \$71,000.00 left at this time to distribute. There is no word when the rest of the ARPA Funds will be received.

-Municipal Light Board – Peter Langmore:

MLB is requesting \$13,000 for a security system at the broadband hut. Letendre asked where Langmore would get this money other than ARPA. Langmore believes the only other place to get the funds would be stabilization or borrowing. All his accounts are maxed out. Letendre pointed out that borrowing for this would cost the town more money whereas getting it from stabilization would be a smarter choice. The Board decided it was best to take these funds from stabilization.

-Catch Basins on Chester Road - Highway:

Waldron needs to repair the swale and catch basins on Chester Road from the damage from the storm last summer which is not being funded by the state or FEMA. This request is for \$75,000.00. Letendre suggested we wait for the second batch of ARPA funds to arrive before making this decision. Letendre asked Interim-Town Administrator, Mitchell to look into when Blandford can expect the balance of the ARPA Funds.

-Hayden Road Drainage - Highway: Waldron spoke of the need for \$10,000 to repair the drainage at 9 Hayden Road.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the request for \$10,000 from ARPA Funding for the Highway Department to improve the drainage at 9 Hayden Road

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

c. Website Redesign: Wendy Berman, Town of Blandford Website Administrator is requesting \$11,000 for redesign of the website:

-Complete site makeover

-Improving Analytics to better understand where users are going

-Review other Town and City websites to see what they are doing in terms of organization and presentation

-Improve features and useability; improve things we can do better

-Re-explore the addition of subscription notification features

-Migrate Assets

-Improve design/interface

-Upgrade all technology behind the site as the current design is not compatible with PHP update which is badly overdue as this website was built in 2016.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the request for \$11,000 from ARPA Funding for Iron Blender Studios to update the Town of Blandford's Website.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

d. Back-Up Generator for the Town Hall: Ackley is working with Chief Mottor obtaining quotes for this project. This will be discussed at the next Board meeting on February 28, 2022.

e. Warrant #17 Approval:

The Board reviewed payables and payroll presented by Town Accountants

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #17 for payment

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

6. NEW BUSINESS

a. ***Town Administrator's Report***

-Rapid Recovery Plan: Mitchell was in touch with PVPC about re-submitting the grant and concentrate more on signage or improvements to unutilized properties or business development. PVPC will write this grant.

-Green Community Annual Report: Mitchell is still working on gathering energy invoice and will work with J. Martin.

-Town Administrator Contract: The contract for Christopher Dunne has been drafted and will be sent to the Select Board and Town Counsel for review.

-Letter from Congressman Richard Neal: The Interim-Town Administrator sent a letter of support to Congressman Neal regarding a much-needed grant for fire safety equipment for Blandford's Fire Department. Congressman Neal did not disappoint and has sent a letter of support in the name of Blandford for this grant.

-Electric Car Charger: Mitchell mentioned the possibility of installing an electric car charger in Blandford. It was quickly decided that although this is the future, there is little need for that at this time.

-Canna Holdings LLC: Host Community Agreement check for \$5,000 has been deposited and Letendre reminded Mitchell that Canna Holdings has been given permission from the Board to go ahead with Counsel to draft a new Host Community Agreement. Mitchell will contact Town Counsel and let them know that Canna Holdings will be in touch.

b. Harper's Payroll Service: Sara Hunter, Treasurer/Tax Collector for the Town of Blandford is asking the Board's approval to change to Harper's Payroll Service as they offer extended protection against identify theft. This will be funded out of the Treasurer's own budget.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to direct Sara Hunter, Treasurer/Tax Collector to use Harper's Payroll Services for the Town of Blandford

T. Ackley Seconded

All in Favor

b. Blandford Fire Association Donation: Tom Ackley announced that the Blandford Fire Association would like to donate three (3) AEDs (Automated External Defibrillator) totaling \$4,279 to the Blandford Fire Department.

MOTION: T. Ackley made a motion to accept these gifts from the Blandford Fire Association.

C. Letendre Seconded

All in Favor

- c. **Hilltown Ambulance:** Ackley inquired about the Hilltown Ambulance situation and the prospect of having a meeting with them. Letendre explained she is in the process of forming a 6-Town meeting to see what the towns can do about this situation as a region. Letendre asked PVPC to be part of this meeting. She believes the best way to go is put out an RFP (Request for Proposal). The Board spoke about available ambulance companies and different scenarios going forward. Ackley mentioned that he and Chief Mottor would like to reach out to the Town of Becket's to see if there would be interest in their Town covering Blandford. Ackley will reach out to Becket on this subject.

7. TABLED ITEMS:

- a. *Request from the Building Commissioner to consider seeking appropriate authorization to amend existing unregistered vehicle bylaw*
- b. *Shepard Farm Update*
- c. *Police Office Safe*
- d. *PC Replacement Plan*

8. *EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

Meeting Adjourned at 7:40 pm

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

Cara Letendre, Chairman

Thomas Ackley, Member

Theodore Cousineau, Member