



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
September 26, 2022
6:00 pm

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chair; J. Allen, Member; T. Cousineau, Member; C. Dunne, Town Administrator.

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm
Meeting is recorded

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of August 08, 2022

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2022, as written

C. Letendre Seconded

All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Highway Department

Chester Road Logging: Northern Tree Service is almost done clearing North Street up to Old Chester Road. Waldron is taking down various problem trees throughout the Town.

Russell Stage Road: Northern Paving is scheduled this week to finish addressing any outstanding issues left on Russell Stage Road.

Wheeled Excavator: The Town will borrow this excavator for a demonstration to see if this will work for the Town.

N. Blandford Road: Not much work accomplished last week due to rain.

b. Town Administrator

i. Budget/Finance:

1. Finance Team / Committee Meeting updates

The monthly Finance Team meeting was last week. FY22 should be closed out according to the Town's accounting team. The Finance Committee did not have a quorum last week and this continues to be a challenge. Dunne is suggesting changing the makeup of the committee. Currently, it requires five members in our bylaws. Dunne is proposing three.

Dunne mentioned that our bylaws also say Finance Committee members cannot be compensated. Letendre agrees that there should be more incentive for Finance Committee members to serve.

ii. Grant updates:

1. Baystate Better Together Grant: The Town is beginning the process of ordering Chromebooks for those aged 55 and older who applied, the cost for which is being covered by the Baystate grant. Training sessions for interested parties are still in the works.
2. Open Space & Recreation Plan finalization: Dunne spoke with PVPC. Their part of this plan will be done by January 2023. Moving the plan from “Conditional Approval” to full approval by the Commonwealth would allow the Town to receive funding in the form of Parkland Acquisition and Renovations for Communities *(PARC) grants.
3. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan updates: The Town does have a plan in place however, it has expired. Dunne is checking to see what level of priority this would be, and he will investigate funding opportunities.
4. Shared HR Study: Vendor options: Dunne spoke with PVPC about the available vendors that offer this service. The idea is to continue looking into a shared plan for Human Resources coverage for multiple towns as we have in the past with the shared Chester/Blandford Police Department.

iii. Other Departments:

1. Board of Assessors: Administrative Assistant hiring: The Board of Assessors interviewed candidates last week for this position. Dunne anticipates the position being filled by the end of the week.
2. Police: draft IMA amendments for review: Dunne forwarded the Town’s amendments to the shared Blandford/Chester Police agreement to the Board. Most of the amendments are intended to discrepancies between the language of the agreement and the shared services in practice. Dunne mentioned that Don Humason is the new Town Administrator for Chester and will need some time to get settled. Dunne is hoping to re-establish quarterly meetings between the Select Boards per the agreement.
3. Water Department Shared Position: The draft for this position has been completed. At this time Chester has hired a water operator in the interim but they are still interested in hiring a shared primary and secondary water operator with Blandford. PVPC is looking into grant funding opportunities.

iv. Ongoing project updates:

1. Town Commons Rehabilitation: funding source identified: This program called Reconnecting Communities is based on removing or altering roads that have divided communities or community assets. This would be a potential way to fund planning work associated with the reconfiguration of North Blandford Road which could be between \$100,000 to \$200,000.
2. OI Departmental Meeting on Monday, October 3 at 5:30pm: The first departmental meeting will be October 3 with a full agenda to discuss including the details of a new HR resource that Sara Hunter, Treasurer has established so employees can access their payroll information online as well as the Warrant for Special Town Meeting on November 14.
3. Beaver Management Policy: The Board of Health Chair, Conservation Commission Chair and the Highway Superintendent met to discuss what to do about the beaver situation throughout the Town. The idea is that Conservation and Highway will make a

map of the Town to identify where the problem areas are to enable Springfield Water and the Town of Blandford to set priorities depending on the severity of impacts. Dick Gates, Chair of Conservation is coordinating with Springfield Water on addressing the beaver situation on Blair Road.

4. Belle Fleur: Community Meeting on Thursday, September 29 at 6:30pm
Belle Fleur is holding a community meeting Thursday via zoom in accordance with state requirements. Belle Fleur will be notifying the abutters and Dunne posted this information on the website.
5. Pudding Hill: Touring site and discussing community impact documentation
Dunne will meet with the owners of Pudding Hall on 1 Julius Hall Road to discuss the changes in community impact regulations.
6. Highway/Fire Garage project: OPM updating scope/contract and continuing to look at funding
With the initial \$120,000 in funding provided at a Special Town Meeting nearly spent, Dunne is meeting with City Point Partners, the Owners' Project Manager (OPM) on the Highway/Fire Garage project to discuss further costs and contracting. Weston & Sampson has submitted a draft contract for designer services which the OPM is reviewing and revising.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. *Establish Liquor License Fee for 2023*

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to reduce the Liquor License Fee from \$300 to \$200 for FY23

T. Cousineau Seconded for discussion

Letendre feels the fee should be waived entirely as these businesses have experienced excess hardship in the past two years. Letendre would like to entertain a motion to waive this fee entirely.

AMENDED MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to waive the yearly Liquor License fee to The Blandford Country Store and the Blandford Country Club.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

Motion Passes

b. *Appoint Pat Lombardo as Blandford Representative to the Board of Hilltown Community Ambulance Association (HCAA)*

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to appoint Pat Lombardo as Blandford's Representative to the Board of Hilltown Community Ambulance Association

C. Letendre Seconded

All in Favor

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

6. NEW BUSINESS

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm

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

Cara Letendre, Chair

Jeffery Allen, Member

Theodore Cousineau, Member