



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD**  
**December 12, 2022**  
**6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

**In attendance:** C. Letendre, Chair; J. Allen, Member - Absent; T. Cousineau; Member; C. Dunne, Town Administrator; D. Hopson, Moderator; D. Jemiolo, Town Clerk

**Appointing Committee:**

The Select Board, Town Administrator, Moderator and Town Clerk opened the meeting at 6:00 pm in order to Appoint Kevin Green to the Finance Committee. Green has a business degree from Westfield State University, experience as a Financial Adviser for 32 years and is recently retired from Westfield Bank, Westfield, MA.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Kevin Green to the Blandford Finance Committee for a term of 3 years.

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** D. Hopson made a motion to adjourn the Appointing Committee Meeting at 6:14 pm  
**C. Letendre Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

**a. *Examination of the Select Board meeting minutes of November 14, 2022***

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2022, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to item 6a. Wright & Pierce – SCADA Upgrade Update

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

**2. \*AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**a. Highway Update**

No Update

**b. Town Administrator**

i. **Budget/Finance: Finance Committee meeting tentatively scheduled for December 14 following finance team meeting at 10:30am;** Dunne reported he will hold the regular monthly Finance Team Meeting then follow with the Finance Committee meeting which will give new member, Kevin Green a chance to get up to speed and allow the Committee to complete some outstanding Reserve Fund transfers.

ii. **Grant Updates:**

1. **Capital Improvement Plan: Updating fleet plan and Collins Center will undertake site visit after receiving facility audits from ADA Transition Plan:** Dunne presented a copy of Blandford's auto fleet. The Collins Center will be distributing this audit to the individual Departments so we can get a better understanding of the condition of our vehicles. Once completed, that will help the Town build a vehicle replacement plan that can be folded into the overall Capital Improvement Plan.

2. **Shared Water Operator with Chester: Update on Efficiency & Regionalization Grant discussion at December 8 meeting;** Dunne reported meeting with PVPC to talk about this grant application. The Town was awarded \$178,000 for this joint effort with Chester, MA. Dunne is asking the Commissioners to take a look at the draft agreement and make suggestions. Both Boards agreed that there are a lot of questions that need to be carefully looked at going forward.

3. **ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan: Report from Institute for Human Centered Design to be delivered by December 30;** Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) has requested an extension and the reports should be back before December 30. This can then be turned over to the Collins Center and used to identify needed capital projects to include in the CIP.

iii. **Other Departments**

1. **Fire Department: Fire Chief Position Posting and Selection Process Updates:** Dunne reached out to the Town of Chester inquiring about their Fire Chief. He is currently part-time and he will be retiring this year so there is the potential to collaborate with Chester on sharing this position. Dunne is developing a draft job description for Chester to review.

iv. **Ongoing Projects/Issues**

1. **Legislative Update: Tour of Town with Senator-Elect Paul Mark and Representative Nick Boldyga, Volunteer Firefighter Tax Break and Cobble Mountain Road:** Boldyga and Mark's visit to Blandford was productive. Talk centered on the Cobble Mountain Road gate, volunteer firefighter tax break, and more talk about a meeting with DCAMM regarding Cobble Mountain Road access.

**4. ACTION ITEMS**

a. **Review and act on contract and funding extensions for ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan:** This was presented to and signed by the Select Board.

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a. **Eversource Staging Area on Shepard Road: Update from conversation with liaison.**

Dunne spoke to Laurie & John Bocon reporting that he had not heard back from the Eversource liaison since he spoke with him last week. His requests from them included Background on the permitting process for the staging area, willingness to cover traffic study that would be needed to reduce the speed limit on the road and repair to the road for any damage resulting from the upturned truck. Dunne is expecting to hear back from them this week.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to recess the Select Board Meeting and to reconvene after the Tax Classification Hearing with RRG and the Board of Assessors**

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to open the Tax Classification Hearing**

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. ***Wright-Pierce – SCADA upgrade update:*** Water Department Commissioners, Blandford’s Water Superintendent, and a representative from Wright-Pierce, joined the Board to discuss the recent supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) upgrades the Department is working on. The representative from Wright- Pierce explained the steps that his company and the Water Department have been taking to improve the dated equipment based on the need to meet Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) consent orders. After the presentation, no action was taken by the Water Commissioners or the Select Board.
- b. ***Bruce Cooper – North Blandford Water Line Repair Issue***  
Tabled

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to reconvene the regularly scheduled Select Board Meeting**

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

- c. ***Tax Classification Hearing; Regional Resource Group and Board of Assessors:***  
Regional Resource Group Director spoke to the Board making note that property taxes are the greatest source of income for the Town. The increase in home values seen during the pandemic could result in a lower rate but higher tax bills. On average, residential property valuations and going up 13%±. With the increase in values and an increase in the levy, we are anticipating a reduction in tax rate. The Town’s Fiscal Year 2022 rate was \$14.79 per thousand square feet and is estimated to fall to \$13.60 per thousand square feet. However, higher values, lower tax rates, and higher revenue needs are projected to result in an increase of the average property tax bill by 5%.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to vote in accordance with MGL Chapter 40 Section 56 as amended the percentage of local tax levy which will be borne by each class of real and personal property, relative to setting the Fiscal Year 2023 tax rates and set the Residential Factor at 1.0, with a corresponding CIP shift of 1.0, pending approval of the Town’s annual tax recap by the Massachusetts Department of Revenue.**

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**7. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm

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

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Cara Letendre, Chair

Absent

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Jeffery Allen, Member

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Theodore Cousineau, Member

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Dr. David Hopson, Moderator

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Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk