



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
January 09, 2023
6:00 pm

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

Meeting Open at 6:05 pm
Meeting is recorded

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2022

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 21, 2022, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

b. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of November 28, 2022

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 28, 2022, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

c. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2022

MOTION: J. Allen Make a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 5, 2022, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Highway Department-Dave Waldron

-Bylaw Violations: Highway is working on contacting residents who are in violation of Town bylaws regarding drainage such as storm run-off and driveway culverts being plugged.

-Crooks & Beech Hill Roads: Waldron received quotes to install a 2" overlay; ½ mile on Crooks and a little over a mile on Beech Hill Road.

-Winter Recovery Assistance Program: Waldron requested the Select Board sign and receive this grant for \$211,243.51 which will go toward the N. Blandford Road bill.

-Palmer Paving: Waldron held back 5% of this bill for N. Blandford Road until the project was completed. The Select Board signed off on the 5% balance \$3,461.00.

b. Town Administrator-Christopher Dunne:

i. Budget/Finance

1. **Operating budget request forms** to be sent out week of January 9, 2023, with meetings scheduled in late January and early February:

Forms were sent out this week and some have already been returned. All requests, increases and issues with the budgets should be noted for these meetings.

ii. Grant updates

1. **Baystate Health Better Together Grant:**

Next computer training to be held on January 23, 2023: This computer training will be postponed to January 30 in the Select Board Chamber.

2. **ADA Transition Plan:** *Gathering comments from Department heads on facility reports to send back to consultant by January 13, 2023:*

All the reports have come back from the consultants. Dunne needs to clarify the cost of any outdoor improvements including grading for wheelchair access to Town buildings for example. Dunne noted that this ADA Transition Plan is a tool we can use for funding to get this work done in the future.

3. **DCR Urban Forestry grant:** *looking into use of this grant in FY24 to fund partnerships and multi-community approaches for improved tree maintenance potentially on Beech Hill Road:*

Waldron and Dunne have been discussing the challenge of keeping up with tree canopy maintenance on a limited budget. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has an Urban Forestry Grant, which despite the name may apply to rural roads. In the past they have funded these programs to assist towns with multi-community approaches to tree maintenance. Dunne will look into this grant further.

4. **Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance Grant Program:** *Looking into use of this program to replace Schoolhouse Hill Road culvert:*

Waldron is looking at Schoolhouse Hill Road as replacing the culvert on this road would tie into the ability to replace culverts on Nye Brook Road. Waldron and Dunne will have a call to discuss the project with staff from the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) later this month.

5. **Digital Sign at Post Office:**

Dunne reported we received the grant for the digital sign. The grant is for \$25,000 and the idea is to have an electronic sign at the Post Office that can be easily updated digitally with Town

meeting agendas, warrants and other announcements easily viewable. Dunne will send out a Request for Proposals for this project in the coming weeks.

6. Porter Memorial Library Patio:

A proposal was received from Tighe & Bond to undertake the patio design and facilitate the construction process. Daviau is doing a great job moving this forward and coordinating this project on a 125-year-old building that has multiple simultaneous maintenance needs.

7. Assistant Treasurer/Collector:

This posting was updated removing the requirement of a bachelor's degree, upping the hours a bit to be on par with the previous position and making it clear that this is a benefited position with the potential for growth from Assistant Treasurer/Collector to Treasurer/Collector.

iii. Other Departments

1. Historical Commission/Historical Society:

Draft Main Street Area Historical Inventory complete:

The Historical Commission has been working with PVPC on this Main Street area inventory which could serve as a springboard for any other funding for historical preservation along Main Street that the Town wants to undertake. Shannon Walsh from PVPC had recommended that the historical area fall somewhere between roughly the Country Club on North Street all the way down Woronoco Street past South Street.

iv. Miscellaneous

1. Department responsiveness to constituents:

Letendre, Dunne and Martin have been discussing responsiveness from Department heads to residents. Dunne is in the process of setting up standing meetings with Department heads in the next month so he can have a regular check-in to make sure residents' requests are being followed up on in a timely manner.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to move to Action Item 4h: Chapter 90 Funds for North Blandford Road

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

4. ACTION ITEMS

a. Review and act on Jim Kronholm Resignation from Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA);

Dunne presented the letter of resignation from Kronholm noting that until ZBA has enough new members for a quorum, the Select Board is the official ZBA in the meantime. Dunne reached out to PVPC as some towns have what is called a zoning administrator. This hired position can make decisions on certain zoning issues which can ease the burden on volunteer Board members of what can be a very difficult regulatory body to serve on.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the resignation of Jim Kronholm from Zoning Board of Appeals as of January 1, 2023.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

b. Review and act on Don Brainerd Resignation from Zoning Board of Appeals

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the resignation of Don Brainerd from Zoning Board of Appeals as of January 15, 2023.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

*c. Review and act on **HP LaserJet Service Contract:***

J. Martin reported this two-year contract is the same price as the two-year service contract that was purchased December 2020. The Board decided to go with the two-year contract at \$1,390.00.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve the two-year service contract with Hewlett Packard for the LaserJet M725 at a cost of \$1,390.00 to be paid out of the Town Hall Office Supply line item.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

*d. Review and act on **Patricia & Gerald Wise donation to Fire Department in the amount of \$100.***

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the \$100 donation from Patricia & Gerald Wise to the Blandford Fire Department.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

*e. Review and act on **standard mileage reimbursement rate increase from \$0.625 to \$0.655 per mile for business use.***

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to approve the standard mileage reimbursement rate increase to \$0.655 per mile effective immediately

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

*f. Review and act on **appointment of Preliminary Screening Subcommittee Members for Assistant Treasurer-Collector Position:***

i. Sara Hunter, Chair

ii. Eric Kinsharf, Member

iii. Dr. David Hopson, Member

iv. Paul Martin, Member

v. Christopher Dunne, Member

Dunne presented this list of screening committee members to interview the Treasurer-Collector position.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the Screening Committee for the Treasurer-Collector position as presented

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

*g. Review and act on **appointment of Preliminary Screening Subcommittee Members for Fire Chief Position:***

- i. *Chief David Mottor, Chair*
- ii. *Chief Jennifer Dubiel, Member*
- iii. *Adam Dolby, Member*

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the Screening Committee for the Fire Chief position as presented

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- h. Review and act on Highway Department request for release of additional **Chapter 90 funds for the North Blandford Road Improvements in the amount of \$50,000:*****

Waldron presented the paperwork to the Board which they signed for the release of these funds for North Blandford Road of \$50,000.

- i. Review and act on agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to receive grant funding for the costs associated with implementation of **Shared Water Operators for Blandford and Chester in the amount of \$178,123:*****

Dunne reported that there is still a lot of trepidation about this shared position. What is important here is that the funding can be accepted without committing to moving forward. If we go through the process of sharing a water operator and decide against it, this is okay. We do not have to return the funds. Dunne brought up the challenge of finding qualified water operators to do this very specialized job and retaining them in small town like ours with a very small water system. The idea is that by combining forces with Chester, we can get a better pool of candidates. Chester and Blandford and in the process of drafting a ‘memorandum of understanding’ which will sort out what the needs of each town are and what kind of mix of hours in each community makes the most sense. Dunne reiterated that the Towns are not merging water systems; just sharing a water operator.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the funding for the costs associated with implementation of a Shared Water Operator for the Town of Chester and The Town of Blandford in the amount of \$178,123

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

- a. Review and act on **Warrant #12*****

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve Warrant #12 for payment.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- b. Review and act on **Warrant #13 for Payment*****

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve Warrant #13 for payment.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

c. *Review All Departmental Expense Report for January 5, 2023:*

Dunne mentioned that the utilities line item is continuing to be tight, and the electric rates have just increased again in January. He is working with Waldron on a few of Highway Department line items that are over budget noting that sometimes Highway takes in funds and they have not shown up yet in the Accounting records. Dunne is looking into this. The Board reviewed the balance of the current expense report and found no other notable issues.

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm

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

Absent

Cara Letendre, Chair

Jeffery Allen, Member

Theodore Cousineau, Member