



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
July 25, 2022
6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chair; J. Allen, Member; T. Cousineau, Member-Zoom; C. Dunne, Town Administrator; P. Martin, Chair Planning; E. Wilander, Member Planning; D. Gates, Chair Conservation; C. Doyle, Member Conservation; T. Ackley, Deputy Fire Chief

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of April 25, 2022

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of April 25, 2022, as written

T. Cousineau Seconded

J. Allen Abstained

All in Favor

2 *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Highway Department – D. Waldron is on vacation; C. Dunne is presenting his report

Weston & Sampson Study: This is the design firm that handled the feasibility study comparing the retrofit vs. demolition and build new options for the Fire Station. The company presented the renderings of the proposed highway & fire building which would be constructed on the property where the salt shed is located. The estimated cost of the study is approximately \$6,000 which will be funded out of our Capital Project account for the time being with a transfer from our the Building Project Stabilization Account and back to our Capital Project Account at our next Town meeting.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to pay for the Weston & Sampson Renderings outlined by the Steering Committee in the amount of \$5,760 out of Capital Project funds.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

Motion Passes

Sperry Road Guardrails: Previously, Waldron reported the danger posed by the poor visibility coming off Sperry Road. Dunne reported that Waldron would like to raise that portion of the road for better visibility. He

would also like to install guardrails in that area at a cost of \$4,200 and additionally, he is looking into a "Slow - intersection ahead" sign. Both projects are covered by Chapter 90 state funds.

FY23 SMART Goals for Superintendent: Dunne presented FY23 Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-based (SMART) Goals for the Highway Superintendent to be used as a tool to track the progress of this position.

Shepard Road Eversource Issue: Highway moved the radar equipment to Shepard Road to remind Eversource contractors to drive slower on this road.

Update on Town Playground Quote: Waldron has been looking for a funding source to resurface the playground area to create a basketball court and hopscotch area. Only one quote was received which was around \$15,000. Dunne reported they will consider using the Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) Grant for this project as public placemaking is among the objectives for this program.

Execute North Blandford Road Contract with Palmer Paving: The contract has been awarded to Palmer Paving and is in the process of being vetted by our Town Counsel.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the contract with Palmer Paving in the amount of \$1,690,268.50 for the North Blandford Road improvements contingent upon approval from Town Counsel.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

b. Town Administrator

Recap Finance SMART Goals for FY23: Dunne shared a copy of SMART Goals for the Finance Team to review and edit.

N. Blandford/Blair Road Beaver Dam: Dunne stated that the Town does not have any kind of a policy in place to address issues surrounding beaver dams that contribute to flooding. Currently these issues are dealt with on a case-by-case / ad hoc basis. He will work with the Conservation Commission and the Board of Health to establish a policy.

Syncarpha PILOT Payment: The Town has an outstanding Payment-In-Lieu-of-Taxes (PILOT) payment from Syncarpha, one of the solar companies in town. The Tax Collector has found the paperwork so they will follow up on collecting the \$90,000. P. Martin, Planning Board, mentioned that Syncarpha should be making quarterly payments, and that the overall amounts will be increased by 1% per year.

Hilltown Community Ambulance Association Quarterly Report: Hilltown Community Ambulance has reported few changes from last quarter.

FY23 SMART Goals for Town Administrator: Dunne presented his recommended SMART Goals for FY23 for the Boards to review and edit.

REDO Applications: The Town was awarded \$60,000 with \$54,000 left to distribute to town businesses and non-profits. The Town received six applications. Dunne mentioned the distribution is the responsibility of the Select Board to ensure these applications are in line with the goals of these Local Rapid Recovery Plan (LRRP) that Blandford established last fall. Specially, these funds are to improve facades and make physical improvements to businesses in town, provide for outdoor dining, as well as general placemaking and beautification. The Board reviewed the applications. The distribution will be as follows:

Blandford Country Store \$14,000: Parking, Barriers, Signage for Traffic, Tables & Chairs

Blandford Country Club \$3,000: Upgrade outside seating

Porter Memorial Library \$13,000: Outdoor seating, leveling the lawn, etc.

Blandford Fair \$6,000: Fencing, other physical plant improvements

Blandford Animal Hospital \$3,000: Outdoor seating, screening bushes

Town Hall Playground \$15,000: Paving, Basketball Court, Hopscotch Court

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$14,000 out of the REDO Funds for the Blandford Country Store/Blandford Bistro outdoor dining project.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$3,000 out of the REDO Funds for the Blandford Country Club outdoor enhancement project.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$14,000 out of the REDO Funds for the Porter Memorial Library for their outdoor improvement and accessibility project.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$6,000 out of the REDO Funds for the Blandford Fair for their fence repair project.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$3,000 out of the REDO Funds for the Blandford Animal Hospital for their outdoor seating and beautification project.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve \$15,000 out of the REDO Funds for a paved play space at Town Hall.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

MEMA Emergency Generator Grant: Dunne spoke with the Massachusetts Emergency Management Association (MEMA) Regional Coordinator last week. They will be taking a walk-through Town Hall. They are anticipating having grants available for emergency generators. The Fire Chief has been working with Dunne to designate Blandford's Town Hall as an emergency shelter. Dunne is collaborating with our Electrical Inspector, John VanHeynigen who will identify our power needs.

Park Trust Landscaping Bids: The Town sent out a Request for Bid for work at Bicentennial Park as well as Watson Park maintenance and improvement of the flower beds. Linda Barnard, Historical Commission, joined the Board to discuss this RFP. The Town received two proposals: Taking Root Garden Design and LB's Property Maintenance. Letendre believes it is a good idea to reach out to our Treasurer and find out how much the Bicentennial Park Trust makes a year to make an informed decision before moving ahead. Letendre mentioned the importance of the Historical Commission being involved in these decisions. Allen is concerned about this amount of money being taken from Bicentennial Trust, not wanting to inadvertently deplete the Trust. The Board agrees. Barnard asked if this would take care of cleaning up the exposed stone wall in Watson Park. Letendre reported this is not part of this bid, however, Tracy Allen has been working on this project. Barnard agreed that the Historical Commission should be involved in this process to be sure the historical plants and bushes are protected.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the scope of work for the park landscape garden rehabilitation from Taking Root Garden Designs for the 3-year amount of \$13,570

J. Allen

All in Favor

MIIA Insurance contract: Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association (MIIA) reached out to review our schedule of property coverage. Dunne is working with various departments to update this list.

IT Support: Novus submitted a new service agreement for FY23. Dunne will speak with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) because the Town gets their IT service through their Municipal IT Collaborative. Dunne will be meeting with them this week.

PVPC Main Street: Dunne received a contract amendment from PVPC for the Main Street project which will extend the contract through December 2022. The Select Board agreed and signed the extended contract.

Assessor Services: The Town received a proposal from Regional Resource Group (RRG), Blandford's current property tax assessment consultant, with no contract in place. Dunne is working with Board of Assessors Chair, Dave Hopson to send out a Request For Proposals (RFP) but expects RRG will be the only company responding based on the Town's past experience.

PVPC Commissioner Vacancy: Mike Hutchins from the Planning Board has resigned so the Town needs a PVPC Commissioner to represent Blandford. Cousineau is the Alternate currently and will serve as the Commissioner in the meantime.

Highway/Fire Garage Project FAQs: Dunne reported he is starting to put together a frequently asked questions (FAQs) document to be posted to the Town website and distributed in his monthly newsletter regarding this project. The Board reviewed the questions and made recommendations for additions to the list.

National Opioid Settlement Update: The Town received a check from the National Opioid Settlement in the amount of \$65.

Proposed Conservation/Planner Position: Dunne spoke to an idea that has been discussed in the past of hiring an assistant for the Planning Board and Conservation Commission. Dunne put together a rough job description of this potential position. Paul Martin, Chair of the Planning Board, spoke about the history of this discussion. Martin pointed out that PVPC was contracted to help Planning on an as-needed-basis and that the only time these Boards need assistance is with solar and marijuana projects as these are complex undertakings requiring specialized knowledge. The assistance that would be the greatest help to Planning at this point would be clerical in nature. Martin pointed out that Edna Wilander is doing an amazing amount of paperwork keeping up with state and federal regulations, zoning changes and bylaws. Martin is concerned that this proposed would need to be an expert in planning, conservation and zoning, and that it is doubtful that such a person could be hired for the proposed \$30 per hour. Colleen Doyle, member of the Conservation Commission agrees with Martin. Martin mentioned Sarah Simpson, Planning Board member, who takes notes and transcribes meeting minutes for the Board. Simpson's term is up at the end of this fiscal year, so they are concerned about this function when she leaves. Martin mentioned the possibility of hiring a 'board's secretary' who can take care of all three boards.

Belle Fleur Update & State Licensure Meeting: Martin believes that Belle Fleur holding a public meeting before applying for a special permit from the Planning Board is backward. Because Belle Fleur changed their building plans so much, the entire process needs to be started from the beginning. Dunne explained that this is a state requirement and that this is separate from the local permitting process.

4. ACTION ITEMS

None

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

None

6. NEW BUSINESS

b. Shepard Farm Property Update - Conservation Commission/Historical Commission/PVPC Shannon Walsh

Shannon Walsh joined the Board to discuss possible locations for a land swap for Shepard Farm. Linda Barnard, Historical Commission Member, joined the discussion and mentioned a plot of land behind the Fairgrounds that is owned by the Town which she believes would be perfect for this purpose. Barnard believes Mick Brennan was collaborating with counsel to sort this out but that is where it ended. Shannon Walsh spoke with Brennan when preparing the historic inventory for Shepard Farm as well as when working on the One Stop grant application. Walsh mentioned that the Town was not awarded on the first round but met the qualifications for the second round. Mick mentioned he contacted somebody at the State, and they were going to come out and look at the two properties in the early spring of 2020 but then of course things came to a halt due to lockdowns and social distancing related to COVID19. The various past proposals for repurposing the farmstead portion of the Shepard Farm property were discussed.

7.*EXECUTIVE SESSION:

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:42 pm

TABLED ITEMS:

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

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

**NOTE: Agenda may include items not expected 48 hours before the meeting.

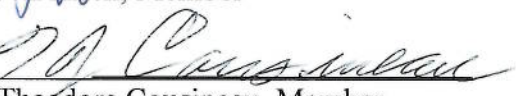
Submitted by Joann Martin
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board
and Christopher Dunne, Town Administrator



Cara Letendre, Chair



Jeff Allen, Member



Theodore Cousineau, Member