



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
March 16, 2023
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 6:01 pm
Meeting is recorded

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2023

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2023, as written

C. Letendre Seconded

J. Allen Abstained

All in Favor

b. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of February 27, 2023

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the Meeting Minutes of February 27, 2023, as written

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a. Highway Department

i. Severe winter weather emergency – response and lessons learned

-Storm Hours: Waldron reported Highway staff have been working long hours plowing as it was difficult to keep up with the continuous accumulations and drifting snow over a long period of time.

-Fire & EMT Notification and Prioritization: Highway, Select Board, Council on Aging and the Town Administrator discussed the Town's Emergency and Community Notification System. The system is not as effective as so many people have opted out of land lines, so these phone numbers are no longer active. Dunne is suggesting we send a notice out to all residents that unless they want to opt out of these notifications, all resident phone numbers will be added enrolled for the purpose of keeping residents apprised of Waldron stressed that when there is a tree down or weather emergency, residents need to call 911 rather than post on social media. Dunne and Waldron agree that there must be a system prioritizing snow and ice removal at specific locations in Town. Waldron spoke about the process when these emergencies happen such as a tree falling on a power line. Blandford Highway must wait for Eversource to clear the power lines. Next, Highway must wait for a tree service company to arrive and remove the downed tree. At this point, Highway can clear the road. This process could take several hours to several days depending on the severity of the storm.

b. Town Administrator

i. Budget/Finance

- 1. Next Finance Committee meeting: Wednesday, March 29 to go over Town Administrator answers to budget questions, recommendations and Reserve Fund transfers for utilities and other items:** Dunne will meet with accounting to solidify revenue estimates as well as the Treasurer next week to finalize a couple items that she generally takes care of. Dunne will meet with Finance on March 29 to discuss preliminary budget recommendations. There are always last-minute bids and budgets that come in later, however, they will be known prior to finalization of the Town Meeting warrant. Finance will also be looking at some recommended Reserve Fund transfers.
- 2. Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO)**
 - a. Moving forward with paved play space quote of \$20,390: Dunne spoke to Waldron about additional quotes for the paved play space. We will go with the one quote he received for \$20,390. The original grant was \$17,000 so the Town will need to identify funding for the remaining \$3,390.
- 3. Rural & Small -own Development Fund**
 - a. Expression of Interest (EOI) submitted for \$300,000 toward some portion of design for the Fire/Highway Facility Project; next meeting of Building Committee rescheduled to Thursday, March 16 at 5:00 PM to discuss additional possible sites for facilities.
- 4. Underutilized Properties**
 - a. Drafting EOI for Shepard Farm to be funded via this grant program: Dunne noted that an EOI had been submitted for Shepard Farm as well.
- 5. Resilient Dirt Roads Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant**
 - a. Two Community Listening Sessions are tentatively scheduled for April 14th with seniors and April 24th for other residents: This program will present a couple "listening" sessions on April 14 as they will be at the

COA luncheon for their presentation then there will be a presentation on April 24 for the Select Board and others.

ii. Other Departments

1. **Fire Chief Position:** This position was reposted. There are some developments in Chester at this time so more information is needed about the possibility of a joint Fire Chief.

4. **ACTION ITEMS**

- a. **Review and act on agreement for Fiscal Year 2022 audit services with Roselli, Clark & Associates in the amount of \$20,000:** Dunne reported what is generally recommended is to change up the firm you hire to do audits every few years. We had Scanlon for a while and we were pleased with their work. This time, we hired Roselli, Clark & Associates whose quote was in line with Scanlon Associates.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to accept the agreement with Roselli, Clark & Associates in the amount of \$20,000 for the Town of Blandford's Fiscal Year 2022 Audit
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

- b. **Approve Warrant #18 for Payment**

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #18 for Payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

- c. **Appoint Lynn Kane as Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector**

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Lynn Kane as Assistant Treasurer/Tax Collector for the Term March 1, 2023, to June 30, 2023.
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. **St. Patrick's Day Parade:** Police and Fire vehicles have been accepted and waiting on parking / lineup details from the Parade Committee: Letendre is asking anyone who would like to be in the St. Patrick's Day Parade March 19, please contact the Town Administrator. There will be one Police vehicle, one fire truck and the Town truck.

- b. **Shepard Farm Conway School of Landscape Design**

- i. **Proposal for student project in the amount of \$17,000:** Dunne talked this fall to the Conway School about a potential student project at the site. Dunne did not hear from them for a while. They just contacted him stating they would be interested. It is more their forte to work on trails, landscape, trailheads, etc. rather than a building. The Historical Commission wants to meet next week about this project. Dunne noted this project will give the Town a vision of what this property could be, and while more affordable than other options is still significant. The proposal was given to Town

Counsel who had a lot of reservations about liability. Ultimately, the Town will need to determine whether the benefits to be provided by the student services justifies limiting protective language in the contract. Dunne will connect with Conservation and Historical Commissions before this work begins as there are some reservations from the Historical Commission. Cousineau asked what the reservations are. Dunne reminded the Board that at the last Special Town Meeting it was clear that residents were not interested in investing more in maintaining that building. Dunne suggested preserving historic architectural details of the home and incorporating them into a vision for the site whether it would be a trail head or signage.

c. Needed improvements to Maple Lane to enable continued Town plowing in winter 2023-2024

- i. Town Counsel: Discontinuance of plowing would not expose Town to liability
- ii. Funds for repair of private roads: FEMA funds in some disaster areas: Dunne
- iii. M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 6C only pertains to “removal of snow and ice”

Town Counsel confirmed it is at the Town’s discretion to plow this road. This now becomes a question for the Select Board. Letendre is suggesting Maple Lane meet with Highway to discuss a solution.

6. NEW BUSINESS

None

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm

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

Cara Letendre, Chair

Theodore Cousineau, Member

Jeffery Allen, Member