



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD**  
**April 03, 2023**  
**6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm  
Meeting is recorded

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to 6a. New Business: Hilltown Community Ambulance Association  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

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

*a. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2023*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of March 16, 2023, as written  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

*b. Examination of the Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2023*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to Table the Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2023 until the next Select Board meeting.  
J. Allen Seconded  
All in Favor

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

None

**3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

*a. Highway Department*

- i. ***DEP – Culvert Pipes Gibbs Road:*** DEP has agreed to reduce the size of the culvert pipe from 4 feet to 2 feet.

- ii. *Verizon/Eversource*: Waldron contacted both companies requesting they do a site visit to talk about tree trimming on Beech Hill Road. Both companies are sending workers out to assess the situation.
- b. Town Administrator
- i. *Budget/Finance: Update from Finance Committee meeting on FY24 budget recommendations*: Finance is working on how to implement the Collins Center recommendations about stipends and wages, etc. More updates on that in two weeks.
  - ii. *Legislative: seeking state funding in light of lack of federal disaster declaration for March 13-15 Nor'easter*: Dunne reported that MEMA decided that there would be no Federal Disaster declaration for the recent Nor'easter. Kathy Warden, Town Administrator in Becket, put together a letter to the Legislature delegates requesting some kind of supplemental funding given that it was based on snow-fall totals in all of the counties noting that we are in Hampden County but our weather is quite different than most of the cities/towns in Hampden County.
  - iii. *Other Departments: Sick leave donation*: The Town is looking for sick-leave donations for our Highway employee that needs time off to care for his injured child.

4. **ACTION ITEMS**

None

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a. *Review and act on three-year service agreement with Changing Environments d/b/a Soofa Signs for solar-powered digital sign with cloud-based content management system in the amount of \$20,000*: Dunne reported that the Town is not paying for any of this. This is all going to be paid for by a Regional Economic Development Organization (REDO) a Baystate Better Together Health Grant. Potentially, there is ad revenue here for the Town. After their expenses, we will get 20% of the revenue from ads which the company estimates would be around \$700 per year. Also, we will be able to control what is put on this sign. This grant pays for 3 years of the sign and 3 years of the app. Allen questioned the Town zoning bylaws. Letendre mentioned we must go through ZBA. Dunne spoke to the previous Chair of the Zoning Board of Appeals who believes this won't be a big issue. Allen is concerned about the light emitted from the sign and he believes it should be located at the Town Hall. The consensus was that this sign will be used to notify the residents of important events, meetings, hearings, voting, etc. in Town and it would be much more effective on Route 23 than it would be on Russell Stage Road. Dunne mentioned that this will be set up so it will not disturb anyone in the area and mentioned that the lighting is a special low density lighting. Dunne will work with ZBA on this issue. Dunne believes that this will be a valuable tool for effectively informing residents and it is fully funded.

**MOTION**: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the three-year service agreement with Changing Environments d/b/a Soofa Signs for solar-powered digital sign with cloud-based content management system in the amount of \$20,000.

**J. Allen Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

- b. **Review and act on Conway School of Landscape Design proposal for student project at Shepard Farm with an initial fee of \$6,000:** Linda Barnard, Historical Commission, joined the Board to voice her belief that the Historical Commission has not had adequate input in this process. Dunne asserted that his and the Board’s goal is to get some kind of vision for that site that can actually propel it forward stating that right now, we just talk in circles. He stated that another meeting with Historical and Conservation Commissions is not going to solve this. Letendre believes hiring the Conway School to help us understand what we can do with this property is finally a way to move forward after years of talk. Dunne has asked the Conway School to show us a scenario where the building is still there and a scenario where the building is gone.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

- a. **Hilltown Community Ambulance Association FY24 assessment proposal (in excess of \$40,000)**

The Select Board met with the Hilltown community Ambulance Association to discuss their FY24 assessment proposal. The Board was joined by MaryAnn Pease, Chester Representative; Bailey Jones, Service Manager; Steve Patomic, Montgomery Representative; Jade Rice, Finance and Charlie Rose, Worthington Representative and Selectmen. MaryAnn Pease kicked off the meeting by explaining that the intention of the Association was to present a 2 ½ % increase to the Towns however, with the escalation of prices since 2019, they are not able to adhere to a 2 ½ % increase with the unpredictability of the rising cost of fuel, electricity, reimbursement rates, benefit increases, staying within increasing competitive wages, state mandates, etc. Bailey Jones explained the complexities of ambulance services and how they are ‘shared’ by other towns and the complications of collections. Pease stressed that the Association is reaching out for any grant that may be available. Blandford agreed to work with Hilltown Community Ambulance Association for FY24.

- b. **Review All Departments Expenditure Report for period through March 20, 2023**

None

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm

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

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Cara Letendre, Chair

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Theodore Cousineau, Member

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Jeffery Allen, Member