



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
May 08, 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

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a.** Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of **April 24, 2023**

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the meeting minutes of April 24, 2023, until the May 15, 2023, meeting
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

George Reichert joined the Board to inquire about flags.

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

- a.** Highway-Dave Waldron

-Line Painting: Waldron reported the line painting is done at the Town Hall parking lot, the Post Office Parking lot, the Porter Memorial Library parking lot, and the basketball /hopscotch court at the playground.

-Conflict of Interest: Waldron is working on having his employees take the mandatory Conflict of Interest training/test.

-Retaining Wall: Allen inquired about whether he called a company to look at the retaining wall on Russell Stage Road as there were concerns about a loose boulder close to the Russell Town Line. Waldron is working on finding a contractor to look into this situation.

- b.** Administrator

- i.** Budget/Finance

- 1.** Draft **FY24 budget** presentation and draft **Annual Town Meeting warrant**
Dunne distributed the draft warrant for the Annual Town Meeting to be held June 5, 2023. Dunne provided an overview of the proposed FY24 operating budget as agreed to be by the Finance Committee. Goals included keeping increases to the

levy under 2%, implementing wage and salary recommendations from the Collins Center study as well as Year One of the Town's first Capital Improvement Plan. Positive developments for the FY24 budget included increases in State Aid, as well as savings from transitioning to an in-house Treasurer-Collector and new fuel contracts. Challenges included increases in assessments from the Hampden County Retirement Board, Hilltown Community Ambulance Association, Gateway Regional as well as tuition rate increases for the vocational schools.

2. Preliminary **Capital Improvement Plan** overview

Dunne provided an overview of the plan which looks at using debt as a tool to fund requested Fire and Highway equipment needs over the next decade. As debt related to broadband, the school system and road repairs comes off, the possibility of funding these equipment purchases opens up.

ii. Legislative Updates

1. ***Cobble Mountain Road recreational reopening bill hearing on Wednesday, May 10 starting at noon***

There will be a hearing on this bill on Wednesday, May 10, 2023. If you are interested in testifying, written testimony is also acceptable. This information will be distributed at the Transfer Station so residents are aware of the opportunity to weigh in on this bill.

iii. Other Departments:

1. **Open enrollment** for health insurance and other benefits

This open enrollment started late last month. It will be wrapped up on May 12, 2023. Dunne does not foresee many substantial changes. Dunne reported that we are mandated by the State to provide life insurance at a cost of about \$6,000 per year. Several employees have also inquired about supplemental insurance. This is insurance that Blandford can offer at no expense to the Town. Dunne will set this up with the Treasurer.

iv. Other items

1. ***Leave requests***

Dunne spoke to the Board about taking a short leave when his wife gives birth to their baby. He will look at making an adjustment to his contract for this time off.

2. ***Springfield Water & Sewer Commission updates***

Dunne spoke to the Town Bylaw that requires vehicles hauling loads over a certain tonnage to take out a bond in case of damage to Town roads. Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC) has taken issue with this and in part relating to work the Town authorized through its Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with the Commission, they are hauling large amounts of stone to the reservoir. While the Attorney General approved the amendment to the bylaw raising the bonds to \$25,000 per mile, the Town has never specified exactly what the inspection procedures are, how to determine who is responsible for damage, etc. So there are some legitimate questions here and SWSC is interested in an IGA to address the issue. Cousineau inquired about the existing IGA that allows SWSC to make improvements to the gated public roads. Dunne reported that they just spoke to

Blandford Highway a couple weeks ago and they are starting work on the portion of Julius Hall that is beyond the gate. Letendre believes we need to do more work on this policy as it is not yet clear. Dunne is recommending we take Springfield Water up on their inter-governmental agreement offer that ensure we can watch out for these roads. Letendre pointed out the complexities of monitoring roads for truck damage. Dunne stated there is a shared interest with Blandford and SWSC to keep Beech Hill Bridge functional and safe and there are other projects where SWSC is very receptive to the idea of helping us fund efforts where they see a benefit to water quality and their operations.

- c. ***Town Clerk: Mandatory conflict of interest training, appointments, and swearing-in***
Doris Jemiolo joined the Board to discuss the need for all employees, whether hired, appointed or elected, to complete the Conflict of Interest Training every two years. The Board requested she post this link on the Town of Blandford Website.

4. ACTION ITEMS

- a. ***Review and act on appointment of Dave Waldron as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024***

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Dave Waldron as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- b. ***Review and act on appointment of Jennifer Girard as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024***

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Jennifer Girard as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- c. ***Review and act on appointment of Christopher Dunne as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024***

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Christopher Dunne as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

- d. ***Review and act on appointment of Chief Jennifer Dubiel as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024***

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Chief Jennifer Dubiel as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- e. *Review and act on appointment of Interim Fire Chief, Adam Dolby as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Interim Fire chief, Adam Dolby as Emergency Management for the term July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

- f. *Review and act on appointment of Teresa Donovan as Inspector of Animals for the term May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Teresa Donovan as Inspector of Animals for the term May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

5. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

7. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 7:24 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