



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD**  
**June 29, 2023**  
**6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

**In attendance:** C. Letendre, Chair-Absent; T. Cousineau, Member; Chair; J. Allen, Member C. Dunne, Town Administration; D. Hopson, Moderator; Atty. M. Reich, Town Counsel, D. Jemiolo, Town Clerk.

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm  
Meeting is recorded

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

**1. *Examination of the minutes of the Select Board meeting on May 15, 2023***

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of May 15, 2023, as written

**J. Allen Seconded**

**T. Cousineau Abstained**

**All in Favor**

**2. *Examination of the minutes of the Select Board meeting on May 22, 2023***

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2023, as written

**J. Allen Seconded**

**T. Cousineau Abstained**

**All in Favor**

**2. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**1. Highway Superintendent – D. Waldron**

***Soofa Digital Sign:*** Waldron and Dunne have been working on a location for this new digital sign to replace the one in front of the Post Office.

***Gasoline Price Drop:*** Waldron reviewed In August 2022, gasoline was \$4.26/gallon. In June 2023, gasoline was \$2.79/gallon. In August 2022, diesel was \$5.19/gallon. In June 2023 diesel is now \$2.78 gallon. Letendre asked for an explanation of the change in prices being paid by the Highway Department

over the course of the year given that the Town has a fixed price contract for these commodities. Dunne agreed to look into the source of the variation in pricing.

***Repair on the Grader:*** As of right now the part to repair the right wheel seal is unavailable but the company is still looking.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to 32iii2: Generator Maintenance

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

2. Town Administrator

i. Finance/Budget

***1. FY2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan***

There are still a couple tweaks then an end-of-project briefing with the Collins Center next week. Dunne believes this will help with long-term capital planning.

ii. Grants

***1. Baystate Health Community Benefits/NEMBA: Shepard Farm Conway School student Project***

Dunne presented a copy of the Conway School student project for Shepard Farm. This is posted on the website as well. Dunne will be working with Conservation to discuss possible trails, trailhead locations and amenities, etc. based on the concepts in this proposal.

***2. REDO: Smart Digital Town Crier (sign)***

Soofa, the company supplying the sign, likes the idea of installing this at the Library rather than the Post Office, however, shade has to be taken into consideration as the sign is solar-powered. Dunne will work with Waldron to be sure the Town is not installing signage within the state's right-of-way on Route 23.

iii. Other Departments

***1. Conservation Commission: candidate for the position of Conservation Agent***

Dunne reported we have a candidate for the position of Conservation Agent. Conservation approved the candidate and an interview will be scheduled for July 12, 2023 with the Select Board.

***2. Electrical Inspections: state of current generator and maintenance contract***

John VanHeynigen, Blandford's Electrical Inspector joined the Board to discuss the Town generator maintenance. VanHeynigen reported that Peter Wozniak was hired to do an analysis of the generator at the Town Hall. He recovered the history of the generator and put together his findings reporting that the generator as it sits today will support the building load so it would be a matter of getting the electrical system reconfigured and a transfer switch added to the system to be able to refeed the electrical system in the event of an outage. Letendre asked if we need a new generator.

VanHeynigen stated that it would just need some minor adjustments but a new generator would not be necessary at this time. He reported this step was done by an electrical engineer. The next step would be to work with an architect for an architectural bid drawing as construction would need to go out to bid. Cousineau inquired about replacing the circuit board in the Town Hall basement as we have been experiencing power outages too frequently. VanHeynigen recommends that when we do this project, we test those circuit breakers and repair or replace them as necessary. There is a lot of moisture in the basement. VanHeynigen will be sure this problem is included in the scope of this work.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to Action Item: 3 Building Commissioner Fee Schedule and Junk vehicles on George Millard Road

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

3. ***Building Commissioner: fee schedule and junk vehicles on George Millard Road***

Jason Forgue, Town of Blandford Building Commissioner, met with the Board to talk about the problem and resident complaints about the junk cars on George Millard Road and the fee schedule for building permits.

***Fee Schedule:*** Forgue brought up the need to increase the fee schedule in February of 2020 stating that the fees are not in line with surrounding towns and the schedule should be reconfigured to make the building commissioner position sustainable. The idea being to allow the revenue generated to exceed the commissioner's salary, expenses, and software package we use for permitting. The subject was tabled at that time. A revised fee schedule was presented to the Board that he believes has become the industry standard for permit fees in the area.

***Junk Vehicles/George Millard Road:*** Forgue reminded the Board that he and the previous Police Chief recommended a junk-vehicle bylaw in 2021. The problem with the current Blandford bylaw is there is no appeals process included. We can hold residents accountable. However, when it gets to court, the judge will throw it out because the resident was not offered an appeals process. Forgue reported that the resident on George Millard Road is receiving fines daily. He is proposing adding an appeals process to this bylaw. This bylaw has been approved in the Town of Chester and it has made a difference. Forgue is suggesting these fines collected be deposited in a revolving account so if a resident comes to the Town Hall stating they would love to get rid of the vehicle on their property, but they don't have the resources, this revolving fund could be used for this purpose. Unfortunately, this revolving fund portion of the bylaw was rejected by the Attorney General. Forgue is requesting that the Board decide how far they should take this situation on George Millard Road. This is a question he asks every town in these situations as this property is not the only property in Blandford that has abandoned vehicles on their property, meaning if he is going to go after one property, he needs to treat all situations equally. Cousineau believes this should be done across the board in order to keep this Town from being overwhelmed by junk vehicles and buildings.

***Belle Fleur:*** Forgue mentioned the many iterations that have occurred on the Belle Fleur property which deviate from the original building permit he granted the company. Dunne will be meeting with Conservation, Planning and Forgue to determine the status of the project and what the various boards needs to do to get on the same page. Forgue reported a permit being approved two years ago but a lot at the site has changed since then with no additional or amended permits submitted to his office.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the updated fee schedule recommended by the Building Commissioner, Jason Forgue

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to Action Item: 8 Review and act on reconsideration of vote taken on May 16, 2022, to award \$40,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a generator for the Town Hall to revote

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

iv. Ongoing Projects

1. ***Springfield Water & Sewer Commission: Intergovernmental Agreement and other updates***  
No new updates.

#### 4. **ACTION ITEMS**

1. ***Review and act on performance review for Highway Superintendent***

The Board evaluated Dave Waldron's performance on many levels:

***Job Technical Knowledge:*** Demonstrating knowledge of the job; successfully completed several projects, attends educational workshops on a regular basis, meets with other boards regularly, open to ideas, has improved rapidly in this position were the general comments from the Board members.

***Problem Solving & Decision Making:*** The Board believes he has either exceeded or met expectations in this area.

***Planning & Organization:*** The Board believes he either exceeds or meets expectations in this area.

***Communication, Verbal & Written:*** The Board voted outstanding and exceeds expectations.

***Interpersonal Skills & Teamwork:*** The Board voted exceeds expectations. Allen stated he has never heard a complaint about Waldron from a resident.

***Adherence to Company Policy and Safety:*** The Board voted that Waldron upholds the Town policies and safety policies.

***Self-Management Skills:*** The Board noted that Waldron shows confidence in meetings and responding to questions even when he is bombarded a bit, easy to talk to so the Board voted outstanding or meets expectations in this area.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to go to Action Item 4: ***Review Warrant for Special Town Meeting with Town Counsel and Town Moderator to be held on Thursday, June 29 at 7 PM***

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

2. ***Review and act on performance review for Town Administrator***

The Board reviewed many areas of Christopher Dunne's responsibilities, accomplishments, goals and contract for FY24. The Board is pleased with Dunne's performance and the average vote across the board was "exceeds expectations".

3. ***Review and act on holiday schedule for Town Offices regarding Monday, July 3, 2023***

The Board discussed the end of summer hour schedule for the Select Board.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to close the Town Hall on Monday, July 3 and Tuesday, July 4 for the holiday.

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

4. ***Review Warrant for Special Town Meeting with Town Counsel and Town Moderator to be held on Thursday, June 29 at 7 PM***

Town Moderator, Dave Hopson; Town Counsel, Mark Reich; Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk, the Blandford Select Board and Blandford Town Administrator reviewed the proposed Warrant for the Special Town Meeting.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Special Town Meeting Warrant as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

5. *Review and act on appointment of Jennifer Girard to Election Warden from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Jennifer Girard as Election Warden from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

6. *Review and act on appointment of Sue Racine to Deputy Election Warden from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Sue Racine as Deputy Election Warden from July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024

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

7. *Review and act on contract with Weston & Sampson for designer services through schematic design for the fire/highway facility project in the amount of \$177,500*

Dunne noted that this was approved at Annual Town meeting in June, 2023 for \$180,000 for schematic design.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the contract with Weston & Sampson for designer services through schematic design for the fire/highway facility project in the amount of \$177,500

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

8. *Review and act on reconsideration of vote taken on May 16, 2022, to award \$40,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for a generator for the Town Hall*

Dunne explained that in May of 2022 the Board approved \$40,000 of ARPA funding to purchase a new generator. A new generator is not necessary, so Dunne is recommending the vote be rescinded and take a portion of this \$40,000 and put it toward the Architectural Design process to update the current generator.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to rescind the motion of May 16, 2022, to award \$40,000 in America Rescue Act Funds for a new generator for the Town Hall.

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

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the proposal for design services for back-up power supply for the Town Hall in the amount of \$22,900 to be spent out of American Rescue Act Funds (ARPA).

**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to Action Item 10: Shared Water Operator  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

**9. *Review and act on Shared Water Operator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Chester and Blandford Water Departments***

Dunne opened the discussion and was joined by the Town of Chester Water Commission and Brad Curry, Blandford Water Commission Chair. Dunne mentioned we need to move on with this project as the deadline for this grant is closing in fast. This proposal focuses on a shared water operator in training not a shared water operator full stop; the idea being that Chester has one trainee, Isiah Solatorio and Blandford's trainee is Steve Grondin. Both are showing a lot of promise as potential Water Operators. The Water Commissioners have reported 'bumps' in the road but both towns see the opportunities available here. Dunne pointed out that if a Town finds this agreement is not working for their town, it can be cancelled. This contract will make the Town of Chester host community. Curry noted that the administrative burden cited by the Commissioners initially may not be an issue but Dunne insisted that Chester serve as Host Community.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Shared Water Operator Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Town of Chester and Town of Blandford Water Departments  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

**10. *FY24 Contract with Regional Resource Group for \$36,000***

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the FY24 Contract with Regional Resource Group for \$36,000  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 pm to reconvene after the Special Town Meeting  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to reconvene at 7:13 pm  
J. Allen Seconded  
All in Favor

**5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**  
None

**6. NEW BUSINESS**  
**1. Review All Department Expenditure Report**  
Tabled

**7. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm not to reconvene

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

---

---

Cara Letendre, Chair

---

---

Theodore Cousineau, Member

---

---

Jeffery Allen, Member