



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
WATER DEPARTMENT**

1 Russell Stage Rd
Blandford, MA 01008
413.848.4279 x 304

Water Commissioners

Brad Curry
Michael Keier
Peter Thayer

Water Superintendent

Gordon Avery

**MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD WATER COMMISSION
JUNE 22, 2023
4:30 P.M.**

1. OPEN SESSION:

Meeting Opened at 4:35 P.M.

In Attendance: B. Curry, Chairman, M. Keier, Member, P. Thayer, Member, G. Avery, Water Superintendent, S. Grondin, Water Operator, K. Shaw, Administrative Assistant.
Meeting is being recorded.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Review of Meeting Minutes of June 1, 2023.

MOTION: B. Curry made a motion to accept the Minutes of June 1, 2023, as written.

M. Keier Seconded.

All in Favor.

Karen brought to the Commission they may want to request that Demands be issued for unpaid water bills. Customarily they are done approximately 15 days after the due date of the 4th Quarter billing. Ideally it would be good to send them out sometime between July 17 – July 21. The Commission by way of the following motion requests the Treasurer/Collector's Office to issue the demands between this time period.

MOTION: B. Curry made a motion to issue the Demands between July 17 and July 21, 2023.

M. Keier Seconded.

All in Favor.

3. ACTION ITEMS:

a. No Action Items.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Water Meter Project Update

Brad apprised the Commission members of what transpired at the last meeting in relation to anomalies she found and had contacted EJP and felt it wasn't being addressed. Brad contacted Team EJP's Pittsfield Office with an unsatisfactory result so asked to speak to the Regional Office and was able to connect with the Regional Manager. Brad told the Regional Manager there is little or no support from Mike Burden and EJP was in breach of the contract and, furthermore, the invoice in the amount of \$2,500 for support was not going to be paid until further attention was focused on resolving the issues involved with not being able to get this project on-line. The Regional Manager looked into it and contacted Brad to apologize and advised they have had bad product and it has been overwhelming. An on-site visit from Mike Burden was scheduled where everyone involved in the metering process could attend and they could see exactly what was happening.

Karen reported the meeting went smoothly and EJP is taking responsibility for the faulty readers. She has also had a conversation with Jeremy, our account representative requesting a timeline for when the readers will be replaced. Jeremy advised they will be able to get some readers to us and later the rest and he was reminded unless we get all the readers we need, we can't put the Town on metered water and he was in agreement with that. Mike Burden is receptive to making several visits while we are working on this.

Karen reminded the Commission of the unpaid invoices for support and it will be held until it is determined the support continues to be available when required. She will encumber the amount.

Lastly, Karen advised she has the original, signed contract with EJP on this.

b. Water Department Tractor Registration

Brad has had several conversations with Adam Dolby on the registration. Adam said he will talk with Dave Motar, previous Fire Chief, to see what he could do. Gordon has had a conversation with Adam and advised nothing, other than the keys came with the trailer. It appears the Coast Guard gave the trailer to the Fire Department and the Fire Department in turn gave it to the Water Department. It appears the Fire Department never got the title from the Coast Guard and they will need to contact the Coast Guard. The goal is to get the military transfer paperwork to work.

c. Water Department Truck

Brad communicated with Dave Waldron regarding the truck the Highway Department is giving the Water Department. The truck now belongs to the Water Department and there will be no additional funds exchanged between the two departments as the Water Department already paid for half the repairs prior to the winter season. Appears the plow was disengaged from the truck so it can no longer be used so Brad advised Highway they can continue to plow the water plant and the pump station. A hitch will need to be installed and it does appear the truck does dump intermittently. The tires will need replacement as the newer tires were removed prior to the Water Department receiving the vehicle.

5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Meeting with Chester Water Commission

The Chester Water Commission arrived at the meeting at 5:45 p.m. and introductions were made. On behalf of the Chester Commission, Bob Daley, Tom Bean and Nick Chiusano attended and Lyle Snide, Chairman, attended via phone.

Bob Daley is of the opinion as Commissioners, there's more that connects the two towns than divides them. It is determined both municipalities have about the same amount of water accounts and share the same goals.

Brad reviewed what transpired at their last Commission meeting relative to the opinions on the MOU of which there were two of the three commissioners in attendance. He gave the floor to Mike Keier who again is asking as to how this shared service proposal will benefit the water uses in Blandford and stated it hasn't really been addressed. He is of the opinion that the grant could have been applied for separately and each would have received the same amount of money. Bob Daley stated that the rate payers of both towns would see the advantage of \$90,000 for each town. Another advantage could be the shared operators and cross training. A large disadvantage would be walking away from the grant money with ramifications from both the constituents in each town and disfavor from the state which might make it difficult for future grants. Mike Keier questioned where the interest of Ira Brezinsky of the PVPC is as he was hired by the Town of Chester. Brad Curry vocalized it would be good to start this with baby steps. Say a shared operator ... let Steve Grondin spend a few hours in Chester and in Blandford. Do this on a limited basis until it can be found out how it will work between the two towns relative to scheduling, management, the whole thing. Nothing larger than that until it is determined how that part would work. Bob Daley stated he was in total agreement. Mike Keier stated DEP will see the two towns separately and if one town is below

standard, the shared operator would need to spend more time in the town that required more attention. Bob Daley doesn't see a problem as it requires a shared operator spend a minimal amount of time. Both towns have an OIT.

Gordon Avery stated hypothetically it is agreed and July 1 comes along and the shared operator starts July 1. In Blandford the OIT knows what to do – takes instruction from the Water Superintendent. It is mutually decided this is of a three month duration and the OIT goes to Chester one day a week to start. Who will be directing the OIT. Chester doesn't have a daily on site person unless it's the Operator. Bob Daley advises it would be their primary Operator. Considerable discussion continued on the scheduling of the shared operator and how it would best fit for each town. Mileage and expenses relative to the shared operator and insurance/liability and all these matters would need to be addressed.

Pete Thayer advises shorten up the contract, procure the grant, take small steps and there is an advantage in sharing for training.

A three month contract for a start was agreed upon by all and it can be revisited at that time. It was also brought up that the Commission can make recommendations but the governing body is the entity that makes the final decision and that is the Board of Selectmen.

If it goes forward Brad is questioning should a once a month whole board meeting be scheduled to discuss what is working and what isn't working? Three weeks the first meeting then once a month thereafter? Perhaps initially the Blandford Water Superintendent and Chester water designee sit down and make a schedule. Bob Daley is agreeable to whatever will best work. Gordon is proposing Steven Grondin go to Chester one day a week and see how that works. Gordon also discussed pay rate and an anticipated increase along with mileage, etc. It is tentatively planned that Blandford will pay for the shared operator and Chester will be invoiced. Bob Daley stated his understanding was that Blandford was concerned about adding more administrative tasks. Chester is willing to assume the administrative responsibilities.

There is implied consent to go forward and will collaborate to make it work to everyone's advantage. Brad will speak with the Town Administrator regarding who will be administering the MOU. Lyle Snide stated that Chester is willing to do the administrative duties with reimbursement from Blandford.

Brad will talk with the Town Administrator and all are of the understanding the Board of Selectmen will sign off on it at their next meeting. The MOU will need to be reworked prior to that meeting.

Chester Water Commission left the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

b. Water Superintendent Update

A new printer will need to be ordered for the Plant due to a lightning strike. It is suggested to get one identical to the one in the Water Department thereby using the same cartridges. A fridge will also need to be purchased due to its age and performance.

36 Russell Stage Road (Don Carpenter) failed the lead and copper testing and it is thought the house has been vacant and water was drawn for the sample, hence the high content.

Next week, Greensite will be clearing 1600-1,800 feet of the water line and it should be good for a long period of time. Brad asked Gordon to get an estimate for further work.

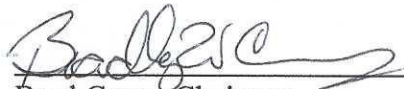
6. MEETING ADJOURNED

Meeting Adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

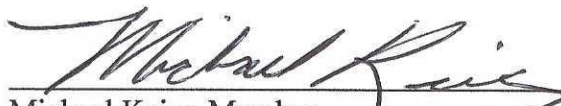
Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant
Water Department

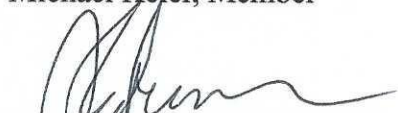
WATER COMMISSION



Brad Curry, Chairman



Michael Keier, Member



Peter Thayer, Member