



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
SELECT BOARD

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

FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
September 28, 2023
10:00 am

1) **EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

i) *Examination of the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2023*

MOTION: J. Lombardo made a motion to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of April 13, 2023, as written

K. Green Seconded

All in Favor

ii) *Examination of the Joint Select Board-Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2023*

MOTION: J. Lombardo made a motion to approve the Joint Select Board/Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2023, as written

D. Brodie Seconded

All in Favor

2) **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

3) **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

a) *Town Clerk*

i) ***Digitization of Town records – M. Kronholm***

Mary Kronholm spoke to the committee about the possibility of funding a deeper digitization project of Town documents such as old bylaws, etc. Dunne suggested using the Roving Archivist that the Historical Society had made use of from the Secretary of State's office. Kronholm was partial to working with the resources provided by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) but was open to other options. The committee agreed that grant funding should be pursued for this type of project.

b) Accounting

i) ***General Ledger Year-To-Date***

A copy of the General Ledger Year-to-Date was made available to committee members.

ii) ***All Departmental Expense***

The Finance Committee reviewed the current All Departmental Expenditure report. As there is new member of the Board, Dunne provided some background on the Town's financial system.

-Reserve Account: This account is at the discretion of the Finance Committee. Dunne generally monitors the budget and when unexpected expenses arise, he will go to the Finance Committee to request transfers.

-Treasurer/Collector: Dunne explained the process Blandford chose to hire an outsourced Treasurer/Collector about five years ago. Sara Hunter of Mass MuniFin took the position and did a great job. This spring the Town went through the process of hiring an in-house treasurer/collector. We did find somebody but unfortunately that has not worked out. Dunne will send out another RFP for Treasurer/Collector services. Dunne explained that all small towns are having a problem securing a treasurer as municipal finance is extremely complex and there are few companies other than Sara's that offer this service. In sending out this RFP, Dunne anticipates that Mass MuniFin will be the only company that will bid on it as that has been the pattern in the past. Sara Hunter will sign a one-year contract until we can secure an in-house treasurer for the future. The Finance Committee recommended they meet with Sara Hunter to discuss options for cutting costs.

-Tree Warden: Dunne reported we spent approximately \$60,000 of our budget on trees in FY23. \$20,000 is used for Ash tree removal and \$20,000 for general tree removal and maintenance work by the Tree Warden. Dunne is concerned that there is no priorities set for the use of these funds. Dunne is working with the Highway Superintendent on getting quotes from companies for tree risk assessments; this is a "windshield survey" assessing which trees are at risk. At the end of the assessment a spreadsheet is given that will list the at-risk trees that should be removed by utility companies and the trees that the Town is responsible for. He will apply for a grant for this process. Dunne believes rather than just awarding funds for tree removal as "blank check" there should be some 'science' to it as well as a policy. Finance agrees.

c) Town Administrator

i) *Project Updates*

Dunne is working on a grant application that may be able to complete the work organizing, identifying, and prioritizing our capital project work. Ongoing projects and Finance Committee discussions include:

- Tree removal
- Fire/highway building
- Capital Project Planning
- Back-Up Power for Town Hall-Emergency Shelter Options
- Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Resilient Dirt Roads
- Culvert Replacement

ii) *Fiscal Year 2022 Audit findings*

The FY22 Audit is complete. In general, the Town was given a clean bill of health. One of the findings was \$80,000 of outstanding bills for personal property taxes which was created by one solar company. The PILOT for this solar company started missing payments in 2020 and this fell through the cracks. An amendment to the PILOT agreement will be signed, and back payments have been made. This solar project is bringing in approximately \$70,000 to \$80,000 a year over 20 years, rising by a percentage point every year so ensuring the project can move forward is a priority.

4) ACTION ITEMS

a) *Elect Chair and Secretary*

MOTION: D. Brodie made a motion to appoint Janet Lombardo as Chair of the Finance Committee

K. Green Seconded

J. Lombardo abstained

All in Favor

Dunne reported that he and Joann Martin will take care of the agendas and meeting minutes.

b) *Review and act on letter of support for Community Compact IT grant for new finance software*

MOTION: J. Lombardo made a motion to accept the grant application for Community Compact IT Grant for new finance software

D. Brodie Seconded

All in Favor

c) *Review and act on Reserve Fund Transfers for Fire Service Group invoices*

Tabled until invoices are available.

*NOTE: Audience participation/public comment is welcome only when acknowledged by the Chair and limited to two minutes. Participation/public comment is limited to Blandford residents who may comment on agenda items only. The Town of Blandford is committed to the full participation of people with disabilities and Town Hall is handicapped accessible. Persons who require special accommodations including an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in the Town's programs, services, or activities, should contact the Town Administrator at (413) 848-4279 ex. 502 at least 15 calendar days in advance of a meeting.

**NOTE: Agenda may include items not reasonably expected 48 hours before the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 11:30 am

Janet Lombardo, Finance Chair

Jackie Coury, Finance Member

Deborah Brodie, Finance Member

Kevin Green, Finance Member