



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
October 16, 2023
6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

Meeting Opens at 6:01 pm:

1) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of August 31, 2023

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of August 31, 2023, as written

J. Allen Seconded

C. Letendre Abstained

All in Favor

b) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2023

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of September 18, 2023, as written

T. Cousineau

All in Favor

2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a) Highway Superintendent – D. Waldron

-Salt Delivery: Waldron reported 218 tons of salt has been delivered the Highway Department in preparation for winter.

-South Street: The culvert work is complete.

-Highway Laborer Position: The applications received so far have been from candidates who not meet the qualifications for the position. The position has been reposted.

-MIIA-Grant for Dash Cameras: Waldron presented prices for dash cams to the Select Board. Cousineau questioned the need for these cameras. Waldron believes this is a great

benefit to the Town to keep employees safe and give a clear picture in case of an accident.

-Russell Stage Road: Waldron visited the location with the Water Department to run tests and found there is no chlorine in the water that is pooling near 9 Russell Stage Road.

-Maple Lane Winter Plowing: Waldron began to speak to the condition of the road. Dunne provided the Board with an update on the road. At the site visit back in June, Edna Wilander, a resident of the road, stated that the Town now owns the road. Dunne followed up with the Treasurer-Collector on this: the road was included in a tax taking back in July 2022 but has not foreclosed on the parcel. As such, it has a lien on it but ownership remains with a private individual. Dunne is working with the Treasurer-Collector on potentially disclaiming the taking, with the Assessors on making the parcel non-taxable so that this does not happen again and lastly, needs to work with Waldron and the Board to address the short-term question of winter maintenance. Dunne suggested that the Town agree to plow the road if so requested by the residents contingent on some type of action to correct the long-term issue (repairs, formation of an HOA, etc.). Waldron agreed that the Town may have to plow again this year but expressed concern given the level of ice build-up. Dunne will review insurance coverage for vehicles and employees.

b) Town Administrator

i) Finance: possible Reserve Fund transfers for fire system, HVAC, and boiler issues; scheduling Special Town Meeting for November / December

Dunne is meeting with Finance on Thursday to talk about Reserve Fund transfers. A Special Town Meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 20. Unfortunately, the town was not awarded the grant funding for the design phase of the Fire/Highway garage project. Dunne provided a preview of other items that might be on the agenda including bylaw updates regarding junk cars and animal control. Dunne has reached out to the grant agency to receive a debrief. The Board discussed the status of the garage project and the possibility of breaking it up into two separate facilities to rein in costs.

ii) Grants/Projects:

(1) Community Compact Best Practices – quote from Novus received for cyber security assessment, gathering quotes for Asset Management best practice

Dunne reported the next Finance Committee meeting will be Thursday. Reserve Fund Transfers will be done to pay for invoices for sprinkler system repairs that were unexpected. Dunne made an insurance claim for the damaged HVAC system which will be covered. This cyber security investment is a Community Compact Best Practice item that Novus Insight recommends. The concern is that some of the software recommendations would be too expensive or too cumbersome to implement. The second item to be considered is an asset-management project which would gather all the data about our transportation assets: culverts, roads, and bridges, etc. and have it all in one place and mappable. This will aid in applying for Chapter 90 monies and undertaking other capital planning.

(2) Community IT - Cloud-based finance software application submitted October 13; Dunne spoke about the finance software that Novus will be installing

This grant application for new municipal finance software has been submitted. Dunne thanks Jackie Coury of the Finance Committee for helping with the grant application.

iii) Other Departments: Gateway Regional Excess & Deficiency certified at under 5%; Hilltown Community Ambulance Assoc. Q1 Report

Dunne provided annual update on the school system's version of "free cash." Excess and deficiency was under 5% meaning that funds would not be returned to member towns this year.

4) ACTION ITEMS

a) Review and act on Fiscal Year 2024 Warrant #7

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2024 Warrant #7 for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

b) Review and act on contract amendment with City Point Partners for owner's project manager (OPM) services through schematic design of the proposed Fire-Highway Facility Project

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the contract amendment with City Point partners for Owner's Project Manager (OPM) services through schematic design of the proposed Fire-Highway Facility Project
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

c) Review and act on proclamation of December 16, 2023, as "Samuel Sloper Day" in Blandford in honor of the 250th anniversary of the Boston Tea Party

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to act on the proclamation of December 16, 2023, as "Samuel Sloper Day" in Blandford in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the Boston Tea Party
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

d) Review and act on letter of support for bill to reopen Cobble Mountain Road to pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian traffic.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve a letter of support for a Bill to reopen Cobble Mountain Road to pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian traffic
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

5) **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

a) ***Bicentennial Park maintenance***

Dunne is working with Bartholomew, the Town's trust management company to look at what can be done to increase the yield of the Bicentennial Trust. Dunne is also working with Tim Phair who may provide tree-trimming services in the park before it snows.

b) ***Generator maintenance: quote from Kinsley***

Dunne received a quote from Kinsley for the Town's generator maintenance. The quote is \$1,225 for two maintenance calls per year.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Generator Maintenance Quote from Kinsley for \$1,225 yearly
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

6) **NEW BUSINESS**

a. ***Chester Road water main work:***

The Water Department did some work on Chester Road for a water main break. A resident has complained. The Water Commissioners are inspecting the work and changes made by the resident. The homeowner dug around in the area and moved dirt onto Chester Road. The Board will wait for the Water Commissioners' meeting this week before taking further action.

b. ***All Department Expenditure Report***

The Board reviewed the expenditure report and found some payroll issues in the Board of Health that needs to be dealt with. Dunne will work with Jennifer Girard on correcting this.

7) **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 6:55 pm

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

Cara Letendre, Chair

Jeff Allen, Member

Theodore Cousineau, Member