



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD
WATER DEPARTMENT**

1 Russell Stage Rd
Blandford, MA 01008
413.848.4279 x 304

Water Commissioners

Michael Keier
Brad Curry
Peter Thayer

Water Superintendent

Gordon Avery

**MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD WATER COMMISSION
DECEMBER 7, 2023
4:30 P.M.**

1. OPEN SESSION:

Meeting Opened at 4:38 P.M.

In Attendance: S. Grondin, OIT2, G. Avery, Water Superintendent, M. Keier, Commission Chairman, K. Shaw, Administrative Assistant, Brad Curry, Commissioner, Dave Waldron, Highway Superintendent, Don Carpenter, Resident, P. Thayer, Commissioner, will be arriving. Meeting is being recorded.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Review of Meeting Minutes of October 19, 2023.

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to accept the Minutes of October 19, 2023, as written.

B. Curry Seconded.

All in Favor.

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. No Action Items.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Water Meter Project Update

The meter project is at a standstill. Getting support from EJP has been erratic and we are also waiting to see if the Town may entertain a software change which should impact the metering project in a positive way.

b. Water Department Trailer Registration

Communication with the Fire Department relative to the trailer has been unsuccessful and while the department would like to use it, so far progress hasn't been made. Gordon did have a conversation with a Fire Department employee but at this point

nothing has changed. Karen will see if she can contact Adam Dolby and hopefully get something done.

c. Classification and hourly rate for Water Department Administrative Assistant

The Commission reviewed the hourly rate for the Administrative Assistant, and it was agreed based on added responsibilities the rate should be increased.

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to increase Karen's hourly rate by \$2.50 per hour starting December 29, 2023 due to the increase in workload and responsibility.

Brad Curry Seconded.

All in Favor.

d. Sick, Vacation, Holiday Benefits for Part Time Employees

A copy of the union contract and the Personnel Policies for the Town were reviewed relative to part time benefits. The Commission looked favorably on adopting the policies the Town has for the part time employees in the Water Department.

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to follow the same policies as the Town relative to benefits for part time employees.

Brad Curry Seconded.

All in Favor.

e. Shared Water Operator Grant Allocation Apportionment

This will be moved to the next meeting as Ira Brezinsky was unavailable for this meeting.

Questions were brought up relative to having a better understanding of specifically what the grant money was earmarked for. This is not clear to the Water Commission and there may be numerous misunderstandings relative to which may impact how the Commission looks at the grant.

f. Indirect Costs and Water Billing for Town Owned Property

A proposed letter has been written for review by the Commission to send to the Town Administrator and the Town Departments that are impacted by the billing as well as the Selectboard. The purpose is to clarify exactly what is needed to get this accomplished as it is favorably looked upon by the Commission and the Town.

However, the water bills for the Town departments involved with this have been billed and payment is required until a workable plan is in place. It is also suggested that legal counsel for the Town receive a copy of the letter.

5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Highway Superintendent – Russell Stage Road

The Water Department is in the process of locating a leak and testing it to determine if it is a leak or groundwater on Russell Stage Road prior to any repaving by the Highway Department. The Water Department will be looking for a contractor to complete work on the line if it is determined to be a leak. The question was raised if there was a pressure test done nearest to the closest hydrant which hadn't been done. The Water Superintendent advised no matter where the line is opened pressure greatly reduces within a short amount of time. Hydrants in this area are not overly effective. When it is determined what type of leak this is – break or groundwater, the Water Department will advise the Highway Department.

Don Carpenter of 36 Russell Stage Road attended the meeting to discuss the lead level and water pressure in his water. The Water Department plans for that area were discussed which should help. Section 6 of the Capital Improvement Plan and the objectives thereto has been published on the Town website with the minutes of November 16th and it was suggested Don Carpenter may want to visit the site to review them as it addresses this in the plan.

Other Business – Not on Agenda

Karen advised she received an invoice from Massachusetts Water Works Association for \$500 and wanted to know if the Commission wanted membership. The Commission believes they have been a member in the past and should be a member so this invoice will be submitted for payment.

Blandford Country Club applied for an abatement. They have been turning their water on and off and was told the last time they requested an abatement in order to have it approved, the water would need to be turned off and on when needed by a Water Department employee as this is the only way to document the actual dates the events occurred and to validate them with the dates on the abatement request. Sue, of the Country Club was advised an abatement wouldn't be granted unless this was done. The club did not request a Water Department employee to do as requested by the Water Department so the abatement was not granted. The Department is willing to go and inspect it and the abatement can proceed from the date of the inspection. At that time the tool on premises needs to be relinquished back to the Water Department. Karen will contact the County Club with this information.

Wright Pierce is requesting \$21,000 to do a rate study which seems excessive and the Water Department will be shopping for other contractors who might be less.

Karen will be on vacation 12/21 – 12/25, returning on 12/26.

b. Water Superintendent Update

G. Avery reported failing one testing site at 36 Russell Stage Road for lead and HHA levels on two sites. He will request the Lead Operator to boost up the soda ash to about 75. There were high levels of chlorine at the two McDonalds sites and it was flushed.

Training through Hach can be done on line and include several individuals. On site would cost \$7,000 or more.

The Commission was advised of the purchase of equipment and cold weather apparel required to enable everyone to perform their duties.

c. FY 25 Budget

G. Avery has stated he will not be taking part in the preparation of the FY 25 Budget and the task will need to go to the Commissioners. B. Curry and M. Keier will work on the budget through K. Shaw. There are deadlines for the submissions.

Regarding email, B. Curry has requested a Town of Blandford email address and Karen will contact IT for information and report to the next meeting.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

**MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to adjourn.
Brad Curry Seconded.
All in Favor.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

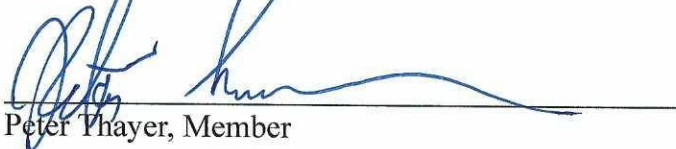
Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant
Water Department

WATER COMMISSION


Michael Keier, Chairman


Brad Curry, Clerk


Peter Thayer, Member