



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**JOINT MEETING MINUTES with  
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD and  
WATER COMMISSION  
Monday, January 08, 2023  
6:00 pm**

**Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall**

**In attendance:** C. Letendre, Chair; J. Allen, Member; T. Cousineau, Member; I. Brezinsky, Interim Town Administrator; G. Avery, Water Superintendent; M. Keier, Water Commissioner; Town of Chester Finance & Chester Water Department.

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm

Meeting is recorded

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

***a) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023***

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 11, 2023, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

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

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2023, as amended

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 6a. 1. Water Department Status update and discussion with Blandford and Chester Water Commissioners re; Shared Water Operator MOU and Energy & Efficiency Grant and 6a. 2. Invoice Discrepancy with Highway Department

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

Staci Iglesias of Beagle Club Road joined the Select Board to discuss plowing Beagle Club Road which is a private road. Iglesias stated she sent a permission letter to plow this road earlier this year, however, it cannot be found. She will forward a copy of this letter to Joann Martin and the Highway Department.

**3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**a) Highway Department – Dave Waldron**

-Franklin Regional Council of Governments: It is time for yearly bids on stone, cold patch, hot mix, etc., for the Highway Department purchases throughout the year. Waldron presented the FRCOG paperwork for Select Board signature to move forward with price quotes.

-Applications for Highway Laborer: Waldron reported he received close to twenty applications to date. He is in the process of interviewing and will bring his results to the Select Board on January 29.

-Bucket Truck is out of service: One of the plates on the bottom of the outriggers fell off. It is in for repair.

-Mini Excavator: Waldron shared a picture of the mini-excavator showing the treads rusting out. This is a piece of equipment that is part of Blandford's Capital replacement plan. Waldron has received two quotes (highest quote so far \$108,000) to replace this equipment and is waiting on one more quote from Bobcat.

-Palmer Paving Quotes Requested: Waldron reported reaching out for quotes from Palmer Paving to repave Beech Hill Road, Sperry Road, and Gore Road. More information to come.

-Steve Grondin: Waldron reported Steve Grondin, Water Department helps with the snow plowing. Waldron is requesting that Grondin be paid double time for working on Sunday just as the Highway staff gets paid double time. The Select Board agrees that Grondin should be paid double time for plowing any time the Highway guys get paid double time.

**Town Administrator – Ira Brezinsky**

-Stand-By Generator: Brezinsky has been collaborating with John VanHeynigen, Town Electrical Inspector on quotes for the stand-by generator repair. John is waiting for a third quote.

-Budget Reminder: Brezinsky has not received all budget requests for FY25 and will send out a reminder to departments.

-District Local Technical Assistance: Ira was looking into this to see if shared services for a fire chief would be a good fit for Blandford. Town of Chester Town Administrator, Don Humason submitted a request to PVPC for this to move forward.

**4) ACTION ITEMS**

**a) Approve Warrant #13 Payroll for Payment**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #13 Payroll for payment  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor**

**b) Approve Contract Amendment with PVPC**

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Contract Amendment #1 between Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and the Town of Blandford for the Community Development Block Grant extending the contract through 2024.  
J. Allen Seconded  
All in Favor**

**c) Approve MIIA Building Valuation Update**

This valuation increase by MIIA has been confirmed by the Board and will be submitted for payment.

## 5) **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

## 6) **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***a. Water Department***

1. ***Status update and discussion with Blandford and Chester Water Commissioners re: Shared Water Operator MOU and Energy & Efficiency Grant***
2. ***Invoice Discrepancy with Highway Department***
  1. **Blandford/Chester Water Operator:** The Blandford Water Department and Water Commissioners joined the Board as well as the Town of Chester Water Department to talk about the potential grant for a shared water operator for the Blandford Water Department and the Chester Water Department. The body of the discussion was the question of whether a vehicle can be purchased out of this grant. Brezinsky pointed out that the greater issue here is that nothing has been done about moving forward with this grant which is jeopardy of expiring. Sean Cronin, Deputy Commissioner at the Division of Local Services has explained that this grant was not specifically for a vehicle however, it is specific to hiring a shared water operator. Michael Kiere, Water Commissioner for Blandford was understanding that Steve Grondin, Blandford's Water Operator would be the shared person. However, the agreement was signed and pre-dated this decision. Kiere reported that in May the Blandford Water Department sent a letter to the Select Board stating they did not think this was a good idea. In June they came back for another meeting in which discussions were more settled, but nothing came to fruition. Chester spoke about their current Water Operator in training. This person graduated from the water training program at Gateway Regional High School in May and was hired by Chester as an apprentice. The hope is that he will stay on board and be supervised by the Blandford Water Superintendent. Letendre spoke about the damage that would be done to the grant funding area to both towns if after being granted this large amount of money, it is rejected. This will not bode well for either town when looking for future grants.
  2. **Invoice Discrepancy:** The Highway Department and the Water Department discussed the water leak problem on Russell Stage Road. Once investigated, it was found that this is not a Water Department leak; it is ground water. It was decided between Water and Highway that if this is in fact ground water, then the invoice to investigate this problem is a Highway Department expense. Highway agreed to pay the invoice.

### ***b. Forest Products Trust Payment***

Brezinsky reported Blandford received \$1,303.36 from Springfield Water & Sewer for trees removed.

### ***c. Fair Share Apportionment, DOT***

Waldon reported this \$50,000,000 is supposed to be divided between the towns based on population. Approximately \$171,060 will be designated and added to Chapter 90 funds in Blandford.

### ***d. Possible Culvert Replacement Route 23***

This is a state road. This culvert is near Long Pond on the corner of Virgil Lloyd Road. This area is infested with beavers and is always overflowing.

***e. Michael Szlosek, Town Administrator:*** Mike Szlosek joined the Board to discuss his contract as Blandford's Town Administrator. Szlosek is clarifying that his Bar Dues (license fee) will be covered under professional dues. Letendre stated, yes, this is included. Szlosek is Town Moderator in Ludlow. However, the Select Board agrees that this is not a position held in Blandford, therefore it would not be necessary for him to resign from Ludlow, and this will be noted in his contract.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the employment agreement contract between Michael Szlosek and the Town of Blandford for Town Administrator services from January 29, 2024, through June 30, 2025, as amended**  
**T. Cousineau Seconded**  
**All in Favor**

**7) EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm

Submitted by Joann Martin  
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board  
and Ira Brezinski, Interim Town Administrator

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Cara Letendre, Chair

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T. Cousineau, Member

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J. Allen, Member