



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
Monday, January 22, 2024
6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

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 20, 2023, Joint w/Assessors*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Joint Select Board and Board of Assessors Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2023, as written.
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

- b) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 27, 2023*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 27, 2023, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

- c) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 02, 2024*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 02, 2024, as written
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

- d) Examination of the Select Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 02, 2024*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Executive Session Meeting Minutes of January 02, 2024, as written

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

Board of Health Director, Jennifer Girard joined the Select Board to talk about the recent activities her department is involved in:

-Septic Grant: Girard and Blandford's Treasurer have been working on this and would like to have permission to send all the documents to Town Counsel for review. The Board agrees.

-Shared Nurse: The Town now has a new shared nurse. Her name is Maryann, and she is taking time to meet with various departments in Town. Maryann's goal will be to promote activities for the public through the Council on Aging and the Library as an example and generally getting information out about public health. Maryann will also join the Council on Aging on their luncheon and breakfast days when Pat Lombardo is not available to take blood pressure. There will also be enough of this grant left over to purchase Stop-the-Bleed kits which will be distributed to appropriate departments. The Fire Department is trained in the use of these kits and there will be more training in the future.

3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a) *Highway Department-Dave Waldron*

-Accident Highway Vehicle: Waldron reported Highway Laborers, Matt Perry and Ray Hultay were working in the Town's tandem 10-wheeler turning left onto Gibbs Road when an F550 tried to pass and hit the front of the vehicle just left of the plow and causing a lot of damage. Perry went to the hospital and has been released. The individual in the F550 left the scene of the accident. Waldron tracked him down and waited for police officers to arrive at which time he was arrested for driving an unregistered, uninsured vehicle. Waldron will send in an insurance claim and is reaching out for the police report.

-Northern Tree: Waldron is waiting for a quote from Northern Tree on tree trimming on Beech Hill Road and Russell Stage Roads.

-Mini Excavator: Still waiting for quotes for a new one.

-Conservation Agent Meeting: Waldron met with Blandford's new Conservation Agent, Nicolas Pietroniro to observe and talk about possible culverts that need to be replaced, repaired, or added on Hayden Road.

-N. Blandford Road: A resident has passed away and the culvert needs work. Waldron is asking for permission to take care of this in the absence of a homeowner. He would like to find out who in the family is responsible for the home. The Select Board does not want to take care of private home culverts as this is the responsibility of the homeowner. They have asked Waldron to reach out to the executor of this property and request they get this culvert repaired.

-Gasoline Spill: Waldron reported DEP was notified and it has been cleaned up. Tighe & Bond did an evaluation of the situation, and the report has been submitted.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 6b. and 6c.
In-person voting and second registered voting location.
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

b) *Town Administrator*

-MMA Conference in Boston: Brezinsky reported his experience at the MMA Conference he attended.

-Water Department Grant: Brezinsky has been in touch with Sean Cronin concerning the Shared Water Operator grant. Cronin is voicing his concern about keeping this grant moving forward.

-Town Hall Roof: Ira is recommending we hire a roofing person as the Town Hall building is experiencing more frequent leaks. Hoppe, Town building maintenance, checked out the situation and solved it for the moment however, the roof needs to be evaluated.

-Mileage Reimbursement Increase: Brezinsky reported the rate for mileage rate went from \$.655 to \$.670 as of January 1, 2024.

-Sprinkler System: Brezinsky will reach out to Fire Services Group after being informed that our sprinkler system has been shut down because the alarm keeps tripping.

-Thank you! Ira Brezinsky will be welcoming the new Town Administrator, Michael Szlosek, on Monday and is extending a thank you to the Town of Blandford for reaching out and giving him the opportunity to work with us. Ira is confident our new town administrator will work out well for Blandford.

4) ACTION ITEMS

a) *Approve Warrant #14 for payment*

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #14 for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

b) *Approve PVPC Invoice #29 Amended*

J. Martin explained to the Select Board that this is not an amended invoice. Stating this on the agenda was an error.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #29 for payment
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor**

c) *Approve MIIA Building Valuation Update*

The last time a valuation update was made by MIIA was 2019 and Brezinsky has been assured that the building has been valued at replacement cost, not present value.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the MIIA Building
Valuation update of the Post Office building.
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor**

5) **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

None

6) **NEW BUSINESS**

a) ***All Departmental Expenditure Report***

New report not available - Tabled

b) ***Town Clerk – In-person voting report***

Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk joined the Board to discuss in-person voting dates: Saturday, February 24, 2024, from 9:00 am – 1:00 pm and Monday, February 26, 2024, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm for March primary election.

c) ***Town Clerk – Second registered voting location***

Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk informed the Select Board that the State of Massachusetts requires all cities and towns have a second voting location in case of an emergency. Jemiolo has worked with the Blandford Fire Chief, Adam Dolby and appointed the Fire Department training center next to the Post Office to be the designated second voting location for Blandford.

d) ***Hilltown Community Ambulance report***

The 2nd Quarter Ambulance Report was received from Hilltown Community Ambulance and reviewed by the Board.

e) ***IT Grant Update***

Brezinsky met with the Finance Team last week and discussed the new accounting software they are considering which only needs quotes; bidding is not required. The Town has been awarded \$80,000 grant for this project. Kinshurf gave a quote \$8,000 to be the project manager. Mass Munifin's quote for their part of this is \$4,500 which includes sending over year-end tax title and reconciliation. The work installing the new accounting software is scheduled to be completed on or before July 1, 2024.

f) ***FY25 Preliminary Budget Discussion***

Many budgets have been received; however, a reminder is going out to the few that have not responded.

g) ***Town Clerk –will assign Police Detail at voting locations***

Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk advised that the Voter's Act of 2022 designated that currently the Select Board is required to authorized to Police Chief to assign police details for upcoming elections. The Town Clerk is asking the Board to give this authority to her.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to authorize the Town Clerk to negotiate with the Chester/Blandford Police Chief to arrange for police detail at upcoming 2024 calendar year elections.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

7) **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 pm

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

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

J. Allen, Member