



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD**  
**Monday, January 29, 2024**  
**6:00 pm**

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

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

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm

Meeting is recorded

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

None

**2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

***a) Highway Department-Dave Waldron***

-Fuel Tanks: Waldron reported the Town's fuel tanks were inspected and found a few minor problems that need to be addressed in the amount of \$2,062 and Waldron is suggesting this expense be shared by the Fire Department, Highway Department, Water Department and Council on Aging for these maintenance bills. Waldron reported these tanks were installed in 1990 and generally, they last about 30 years and new ones would cost around \$30,000. Cousineau reminded the Board that he would like to see a card system used for obtaining gas from the Highway Department to monitor the volume of use more closely for the departments that need gasoline. Waldron will investigate a card/meter system to monitor this and get back to the Board.

-Accident on N. Blandford Road: Waldron reported he is still waiting for MIIA to contact us to investigate the recent accident with the Town plow truck being broadsided by another vehicle. Matt Perry had a minor injury and is fine.

-New Hires: Waldron reported he has 3 possible candidates for Highway Laborer. One of them cannot join this evening so will be interviewed by the Board February 5. The Board welcomed the candidates and asked a series of questions. Waldron will bring the last one in on Monday, February 05.

***b) Town Administrator – Mike Szlosek***

Roof Leak: Mike spoke to John Hoppe, building maintenance, about the Town Hall roof leaking. John sprayed the areas where he located leaks in the past, but this did not solve the problem completely. The Board believes we should hire a roofing company to look at the problem.

-Finance Team Meeting: C. Letendre reminded Szlosek he should reach out to the Finance Team as well as the Finance Committee regarding regularly scheduled finance meetings.

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 6d) Special Town Meeting Request – Library Construction Grant Application  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

**4) ACTION ITEMS**

*a) Approve Warrant #15 for payment*  
Tabled

*b) Tax Map Maintenance Approval*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the contract for Tax Map Maintenance from the Board of Assessors  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

*c) Federal Mileage Increase from \$.655 to \$.670 as of January 01, 2024*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Federal Mileage increase from \$.655 to \$.670 as of January 01, 2024  
J. Allen Seconded  
All in Favor

**5) UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**6) NEW BUSINESS**

*a) All Departmental Expenditure Report*  
No new report available. Tabled.

*b) Town Clerk – Local Election Hours:*

Doris Jemiolo, Town Clerk, joined the Board to discuss shortening local early election hours on June 8 from 10-4 to 10:00 am to 2:00 pm explaining since mail in voting has increase substantially, early walk-in voting is not being utilized as much in Blandford. The Board inquired if the Town Clerk's office has seen a decrease in voting numbers. Both and Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk stated no, 'voting numbers have increased and should not be affected by this change.'

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve the change in Early Voting times from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm to 10:00 am to 2:00 pm  
T. Cousineau Seconded  
All in Favor

*c) Town of Blandford Snow Day Policy*

The Board discussed the need to form a policy for inclement weather. Previously, it was believed if Gateway Regional School District is closed, then the Town Hall is closed. Town Administrator Mike Szlosek believes this policy should not be based on school attendance as schools close for varied reasons such as busing/road condition problems, lack of sidewalk access, school building emergencies, etc. Szlosek believes any call to close Town Hall should be made by the Select Board in conjunction with the Town Administrator. Szlosek will work on a Blandford Town Hall policy for inclement weather. It was found that paid snow days were requested

by a couple of employees which will be reversed as we don't currently have a snow-day pay policy.

***d) Special Town Meeting Request – Library Construction Grant Application***

Library Grant: Nicole Daviau, Director of Blandford's Library and Mary Kronholm, Board of Trustees for the Library joined the Board to discuss their recent grant application. The Porter Memorial Library is in the process of applying for the Massachusetts Library Commissioners Small Building Grant which would allow the Library to expand. This much needed expansion would give them the ability to be in compliance with handicapped and ADA accessibility requirements and have proper restroom facilities and give them the space to have a children's area. This grant requires approval from town residents to allow us to apply for, accept, and expend the funds. At the time of application, the grant requires that the Town vote to 1) Secure \$150,000 of local funding for the Planning & Design Phase of this project which the Library has been diligently saving over the years and presently they have \$120,000 of these funds in place in building stabilization and this grant would match these funds. 2) Approve the project and 3) Authorize to apply for, accept and expend MPLCP grant funds.

Library Progress: Daviau has been tracking the Library's progress over the years and is excited to report book checked out from 2018 to 2023 has increased by 202%. Foot traffic tracked since 2017 shows the Library has already surpassed 2017 just in the first half of this fiscal year. The Board has agreed to move forward with planning a Special Town Meeting.

**7) EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 pm

Submitted by Joann Martin  
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board  
and Mike Szlosek, Town Administrator

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Cara Letendre, Chair

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T. Cousineau, Member

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J. Allen, Member