



**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
JANUARY 4, 2024
4:30 P.M.**

1. OPEN SESSION:

Meeting Opened at 4:30 P.M.

In Attendance: G. Avery, Water Superintendent, M. Keier, Commission Chairman, Brad Curry, Commissioner, P. Thayer, Commissioner, K. Shaw, Administrative Assistant.
Meeting is being recorded.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Review of Meeting Minutes of December 7, 2023.

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to accept the Minutes of December 7, 2023, as written.

B. Curry Seconded.

All in Favor.

Items not on the Agenda

▪ **Goals of the Water Department**

Metering of the Water consumption for billing
SCADA Project

▪ **2022 Unpaid Bill from KP Law**

Brad Curry was on the Water Commission and has substantiated this, in fact, is a legitimate bill that will need to be paid.

▪ **Blandford County Club Abatement**

Steve Grondin will visit the Blandford Country Club on Friday, January 5th to substantiate the water is turned off and at the same time retrieve the wrench that controls the on/off mechanism. The question arises if the Water Department should bill the \$50 water turn off fee. M. Keier advised there is a fine for tampering with the controls and while the fine won't be levied, the turn off fee should be.

▪ **Follow-up on Brad Curry's town email address for Commission business**

Karen advised B. Curry that a Town email address for him would need to be licensed and there would be an expense. B. Curry is still interested in working on a town email versus a personal one and will follow-up with the Interim Town Administrator on how best to go forward with it.

3. ACTION ITEMS

- a. No Action Items.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Water Meter Project Update

The metering of the water is on hold temporarily as there is a possibility that an accounting software change may be instituted and it's a wait and see if that occurs. If it does, the new system would be more compatible with the EJP software. Karen will check with the Town Administrator as to the status of a software change. If this doesn't happen then there will need to be discussion on whether or not to go forward with legal action as there has been a large expenditure of both time and money to get this system off the ground.

b. Water Department Trailer Registration

Karen ran into Adam Dolby and inquired about the status of procuring the necessary paperwork in order to register this trailer as it will be helpful for use by the Water Department. He, again, said he would check into it. There have been multiple inquiries made to the Fire Department (where this trailer was previously housed) and nothing has been produced to enable the Water Department to register it. It is hoped we can pursue on our own. Brad Curry will look into it with this in mind and Karen copied her file for him on the subject.

c. Shared Water Operator Grant Allocation Apportionment

It was thought Ira Brezinsky was to attend this Commission meeting but was working remotely and not in the office. Mike Keier advised that Bob Daley reached out to join this meeting and Mike advised he sent an email response advising there will be discussion at the January 8, Selectboard Meeting and best to meet after that date. The Water Commission, Water Superintendent and Administrative Assistant will plan on attending the Selectboard Meeting. It was expressed it is felt there are inconsistencies on how the grant money should be used and it will be discussed at future meetings, both with the Selectboard and Joint Water Commission meetings to iron it all out. It appears, through Ira Brezinsky that Chester has hired an OIT who is working in treatment and will be getting his driver's license shortly. A driver's license will be required for the position he will occupy. M. Keier stated on June 22 at a prior Blandford Water Commission meeting which the Chester Commissioners were in attendance, that Blandford wasn't entirely on board with the Shared Operator Grant and requested a revisit. However, if the Grant was accepted, all were in agreement that Steven Grondin would be the shared operator. It is unclear how this got off track.

Relative to the purchase of equipment, namely the truck, it was the understanding of the Water Department it was an acceptable purchase under the Grant. Also that fall prevention and confined space equipment could be purchased and mutually shared. These items were purchased according to this interpretation. There are instances when two sets of equipment may be needed and, therefore, both municipalities will have to have them. Several other items were purchased of much less value under the Grant. Further discussion followed relative to the equipment Chester may have or need and what Blandford has. It is also noted that while much can be shared, there are items that each municipality will require.

d. Indirect Costs and Water Billing for Town Owned Property

This is tabled until the new Town Administrator takes the helm. Having knowledge of the amount the Water Department is paying in indirect costs was discussed and noted as an important part of this project.

e. FY 25 Budget

G. Avery stated he is willing to work with the Commissioners on the FY 25 budget but definitely wants their input and participation. He stated his unhappiness that certain line items, one of which was related to vehicle maintenance, were not separated in the FY 23 Budget which made it difficult to project for the FY 24 Budget. Other line items were removed.

Mike Keier and Brad Curry stepped forward, with Gordon Avery to get the FY 25 Budget worked up. A meeting of the three on the second Thursday of February is planned at 3:30 p.m. and all the paperwork is to be gathered for this. It is anticipated it shouldn't take more than an hour or so.

f. Water Department Rate Study

The Rate Study quote from Wright & Pierce came in at \$21,000 and it is felt that is on the high side. Much legwork on the project has already been done. It would be advantageous to seek several more quotes before going forward. Once Gordon can identify vendors to reach out to, he will go forward with seeking quotes. He may contact Chris Dunn, prior Town Administrator, who advised he knew of some. Brad Curry will contact Huntington on this as they may recently have had this done.

g. L.B. Corporation Bill for Service on Russell Stage Road

This has been discussed and is being brought to the attention of the Selectboard and is listed on their Agenda for their January 8th meeting which M. Keier, G. Avery and K. Shaw will be attending. The uncertainty lies in whether it is a Water Department or Highway Department bill. K. Shaw reviewed the minutes of a prior meeting and did a short transcript of exactly what was discussed relative to this subject.

5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Water Superintendent Update

There were 3 leaks that were reported and usage noted at 147,000 gallons a day. They were at 16 Kaolin Road which will be the Water Department's responsibility; 3 Kaolin Road and 2A Huntington Road which are the responsibility of the home owners. This

happened during the 5" + rainstorm. Once the leaks were repaired usage dropped back down.

Two new PH meters had to be ordered. One meter during cleaning literally fell apart. While one was reading accurately, both will be changed out when the new ones are received.

Elm Electrical came onsite to demonstrate how to clean the new turbidity meters. Matt showed how to do the alarms which will be done quarterly.

The plow in the Water Department will not work on the new truck. It is suggested to try to ballast it working through A.C.T. and/or look into replacing the plow. Both will be looked at and Gordon will do the leg work.

Gordon would like to set up minimum requirements as well as pay scales for each position in the Water Department. It is noted that Chester does not have this in place. He expressed concern relative to the disparities in both Towns relating to the positions as well as with what each municipality (Blandford/Chester) is paying.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

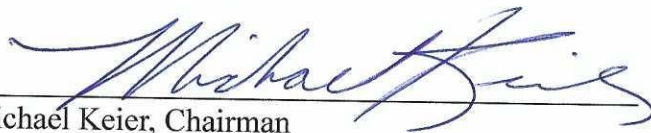
MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to adjourn.
Brad Curry Seconded.
All in Favor.

Meeting adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

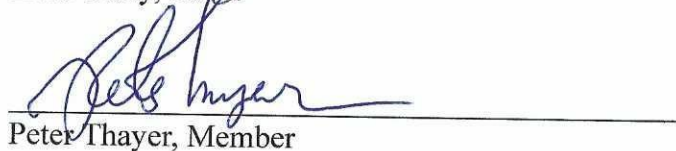
Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant
Water Department

WATER COMMISSION


Michael Keier, Chairman


Brad Curry, Clerk


Peter Thayer, Member