



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

MEETING MINUTES
BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD
Monday, February 26, 2024
6:00 pm

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

Meeting Open at 6:00 pm

Meeting is recorded and zoom

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to move to Departmental Reports 3c) Kristen Smidy, Gateway Schools superintendent
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

1) EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 05, 2024

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 05, 2024, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

b. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2024

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to table the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2024, until the March 04, 2024, Select Board Meeting when there is a quorum
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a) Highway Department – No report

b) Town Administrator – Mike Szlosek

-Town Hall Roof Leak: Szlosek reached out to MIIA to place an insurance claim. MIIA inspected the damage and reported they cannot pay for general wear and tear on the roof but the damage inside the building will be covered. Szlosek will work with the Building Inspector to investigate this situation.
-FY25 Budget Reviews: Budget reviews are starting February 29 and will continue for the next 1 to 2 weeks.

c) Gateway Regional School District – Kristen Smidy, Superintendent

Superintendent Smidy joined the Select Board to summarize the Gateway Schools activities and budget.

-Welcome Kristin Smiddy: Smidy began by thanking Dave Waldron, Blandford Highway Superintendent for his excellent communication with her on those days when important weather condition decisions need to be made. Smidy stated he was and remains an excellent resource for her when making these decisions and she wants to thank him for that.

-Cyber Security: Google is working on enhanced multi-factor authentication which is starting to trickle into the education side. Gateway is applying for grants. These changes are coming and unavoidable.

-Chester Elementary Fire Pump problem: The school was put on a fire watch in late January because during a quarterly inspection, it was found that the transducer to the fire pump was not working properly. The Chester Fire Department worked with the district to always have a fire truck on site as the transducer was being repaired. There was no concern for student safety. To be pro-active, they are checking all the fire pumps.

Chester Elementary Programs: Smidy reported ‘lots of good things going on at Chester Elementary.’ ---

Hydroponics: The classes are doing hydroponic growing of cucumbers, and seedlings the kids are getting to eat during lunch.

-Gateway Goings on: Smidy reported there is a push for more hands-on learning, so the school is offering classes in Financial Literacy as an example. Gateway is looking into what is called a Bar Grant which will offer programs for more hands-on experience for the students.

-Gateway Budget Meetings: Gateway’s budget meeting will be March 6, 2024, at 7:00 pm at Gateway. Smidy reports the preliminary budget is online and is anticipated to go up 3.42%. Blandford’s statutory assessment increase is 5.69% which is due to enrollment.

-Massachusetts School Building Authority: The MSBA was done in November and was a big win. The School Committee is hoping to roll that money into a capital stabilization account because Gateway needs a new roof as it is 23 years old. This will be a joint decision with towns and the School Committee about how they want to proceed with that.

-Vision Impaired Program: Smidy reported this is Gateway’s second year running this program for children with vision loss. The funding for this program is generous and Gateway has trained employees for vision impaired teaching and Braille.

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to move to New Business 5f) PVPC CBDG Program Extension.

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

4) ACTION ITEMS

a. *Approve Warrant #17 for Payment*

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve Warrant #17 for payment

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

b. VDAR Financial Software Contract

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to table the VDAR Financial Software Contract until the March 04, 2024, Select Board Meeting
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

c. Approve Special Town Meeting Warrant for March 18, 2024

MOTION: J. Allen made a motion to table the Special Town Meeting Warrant until the March 04, 2024, Select Board Meeting
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

5) NEW BUSINESS

a) Town Clerk, Doris Jemiolo – Caucus details

Assistant Town Clerk, Mary Kronholm met with the Select Board and the Chester/Blandford Police Chief to approve and distribute the Blandford Town Caucus posting for March 04, 2024.

b) Town Clerk, Doris Jemiolo – State Warrant

Assistant Town Clerk, Mary Kronholm met with the Select Board and the Chester/Blandford Police Chief to approve and distribute the Town of Blandford State Warrant.

c) Treasurer Clerk Position

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to table the Treasurer Clerk discussion until the March 04, 2024, Select Board meeting.
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

d) Severe Weather Policy Approval

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to approve the Severe Weather Policy for the Town of Blandford
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

e) All Departmental Expenditure Report

MOTION: T. Cousineau made a motion to table the All-Departmental Expenditure Report
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

f) PVPC CBDG Program - Joseph Hagopian

-Joseph joined the Select Board to ask for approval of the extended FY20 Community Development Community Block Grant that the town received in early 2021 for a total award of \$449,825 which included two main programs. 1) The ADA Self-Assessment Transition plan as well as the Housing Rehabilitation program. The ADA Plan has already been procured out and was brought back to the Town in the spring for

review and approval. The original goal of the Housing Rehabilitation was to get 12 units rehabilitated from general code violation repairs, room replacements, lead paint removal, asbestos removal, and sanitary code violations. The goal was initially 12 but there were several residents who were either applied and then later backed out for a number of reasons or tried to apply for the program and did not qualify financially. There were also several who entered the program then backed out because they were not interested in the degree of work that needed to be done and the commitment to be made. This program is over June 30, 2024.

6) **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

None

Meeting adjourned at 6:39 pm

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

Absent

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

J. Allen, Member