



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD**  
Select Board

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

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**BLANDFORD SELECT BOARD**  
**Monday, March 11, 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 and zoom

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

*a. Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of March 04, 2024*

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the meeting minutes of March 04, 2024**

**J. Allen Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

a) Kevin Green: Reporting an abandoned building that is dangerous and should be boarded up. This will be reported to the Board of Health.

**3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

*a) Highway Department*

-Russell Stage Road/Catch Basin: Highway has repaired the problem.

-Hunting Road & Knox: Replaced an undersized culvert. The drainpipes were undersized, and the result was the rushing water tore up the road. The work is now complete.

-Highway Employee-Clayton Therien: Waldron announced that Clayton has taken on the job of raising and lowering flag for the Town. Thank you, Clayton.

-Gibbs Road: A culvert pipe replacement will be started and finished next week. This process started in 2018. It took this long to wade through the red tape and problems with this project.

*b) Town Administrator*

-Water Department Shared Operator meeting with Sean Cronin: Szlosek had a telephone meeting with Sean Cronin to talk about the current shared Water Department grant between the Town of Chester and Town of Blandford. Szlosek reported Cronin would be willing to entertain extending the grant until December 15, 2024, which will allow both water departments to expend those funds over the summer. However, he has four conditions:

1) No further Equipment Purchases. Cronin will not ask to return the \$40,000 expended for the new truck as both towns are utilizing this vehicle.

- 2) No retroactivity before February 14 as we cannot reclass previous personnel costs to use up these funds.
- 3) Budget & Schedule: Cronin is expecting A list of how this money will be spent between now and December 15, 2024.
- 4) Cronin would like a solid commitment to Extend the Shared Operator and more cooperation beyond the end of the grant.

Cronin is requesting 4 letters that should mirror each other; 2 from the Select Boards and 2 from the Water Commissions. Szlosek believes we are in decent shape with this grant if we do what we have been asked to do. Letendre asked if the Blandford Water Department seemed on-board will all this. Szlosek noted they were somewhat skeptical. Szlosek reported they expressed some concerns about the way the system is being run in the Town of Chester in that Chester does not have some of the safety systems in place about which they are concerned.

-Novus Insight: Szlosek reported meeting with Novus for our annual review of the Town's IT needs and state law requirements for FY25.

- Support Servies: \$20,196
- Private Cloud Services: \$3,150
- Antivirus: \$520
- Server Replacement \$15,000
- Firewall Replacement \$2,250
- Office Software Updated \$5,900

Szlosek stated this is down from FY24 however, there have been changes in state security requirements. In addition, Novus is advising that we add some security programs which would be \$1,400 to install and \$2,100 per year which Szlosek will include in the FY25 budget. Szlosek also reported various other services that will be onboarded at lesser costs.

-Gateway Regional School Assessment increase: The Gateway assessment has increased by 5.69% as our student count has gone up by four students, bringing the budget to \$1,569,382.

-Lekrenski Brothers School Transportation: Lekrenski reported no increase in their yearly contract price.

-Snow & Ice Account: Szlosek has been contacted by our Accountants to say our snow and ice account is in deficit.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to advise the Town Administrator to approve going into deficit spending on the Town of Blandford's Snow & Ice Account #015422.005 Salt & Sand**

**T. Cousineau Seconded**

**All in Favor**

-MIIA Insurance: Szlosek met with representatives from MIIA regarding the Town's health insurance. They will be meeting with Highway employees on Monday, March 25.

-Union Contract: Szlosek has been working with the Union. Negotiations will begin soon.

-Post Office: The post office building had a sewer back-up. John Hoppe is working on it. Jeff Allen is recommending town buildings have a special account funded so there are fewer surprises when something goes wrong.

4) **ACTION ITEMS**

a. *Approve Warrant #18 Accounts Payable for Payment*

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #18 Accounts Payable for Payment

**J. Allen Seconded**

**All in Favor**

5) **NEW BUSINESS**

None

**MOTION:** C. Letendre made a motion to move into Executive Session in accordance with G.L.c.30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government's bargaining or litigation position.

**Roll Call Out:** C. Letendre – Yes T. Cousineau – Yes J. Allen - Yes

6) **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government's bargaining or litigation position**

Meeting adjourned at 6:51 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