



TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
SELECT BOARD

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

**FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES  
November 16, 2023  
Following 10:30am Finance Team meeting**

**In attendance:** J. Lombardo, Chair; K. Green, Member; D. Brodie, Member; J. Coury, Member C. Dunne, Town Administrator; D. Hopson, Chair of the Board of Assessors

Meeting opened at 11:14 am

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

*i) Examination of the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of October 30, 2023*

**MOTION:** J. Lombardo made a motion to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of October 30, 2023, as written

**K. Green Seconded**

**All in Favor**

**2) AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

**3) DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

a) Assessor

i) Chair of the Board of Assessors and former, Dave Hopson, spoke to the regional school budget process, a discussion which was prompted by the shortfall in rural aid for Gateway Regional School District (Gateway). As the former Superintendent for the school district, Hopson anticipated a 2.5% increase in the school's overall budget for FY25. Hopson reviewed the different elements of the budget (e.g., Foundation, Non-Foundation, Minimum Contributions, etc.), and Dunne agreed to send Committee members a copy of Gateway's FY24 assessment letter. Other issues on the horizon mentioned by Hopson included the expiring contract with teachers, a looming replacement of the middle school/high school roof and the roughly 20-year cycle indicating that the state may be looking to make cuts to regional school budgets in the near future.

b) Accounting

i) General Ledger Year-to-Date: copies of the latest General Ledger and All Department Expense reports were made available to Committee members. Dunne noted that the Select Board had not seen any major issues in their review this past week but that the External IT/Computer Software line item continues to be a challenge. Dunne reminded Committee members that two major elements funded via this line item, IT support and the Town finance software, would be addressed through a regional RFP and a grant-funded Town project over the next year.

c) Town Administrator

i) Project Updates:

(1) Dunne updated the Committee on the Fire/Highway garage project. For the moment, this effort is on pause while a new Town Administrator is identified. Next steps will include a community survey aimed at determining some preferences around cost, location, etc. For the design team's part, they have been

exploring alternative options for the materials that may reduce costs such as fabric rather than prefabricated steel for the sides of the structure. Cost continues to be a challenge.

- (2) Brodie asked about the property issues on Main Street. Dunne said he has not been deeply involved here but that the property in question was discussed at a recent Select Board meeting and the Town's Health Agent was moving forward with a condemnation proceeding. Brodie asked if the property was within the Business District noting that it has several trailers parked out front. Dunne said he believed the District extended that far down Main Street but would have to check. Green noted that a property with similar issues on Hayden Road has received less attention because it is tucked away on a side street and not prominently located on Route 23.
- (3) Coury asked about the status of the Town Administrator search. Dunne explained that the Screening Committee had selected a handful of applicants for preliminary interviews which would take place the week following Thanksgiving. Dunne noted that there were at least a couple candidates he believed would likely prove worthy of a finalist interview with the Select Board in early December.
- ii) Fiscal Year 2025 operating and capital planning: Dunne mentioned that he would share copies of the "annotated budget" he had been working on with Committee members. Additionally, he would be sending out FY25 budget request materials before departing.
- iii) Annotated budget: Dunne mentioned that he would share copies of the "annotated budget" he had been working on with Committee members

**4) ACTION ITEMS**

- a) Review and act on Reserve Fund Transfer to cover Town Hall Maintenance & Repair Account (015192.000) invoice for emergency sprinkler alarm repair (\$1,005.00)
  - i) Tabled until insurance payment is confirmed
- b) Review and act on Reserve Fund Transfer to cover Town Hall Maintenance & Repair Account (015192.000) invoice for boiler motor repair (estimated at \$1,000)
  - i) Tabled until an invoice is available
- c) Review and act on Reserve Fund Transfers to cover deductible for Town Hall HVAC repairs (\$1,000)

**MOTION: J. Lombardo made a motion to approve the Reserve Fund Transfers to cover the deductible for Town Hall HVAC repairs in the amount of \$1,000.**

**D. Brodie Seconded**

**All in Favor**

The meeting concluded at 12:00 pm

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Janet Lombardo, Finance Chair

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Jackie Coury, Finance Member

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Deborah Brodie, Finance Member

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Kevin Green, Finance Member