



**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

**BLANDFORD WATER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Thursday, MARCH 7, 2024

4:30 p.m.

1. OPEN SESSION

Meeting Opened at 5:11 P.M.

In Attendance: M. Szlosek, Town Administrator, Pete Thayer, Commissioner, Mike Keier, Commission Chairman, Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent, Steve Grondin, OIT, K. Shaw, Administrative Assistant. Brad Curry, Commissioner, Absent.

Meeting is being recorded.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

- a. **Review of the minutes of the February 1, 2024 Water Commission meeting**

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to accept the Minutes of February 1, 2024, as written.

P. Thayer Seconded.

All in Favor.

3. ACTION ITEMS:

- a. **Finance Committee Meeting with Water Commissioners for FY 25 Budget review on March 12, at 1:00 p.m.**

Brad Curry will try to make the meeting on the budget scheduled for March 12 at 1:00 p.m. Gordon would like certain line items to be added to enable a clearer approach on the budget.

- b. **Water Department Billing Commitment 3 – FY 24 3rd Quarter**

Commitment 3 billing has been completed with no issues and the Commission will need to sign it so a copy can go to the tax office and one retained in the Water Department. Fire suppression billing went out on this commitment.

Backflow prevention fees will need to be billed for the next quarter for approximately 9 accounts.

c. Administrative Assistant's schedule for March and April

K. Shaw will be on vacation from April 1 – April 4 which is a payroll period. Karen will talk with Joann Martin or work with Gordon on it the Friday prior to vacation. Karen is also scheduled for surgery March 22 and expects to be out until her follow-up with the surgeon. She is then scheduled for vacation.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Water Department Trailor Registration

In Brad Curry's absence this will be moved to the next meeting.

b. Water Meter Project Update

The water meter project will resume once VADAR is up and running which is tentatively planned for the first quarter of FY 25.

c. Indirect Costs and Water Billing for Town Owned Property

A contract is required for this to go forward and this has not yet been completed as a fixed amount is needed in order to put a contract together. For billing, only the usage can be considered, not the debt. It is being considered to leave it as it is, i.e., bill those Town departments and have them pay as what has been done in the past.

d. Water Department Rate Study

The rate study period has been taken down from a 20 year project to a 5 year project which is acceptable. The fee was bumped down to just under \$10,000 for a five year study which will provide what is required and will enable the department to set their rates. If a \$25,000 grant (which Gordon has applied for) comes through it can be returned to a 20 year project and resubmitted.

MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to accept the Wright & Pearce rate study proposal for \$9,999.0 for a 5 year rate study.

P. Thayer Seconded.

All in Favor.

5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

Chester/Blandford Shared Water Operator Grant

Mike Szlosek received a call from Sean Cronin of the DOR relative to the Shared Water Operator Grant between Blandford and Chester and he may be open to extending the Grant to September 15, 2024 to enable use of the personnel funds and to fund several summer projects. There were certain conditions: 1) there is to be no more equipment purchases, however, there were no payback stipulations to what has already been purchased; 2) No reclassifications of previous personnel costs before February 14th of this year. Cannot reclassify old money; 3) A budget is required and should reflect hours and costs going forward to spend the remainder of the Grant; and 4) He would like protocols in place to continue the shared operator. Finally he would like a letter agreeing to all noted from the Blandford Selectmen, Blandford Water Commission, Chester Water Commission and Chester Selectmen. Gordon Avery is endorsing having a schedule and discussed the need to fine tune it. It is the goal to create a schedule and increase the shared hours in the spirit of using the Grant as is intended. The letters will be the next step to keep the Grant up and running. A fixed schedule will be worked on and submitted. Administrative costs were also discussed and will be billed as part of the Grant.

a. Water Superintendent Update

The PH meter is now operating and the readings were consistent. It is advisable to change the PH from 7.2 to 7.4. The pumps have been slowed down.

Gordon would like to see Steve have hands on with Bernie's responsibilities and this will be discussed.

Filter 2 is going quicker than filter 3 at the plant so there may need to replace 2 filters this year.

There is a water leak that may be in someone's house. Jon Tibbetts of Mass Rural Water Association is scheduled to come in to help detect this leak next Thursday. Leak detection and GPS will be used.

Will be necessary to reach out to the state relative to billing for the Mass Turnpike as there may be a need to install additional meters. Gordon has reached out to Lee and they advised they have meters installed which were installed early on.

A couple quotes will be requested to empty the ozone room. Work will be looked at to have a new chemical room.

b. KPLaw PFAS Cost Recovery Program Notice

It is not felt this applies to Blandford, however, it was given to K. Shaw to look into

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

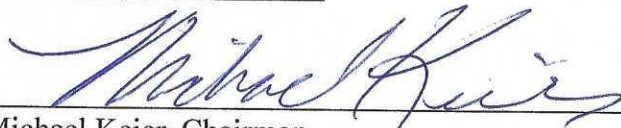
**MOTION: M. Keier made a motion to adjourn.
P. Thayer Seconded.
All in Favor.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant
Water Department

WATER COMMISSION



Michael Keier, Chairman

Brad Curry, Clerk



Peter Thayer, Member