



**TOWN OF BLANDFORD  
WATER DEPARTMENT**

1 Russell Stage Rd  
Blandford, MA 01008  
413.848.4279 x 304

**Water Commissioners**

Brad Curry  
Michael Keier  
Peter Thayer

**Water Superintendent**

Gordon Avery

**BLANDFORD WATER COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, MAY 16, 2024  
4:30 p.m.**

**1. OPEN SESSION**

Meeting Opened at 4:35 P.M.

In Attendance: Brad Curry, Commissioner, Mike Keier, Commission Chairman, Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent, Steve Grondin, OIT, Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant.

Meeting is being recorded.

**2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:**

**a. Review of the minutes of the April 11, 2024 Water Commission meeting**

**MOTION: Mike Keier made a motion to accept the Minutes of April 11, 2024.**

**Brad Curry Seconded.**

**All in Favor**

**3. ACTION ITEMS**

**a. Water Line Break**

The water line break lasted approximately 18 hours before the residents were back on line. It was 22 hours before everything was flushed and tested. Mass Pike was pressurized on Saturday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. The break was the responsibility of the DOT to repair. Gordon will be meeting with Eric Main, DOT Superintendent for this district to go over the maps they have and also will have the State print Blandford a full set of maps. Discussion followed relative to plant personnel and possible restructuring.

Brad Curry noted a gap in communication relative to this emergency water break. It is suggested there should be a one point contact versus various departments going in different directions. It is also noted a reverse 911 went out relating to this break, however the database may not be up to date.

**b. 24 North Blandford Road – Abandoned Property**

This is an abandoned property and there was a water line break on the property. The water has been shut off and a fee of \$50.00 will be charged. A letter will be sent to the property advising this is the third time the line has been broken and the water will not be turned on until the water service from gate-valve to home is replaced. If the Water Department is not contacted, a second letter will be sent certified (advising this is a second attempt to notify) relaying the same information.

**c. Maple Lane**

Resident at 6 Maple Lane is still complaining about the water pressure being low. The plumber was out again and S. Grondin was also at the property. Water Department shut the water off (no fee for shut off or turn on). Areas had been replaced with copper but it still appears there is a pressure issue. It appears isolated to this residence. The meter had been replaced and does not appear to have resolved the issue. It is felt the issue might be in the actual water main. Major work on the main is planned in the near future and it was discussed if it should wait. There is also a problem with shutting off Maple Lane at the main as it has been paved over. The gate box replacement should be done by the Highway Department. Work cannot be done until this is fixed. When accomplished, LB Corporation will need to perform work. Question was raised, can it be re-tapped? The remaining discussion revolved around possible fixes to this issue. Gordon will contact the homeowner and advise they are planning to re-tap the line from the corp to the curb. He will also suggest she may want to get pricing from them on running a line from the curb to the house and a bigger line could replace what is there which would result in more pressure and better flow. Will be less expensive to have the work done then, rather than later. Highway will be contacted to be put on notice they will be responsible for replacing the gate-box.

**d. Water Purchase**

As to having water available to the residents and the expenses relating thereto, it is agreed the Water Department will pay the bill for the water purchased at Big Y to be available for the residents who need it. A great deal of water was ordered from Berkshire Water, and it is questioned as to what department will be paying for the water. In addition, the Highway Department offloaded the water and there is a question relative to whether the payroll hours should be paid by Highway or Water. It is suggested by the Water Commission that the hours and cost for water be paid out of Emergency Management fund. The Water Commission is agreeable to pay for the 1 gallon jugs of water initially purchased. It is suggested there should be a formula to gage the amount of water required for breakages taking into account the number of residents impacted by the break.

Brad Curry will notify Highway the hours relating to any work done by the highway personnel will need to be paid out of highway.

**4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:**

**a. Water Department Trailer Registration**

The trailer registration is still not accomplished. K. Shaw has been focusing on the work required preceding the new accounting software which will be put into place for the fourth quarter water billing. She will follow up as soon as she has an opportunity.

**b. Water Meter Project Update**

K. Shaw reported her concerns on the timeline for the installation of the utility software, specifically if the goal is to have it metered. G. Avery stated it cannot be metered at this time pending the rate study. Once the rate study has been completed, work can be done on billing on a metering basis. K. Shaw advised this project will be given priority as 4<sup>th</sup> quarter water bills should go out June 1. It is anticipated the rate study should be completed prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter water billing which covers the period 07.01.24-09.30.24 and is mailed on 09.01.24. Hopefully at that time, the billing will be on a metered basis.

Strategy was discussed relative to rates and the possibility that there may be a flat rate increase prior to the metering.

**d. Indirect Costs and Water Billing for Town Owned Property**

It is established that the Water Department will bill the departments as has been done in the past for their water consumption. A credit or swap of an indirect cost has been abandoned.

**e. Isaiah – OIT Laborer – Budgeting**

There is grant funding for Isaiah out of the Grant until September 15<sup>th</sup>. After that date, any work for Blandford will need to be in the budget. G. Avery requested \$22,500 for Isaiah for funding for the rest of the fiscal year. Mario is budgeted at least until the end of the year and there is a possibility, he could then work for the Highway Department.

**5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:**

**a. Water Superintendent Update**

With M. Szlosek gone, Dave is now in charge of the One Stop Grant and he has been advised he needs to add Elizabeth Pereira of Wright Pierce in as a consultant in the processing. G. Avery explained the One Stop Grant program allows you to apply for various grants at one location and the state will help.

Regarding the F-150 truck from Westfield, G. Avery updated the status on when Blandford will be receiving it.

The floors are done at the plant and G. Avery reported they look excellent. Pricing will be requested to do the outside pads.

Tree work is completed and looks good. A bit of a mix up on the project resulting in trees marked for another time were taken down. They were scheduled to come down a bit later, but are now down and will not have to come down later. Clean up will extend up to the dam.

Filters 1 and 4 are scheduled for washing.

An update was given for the lead and copper testing.

**b. KP Law PFAS Cost Recovery Program Notice**

K. Shaw was tasked with looking into this and reported that at the last meeting it was determined it didn't impact Blandford, but she was going to check to be sure. She was unable to check into it and the deadline was May 10<sup>th</sup> and has passed.

**c. Wayne Lawrence, Cross Street**

Mr. Lawrence emailed and is wondering what the process is to gain Town water on Cross Street, where he is seeking approval to build a cabin. It was discussed on the best method to get this accomplished. G. Avery called Steve Garrity on the matter to determine the most cost affective way. M. Keier will look into the matter and contact Mr. Lawrence.

**d. Old Chester Road – 16 Acres – Request for New Service**

G. Avery went over the above.

**e. Next Commission Meeting to be Held at the Plant**

The next Commission Meeting which will be scheduled for June 20, 2024 will be conducted at the water plant.

**6. MEETING ADJOURNED**

**MOTION: Mike Keier made a motion to adjourn.**

**Brad Curry Seconded.**


**All in favor**

Meeting adjourned at 6:17 p.m.

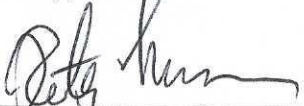
Respectfully Submitted,

Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant  
Water Department

**WATER COMMISSION**

  
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Michael Keier, Chairman

  
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Brad Curry, Clerk

  
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Peter Thayer, Member