



**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

**CHESTER/BLANDFORD COMBINED
WATER COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, July 18, 2024
4:30 p.m.**

1. OPEN SESSION

Meeting Opened at 4:330P.M.

In Attendance: Brad Curry, Commissioner, Mike Keier, Commission Chairman, Pete Thayer, Water Commissioner, Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent, Cristina Ferrera, Town Administrator, Tom Bean, Bob Daley, Chester Water Commissioner, Jim Zimmerman, Chester Water Commissioner, Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent.

Meeting is being recorded.

2. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS:

a. Review of the minutes of the June 20, 2024 Water Commission Meeting

MOTION: Mike Keier made a motion to accept the Minutes of June 20, 2024.

Brad Curry Seconded.

All in Favor

3. ACTION ITEMS

a. Old Chester Road

The Highway Department put sand on the area where the water main is exposed and subject to damage. The area requires further repair which was conveyed to the Selectboard at their meeting approximately a month ago. The Selectboard gave a greenlight to repairs that the Highway Department needs to make. Discussion followed regarding the history of work done on the road and what presently needs to be done. The Town Administrator inquired as to what she can do to help with this issue. It is suggested if the Highway Department is unable to address it, perhaps a contractor can be hired to make the area safe and protect the water main. Strategy was discussed as to how best to go forward with the knowledge this road will eventually be paved and should not be until work that needs to be done by the water department is completed. If it is paved prior to that, the road will need to be dug up to install water pipes. Best strategy is to make it safe

until the pipes are put in. Prior work consisted of giving the road what is termed a dirt road standard which would be acceptable but at present it is no longer at that standard. It is agreed the best approach is to make the road passable at an acceptable dirt road standard. The Town Administrator will discuss with the Selectboard with emphasis this needs to be addressed.

b. Water Plant Concrete Work (Pads)

This has been done and the Water Department is pleased with the result at a cost of \$6,200.

c. 2012 Ford Pickup Truck – Westfield Surplus Equipment

This is pretty much all set. Waiting for the paperwork from MIIA.

d. Water Abatement Request – 24 North Blandford Road, Estate of William H. Needham, III. (Added to Agenda 07.16.24)

This has been approved by the Water Commission.

4. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PRIOR MEETINGS:

a. Open Discussion – Chester and Blandford Water Commissions

The Hiring of the summer intern, Brody, in Chester as a shared employee. It has been the understanding any shared employee hiring would be mutually agreed upon by both municipalities before going forward with the actual hiring. The Blandford Commission is questioning why this wasn't adhered to. There are also questions of the availability of funding within the grant for this intern and if he is only being used in one town, if he falls under the rules of the grant. Bob Daley advised Andy Meyers of Chester will contact the state to determine if this is appropriate. It has been agreed upon if what is in place presently is not appropriate, Chester will pay this intern out of the Chester budget and not the shared services account. Going forward it has been agreed any shared service employee hiring will be done in conjunction with both towns.

Gordon discussed another shared employee, Isaiah, who submits his time through Chester and he is questioning whether this individual works the necessary hours to receive benefits and, if so, this will need to be reviewed in mid-September as reimbursement for his work will be coming out of both Blandford and Chester's budgets as well as his benefits (indirect cost) if he meets the criteria to receive them. He noted the rate they are paid is not the total expense of the employee when indirect costs are considered. Concern has been expressed on Isaiah's attendance lack of notification when he is out and Bob Daley advised he was unaware of this and will discuss with him.

Brad Curry advised Chester there is going to be Workzone Safety training class held in Huntington on September 24 at Stanton Hall through the Baystate Roads Program and wanted to let them know should they want training for any of their employees. He will send them the notice he has on this.

As to training, Gordon advised they are doing a D1 & T1 VSS class in mid-August through Mass Rural Water Association. Any employee Chester would like to have attend will need to be signed up through Chester. There also will be a D2 & T2 course in Blandford starting the end of September through Mass Rural Water as well. Obtaining dual licenses may result in too much work for one employee so both really aren't required.

Bob Daley will reach out to Karen for information on funds through the Valley Opportunity Council for qualified water users in Chester. He will reach out to Isiah regarding T2 training.

Another joint meeting will be set up towards the end of August.

Joint Chester/Blandford meeting closed at 5:05 pm.

b. Water Department Trailer Registration

Karen is working on this and Greg Whittier, District Fire Warden has been assisting. It is hoped if the paperwork is not in Blandford's hands, Gordon will try to get this done when he is registering the 2012 truck.

c. Water Meter Project Update

To next meeting.

d. Update on Water Purchase Return

To next meeting.

e. One Stop Grants

Mariusz Jedrychowski of Wright and Pierce would like to meet with Gordon and the Town Administrator to review the grants, specifically the one stop grants (\$750,000) and the federal earmark funding (\$3,000,000). A meeting is scheduled for July 19th and Gordon will check with the Town Administrator relative to attending. Wright Pierce's involvement is a paid service to best serve the Town. Gordon advises the Town has been approved for the Federal Earmark Funding and on the One Stop Grant it is expected to hear something by November. The top projects at this time which would utilize these funds are Russell Stage Road (complete), Maple Lane and a new pump house and storage tank (approximately six million dollars). Work is scheduled to be done by the DOT at the service plazas and it is hoped that there will be some help with the infrastructure from them due to their work at this site. Gordon will be meeting with them next week.

f. Water Rates – Update

Gordon will be meeting with Mariusz tomorrow and will be getting an update.

g. 24 North Blandford Road – Abandoned Property Update

Zeke is working with Nancy Heritier, the sister of the deceased property owner regarding an alternative to installation of a new water line and meter. Instead of an entire line, just replace from the corp to the break and put a meter pit off the road and should it leak again it will be metered. Putting meter pits for all long runs may be a consideration going

forward. In this manner, if there is a break, it will be metered and the Town is not losing the water.

MOTION: Pete Thayer made a motion to accept the replacement of the water line from the corp to the break and install a meter pit off the road.

Mike Keier Seconded.

All in Favor

h. Wayne Lawrence – Cross Street

Gordon met with LB Corporation and the quote is \$16,000 - \$20,000 to run a line which might be under the cost to dig a well. However, it appears they are looking to dig a well.

5. NEW/OTHER BUSINESS:

a. Water Superintendent Update

Please refer to the sections 4e, 4g, 4h and 5b,

b. Meeting with Cristina Ferrera, Toan Administrator

Gordon took the Town Administrator for an on-site visit of the water plant and other pertinent areas in Blandford.

6. MEETING ADJOURNED

MOTION: Mike Keier made a motion to adjourn.

Brad Curry Seconded.

All in favor

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

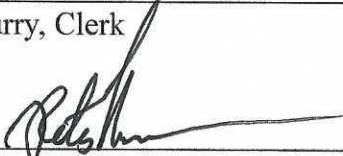
Transcribed by,

Karen Shaw, Administrative Assistant
Water Department for Gordon Avery, Water Superintendent

WATER COMMISSION


Michael Keier, Chairman

Brad Curry, Clerk


Peter Thayer, Member