



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**JOINT FINANCE COMMITTEE,
SELECT BOARD and MODERATOR
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 10, 2024
6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

In attendance: C. Letendre, Chair; J. Allen, Member; T. Cousineau, Member

1. 1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of April 08, 2024

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of April 08, 2024, as written

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

None

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a) Highway-Dave Waldron:

Tighe & Bond: Waldron reported he received quotes for the Town Hall Playground water damage problem as well as the bridge on Russell Stage Road.

Playground: Approximately \$50,000 to prevent water from coming down the hill from Watson Park into the playground.

Bridge: \$72,000 which includes site investigations, preliminary design, permitting and final design.

Waldron will investigate chapter 90 monies for this project. The Select Board requested this be done by winter 2024.

Road Work Grant: The Select Board signed the grant for repairs on Beech Hill, Glasgow, Crooks, Herrick, and Wyman roads.

Springfield Water-Nicole Sanford: Letendre explained she asked Waldron to reach out to Sanford to look for help with the remaining \$32,000 for the bridge repair. Sanford said the budget is set for FY25 however, she would look for this in the FY26 budget.

Bridge on Beech Hill: The width of the bridge would now be 21 feet wide. The current width is 12". The project is moving along on time.

Pathway Side of Town Hall: The Board requested Waldron investigate replacing the path on the side of the building as the current path is rutted and uneven. The Select Board does not believe this is a priority.

Fleet Service: Waldron is asking about having the Blandford Highway fleet oil changes be completed by an outside service at a contract fee of \$5,000 per year. When asked about why this is not done in-house, Waldron

stated they have no way of getting rid of the old oil. Letendre stated she would like Highway to investigate getting rid of the used oil from this process and continue taking care of the fleet oil changes.

-Bucket Truck: Still being worked on. Allen commented that it's been in for 2 months.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a) Eric Kinsherf, CPA Contract Renewal - Tabled

b) Appoint Gordon Avery to the Emergency Management Committee for the term July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Gordon Avery to the Emergency Management Committee for the term July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

c) VIFS Insurance Approval – Accident & Sickness Insurance Proposal for Town of Blandford

Letendre stated this insurance is for volunteer firefighters in Blandford.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the VIFS Insurance premium for \$4,688 increasing the medical coverage from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for an additional \$300 over last fiscal year

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

d) Appoint Jess Carrington as Inspector of Animals – Town Clerk

Jess joined the Board to discuss the position of Inspector of Animals. Carrington noted she does have the appropriate licenses required.

MOITON: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Jess Carrington as Inspector of Animals for the term July 01, 2024, to June 30, 2025.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

e) Jackie Coury as temporary Town Administrator

Cousineau mentioned he would like to appoint Jackie Coury as our temporary TA until we have a chance to advertise and interview. Letendre would like to have this discussion at another time after having a discussion with Coury.

f) Jackie Coury as Building Committee Member

Cousineau brought up the discussion about Jackie Coury, Town resident, being appointed to the Building Committee. Allen believes she cannot be a voting member. Martin is willing to work with Coury getting bills, agendas, and meeting minutes organized. Letendre believes the group needs a leader; a person that keeps track of what has been discussed and agreed upon, to avoid the repetitive conversations which have caused little to no progress forward and the Town is 'burning money.' Letendre is suggesting to the Building Committee that they allow Coury to run the meeting without being a voting member as she is on the Finance Committee in Blandford. Coury agreed she would manage this and would like to continue after a new Town Administrator is appointed.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) Springfield Water: Warfield Cemetery and Gate 20

Letendre told the board Springfield Water is not able to attend this evening. Pete Sparks joined the Board to talk about the gates that are still in place. Cousineau explained the problem is that the current gates are counterproductive to getting to Stanard and Beech Hill Cemeteries and Sparks keeps getting stopped by state police. This gate was agreed upon to be taken down a few years ago and it never happened. To compromise, Springfield Water agreed to remove the trespassing sign, but Sparks is continually being stopped trying to do his job in one of Blandford's cemeteries. Letendre's understanding is that one of these cemeteries are being maintained by Springfield Water. Cousineau and Sparks said, no, it is not being maintained by Springfield Water. Sparks reported Springfield Water showed up a couple of years ago, made a pass with a mower and they haven't been back since. Letendre said Springfield Water believes the only reason access is needed to these cemeteries is for headstone repair only. Letendre stating that this needs to be a renewed conversation with Springfield Water. Sparks is pointing out the problem is that there is a gate going to Beech Hill Cemetery which is a public road. The gate should not be there. Anybody should be able to go to Beech Hill Cemetery. Letendre will forward this to Nicole Sanford, Springfield Water and let the Cemetery Commission know when she receives an answer.

b) Clean Bricks in Bicentennial Park – George Reichert

George Reichert, resident, is generously taking on the project to clean up Bicentennial Park. Reichert believes the weeds need to be taken care of before cleaning the bricks. Reichert knows a person that can identify these plants versus weeds. He will contact this person. Reichert got a price from a person to pressure wash the bricks which is \$325. The problem is there is no outside faucet on the Post Office building. He is working with Westfield Gas & Electric about getting volunteers and funds for this project. Westfield Gas & Electric will donate \$500. Reichert is also working with Hull Forest Products and is interested in opening their land for use for hunting and passive recreation. Reichert likes that Hull, who owns a great deal of property in Blandford, has a vastly different attitude toward recreation use in Blandford than Springfield Sewer & Water has.

c) Paint Post Office – George Reichert

Reichert is also volunteering to investigate the painting of the Post Office. Home Depot will donate supplies and volunteers to work with Blandford residents. More to come.

d) Weston & Sampson & City Point Partners Invoices for Fire/Highway project

Jackie Coury, Finance Chair has been working with the Building Committee trying to help organize their meetings and invoices. Letendre believes City Point Partners as the OPM should be tracking this work and invoices. Coury reported we have been working with City Point since 2021. Coury will contact City Point and pointed out that as an OPM, they should be following Weston & Sampson's progress.

e) Resolution in support of the construction of MA Pike Interchange Exit on I90 in Blandford

Students from Gateway Regional School District sent Blandford a well-written referendum to advocate for a Mass Pike entrance in Blandford. Letendre contacted Mr. Mosher, a teacher at Gateway. He asked if we could hold onto this until the fall. His students brought this to his attention, and they donated their energy to advocate for this exit. Kronholm noted if this is put on as a ballot question for the town, you will have to have a special election. Letendre mentioned the Town will need a special election in the next three months.

f) White Church Roof

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the grant request for a new roof on the White Church on North Street in Blandford

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move into executive session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union personnel not to reconvene

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

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 sessions in preparation for negotiations with union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union personnel.

Meeting adjourned at 7.16 pm

Submitted by Joann Martin
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

J. Allen, Member