



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**JOINT SELECT BOARD
and
WATER DEPARTMENT
MEETING MINUTES
September 09, 2024
6:00 pm**

Meeting held in the Select Board Chamber, Town Hall

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

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Examination of the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 03, 2024

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to table the Executive Session Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2024.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to New Business 5a) Closing Grant for Shared Services

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

George Reichert – Asking to be appointed as Chair of the committee to repair the Post Office building.

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

a) Highway – Rene Senecal

General: Senecal reported being busy cleaning up various problems and working on key issues and bills that have not been paid.

Post Office: Senecal agreed to take care of removing the leaves from Bicentennial Park when the clean-up project is completed.

b) Town Administrator – Cristina Ferrera

Dangerous Dog Hearing – Follow-up: Ferrera reported that Frappier and Thomas were in receipt of their non-compliance to the original Dangerous Dog Hearing order. Chief Dubiel reported that the fence is being constructed. Chief Dubiel and the Town Building Inspector will check in with the dog owners.

Special Town Meeting: Ferrera mentioned the Town is hoping to have a Special Town Meeting in September. More to come.

Power Failures: Elm Electric is looking into our frequent power failure problems. They will send in a quote for a full repair.

4. **ACTION ITEMS**

a. *MIIA Lump Sum Payment – Already signed by the Town Administrator - table.*

b. *Approve Warrant #04 Payroll*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve FY25 Warrant #04 Payroll for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

c. *Approve Warrant #05 Payroll*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to Approve Warrant #05 Payroll
T Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

d. *Approve Warrant #05 Refund*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #05 Refunds
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

e. *Approve Warrant #06 AP for Payment*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #06 Accounts Payable for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

f. *Approve PVPC Invoice #36 Housing Rehabilitation Program*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Invoice #36 Housing Rehabilitation Program
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

a) *Blandford Water Department and Chester Water Department – Closing Grant for Shared Services*

The Town of Chester Water Department joined the Blandford Select Board to discuss the process of Blandford and Chester sharing water operators. The Blandford Water Department does not believe this is working well. The Shared Grant will end September 15, 2024. After that, the two Towns will no longer have a joint venture. Blandford Water believes Chester Water's technology is far behind Blandford's so this will only hold Blandford up. He is suggesting that Chester work on their technology first. Chester will contact PVPC and get the final closing paperwork done.

b) PVPC – Public Hearing Re: CBDG Wrap Up

PVPC joined the Select Board meeting to begin the process of wrapping up the Community Development Grant Program (CBDG). It was reported that 7 homes in Blandford have received rehabilitation. Because of the increase in cost of construction, we could not do the 12 houses originally planned. This program is now complete. There will be a couple more reports coming in. The end date for this grant is September 30, 2024.

c) Resident Complaint – Milkweed Berries in the Playground

A resident complained that there are milkweed berries growing on the side of the playground. This will be removed by the Conservation Commission immediately.

d) Frequent Power Failures – J. Martin/re J. Hoppe

Town Administrator, Ferrera has reached out to Elm Electric and is waiting for their reply.

e) Building Committee Update

Fire Chief Dolby, Town Administrator Ferrera and Select Board Chair Cara Letendre met with the engineering company working on the new Fire Department project. It was determined that at this point in the process the building committee has completed the duties within their authority, and they have gathered enough information for the engineers to move forward with providing us with the specifications and cross-differences chosen by the team. The two locations selected by the team in order of preferences are the current firehouse location along with purchasing the home next door to it, or the Salt Shed location on Chester Road. Our goal is to have the full specification designs completed for both locations along with estimated costs completed in time for the special town meeting in the fall enabling residents to vote on their preferred location for the firehouse. However, the engineers did tell us that producing specifications for two locations is going to cost more money, they do not recommend this, but it was requested given that the residents in Town asked for the option to vote. Town Administrator, Ferrera is working with Town Counsel regarding the process of possibly purchasing the residence next to the current firehouse so we can swiftly start the process of understanding the cost and conditions of a possible sale. We have also given directions to the engineers to determine the added cost of demolition of both buildings and evaluate the environmental factors which may or may not impact costs. Directives have been given to the engineers to design and create specifications for a firehouse that will support our community and equipment for many years to come. The hope is to quickly move forward in order to keep the project within budget and meet our timeline of presenting information options to residents in the fall. In conclusion, we would also like to thank the Building Committee for the time and effort they have put into getting us to this point in the process. We have determined it will not be necessary to create another building committee at this time, however, we want to extend our thanks to the folks who recently submitted letters of interest to participate in a new committee and we will certainly keep those folks in mind in the future. We are in a place where we are just waiting for the specifications and design. Weston & Sampson will be attending the Special Town meeting to review the process with residents, present the information and let the residents vote on location and move forward with this project.

Cousineau asked if we have been in touch with the owners of the property next to the current firehouse. Letendre reported the owners of the property are interested in talking about the possibility. Ferrera will collaborate with them.

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

Absent

J. Allen, Member