



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
October 07, 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 Select Board Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2024

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to TABLE the Select Board Meeting Minutes of June 24, 2024, until the next Select Board Meeting.

T. Cousineau Seconded

All in Favor

2. *AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT

George Reichert – Update on the Post Office painting project.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Interim-Highway Superintendent – R. Senecal

Cobble Mountain Road: Resident, Kevin Green is asking about the repair of Cobble Mountain Road complaining that Crooks and South Street have been done, why not Cobble Mountain. Cousineau explained Crooks and South were paved with grants and the Town does not have the funds to do a full paving of Cobble Mountain. Senecal reported the Highway Department has recently put 32 tons of asphalt on Cobble Mountain Road. Senecal is agreeing that there are a dozen good sized potholes they are planning to take care of. The hot box was broken and is now repaired. Senecal also stated that this road has to be completely redone which would have to be a full-depth reclamation, a 4” base, drainage and 2 ½” top. When Crooks and South Street were done, asphalt was at \$52 a ton. It is now \$130 a ton. The costs have increased exorbitantly and much, much faster than your Chapter 90 monies are coming in. He reported that Highway is working on 3 different projects right now. One of them is to do the section of Cobble Mountain from Birch Hill to the gate of Springfield Water. We are not going to be able to do a full depth at this point. We will have to do what is called a mill and fill. The milling is going to be a problem there because the road is so broken. It will take 4 or 5 years to get the funding for this road but if we do it in this manner, we will get another 10-12 years on that road. The two priority projects are Russell Stage Road (at the bottom) and Old Chester Road. The repair on Old Chester Road was a priority as they needed to make the road passable to protect the water line which put Cobble Mountain off. Old Chester Road has been repaired so the water line is protected. We brought in about \$16,000 worth of materials. We graded it, rolled it, it’s in good shape.

Nye Brook Road Culvert & Guardrail: This work has been completed. Senecal will use Fair Share monies for this project. He expected a total cost of \$20,000, however, it came out at \$15,000.

Highway Crew Kudos: Senecal is thanking the crew for maintaining the shop a lot better.

Winter Accounts are Low: Senecal stated he will have to meet with Finance on his winter GL accounts as not enough was budgeted to get through the winter. The Sander was in for repair in FY24, and the company was asked to take the funds out of the new budget which should not have happened. This has now been paid out of the new budget, which is why we are so short so early in the fiscal year. Senecal will need funds in this account to build the inventory which has been depleted. He believes his plow blade/winter account will be overspent by \$8,000 by the end of the fiscal year.

Gill Engineering: Senecal met with the engineers and the project manager. They sent him the narratives he requested as well as a copy of all the bills. Senecal will be able to take care of this report by November 15 which will make the Town square with required reporting..

Russell Stage Road – Senecal is referring to the lower part just before the Town line where the wall is. Highway is working on two different situations. One solution came out to \$50,000 which we cannot do because we would have to go out to bid. He does believe Palmer/Peckham will be able to put that swale in and do the repair and it would be sufficient enough to last 10 more years. The Town does not own the proper equipment to install a swale.

Line Painting: This will be done on October 14. Every paved road will have some sort of marking depending on the road.

Granite Pieces at the end of Rt. 23: Senecal reported he has not removed this granite because it is not town property. He spoke to the property owner who gave him permission to remove them.

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to move to 5b. New Business Historical Commission –
Linda Barnard
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

2. *Town Administrator – C. Ferrera*

a. *71 Chester Road – Kana*

Mr. Kana met with Cristina Ferrera, TA to discuss his water damage insurance claim. Ferrera is in receipt of the claim and has presented it to the Select Board. MIIA is asking for 3 quotes to repair the damage to their property and the Kanas have not been able to do that. Mr. Kana explained he can get the quotes, but they can't work on it until Mr. Kana gets the okay to have them work on it because it is Town property. Ferrera explained because it's Town property, we are obligated to work through the insurance company and town counsel. Ferrera is requesting that Mr. Kana supply us with the quotes, we can process through the insurance company and get this project moving. Mr. Kana explained that Gordon Avery, Water Department was working on a new water line and asked the company working on the property to use millings for deep filling only and the company did not follow these instructions. They put road millings all the way to the top so nothing can be grown on the tree belt. Ferrera point out that this is Town property and stated she believes this is where the insurance company and attorneys are saying because it's Town property we cannot pay a claim. Mr. Kana pointed out that the millings are actually 17' onto his property which is more than Town property. Ferrera suggested he submit those quotes so we can submit them to our insurance company and attorneys, and we can go from there.

b. *Biermann Services – Repair to Fuel Tank Fail*

The fuel tank at the Highway Department has failed. Ferrera is pointing out that this tank is used by several departments. This bill should be shared by these departments and not just paid out of the Highway budget. Senecal mentioned that he has to call the company back in because the alarms are going off again. The

Select Board has suggested bringing this to the attention of the Finance Committee to acquire more funds for the budget.

c. *Quote from Encore – Springler System*

Ferrera is investigating the bills coming from Encore. She is focusing on many bills for inspections of which she is not aware. She has requested the company do nothing else until she can meet with them since we are \$1,000 in this month for inspections only. After requesting a pause, Ferrera received another quote from the company for \$15,000. Encore informed her this work was scheduled to be done in April 2024. Ferrera spoke with John Hoppe, building maintenance, who explained that this would fix the Fire Suppression system; “this is the fix that we need.” Ferrera is asking for support from the Select Board to be paid out of ARPA funding.

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the expenditure of ARPA funds for the following proposal from Fire Services Group/Encore Fire Protection to repair the fire suppression system at Town Hall in the amount of \$15,115.

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

- d. *MIIA Insurance Increase:*** Ferrera has been working with MIIA on the increase of our MedX insurance policy from MIIA. The increase is 20%. This increase will be split 10% to the town and 10% to the retiree.
- e. *Post Office Plumbing Repair:*** Aaron Poteat, Blandford’s plumbing inspector, took a look at the Post Office building drainage and determined the pitch of the pipe is sagging, which is why it keeps backing up. It’s a two-person job and Poteat is going to reach out to Connor Ogden for a quote.

4. ACTION ITEMS

a) *Approve Warrant #07 Payroll for payment*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to Table Warrant #07 Payroll until the next Select Board Meeting

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

b) *Approve Warrant #08 Payroll for payment*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to Table Warrant #08 Payroll until the next Select Board Meeting

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

c) *Approve Warrant #08 Select Board AP*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #08 Select Board AP for payment

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

d) *Approve Warrant #08 Water Department AP*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #08 Water AP for payment

**T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor**

e) Warrant for State Election – Town Clerk

**MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Warrant for State Election
T. Cousineau Seconded
The Select Board Signed
All in Favor**

5. NEW BUSINESS

a) 71 Chester Road – Kana

See Town Administrator Report above.

b) Historical Commission – Linda Barnard

Historical Inventory: Town Administrator, Cristina Ferrera started the conversation explaining she met with Linda regarding the Historical inventory of the Town Hall. Barnard’s concerns are that the FY25 budget was supposed to include \$5,000 inventory expenses plus what was not spent from the FY24 budget of \$2,500. This did not happen. Since they only spent \$2,500, technically they should have that \$2,500 plus \$5,000 for FY25.

Town Common Committee: Ferrera reached out to PVPC to see what is left to do to get this done. Barnard is interested in reforming the Town Common Committee. This committee would determine priorities in this work with their focus on making the Commons a ‘common area.’ Letendre believe this is something we can reconvene and possibly a small amount in the FY26 budget. Avery reported there is a shallow water line right where they want to turn the Road into North Blandford Road. Senecal added that he was part of this process in the early days. The State got involved and said the specs could be done by the State, however, you also have to have engineering work done. This would cost \$150,000 for the engineering and the State said they would not take on this project. These changes would also mean moving utility lines and poles. At the time, Eversource wanted nothing to do with this as this is not a requirement for them therefore Blandford would have to take on that cost burden. Letendre believes we should focus on the small pieces of this original project like the path, and not so much the huge parts of this project.

Gazebo: Barnard is asking that we take care of repairing the Gazebo in Watson Park as it is not safe. Letendre has asked for some quotes for that repair.

Blackboard from One-Room School House: Barnard reported they are in the process of taking the blackboard out of the One-Room School House on Nye Brook Road. She would like to see it hanging in the Town Hall. Letendre said she would look into framing it.

c) Watson Park – Erosion (Doug Emo)

Dry Patches in Watson Park: Doug Emo, Watson Park Superintendent is not sure why the dry patches are spreading in the Park. He investigated and does not believe it is moles or grubs and maybe it is due to drought, but he would like to have somebody look at this. This will be taken care of in the spring.

Picnic Benches: The picnic tables in the Park are needing repair and/or replacement. This will be discussed in the spring before we spend more time and money on repairing older tables.

d) FYI-New Hire, Poll Person for elections, Erin Scirica

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to appoint Erin Scirica as a Poll Person for elections for the term July 01, 2024, through July 30, 2024

J. Allen Seconded

All in Favor

e) Veteran's Park Fence

Letendre brought up the fence that was installed in Veteran's Park that was not authorized by the Select Board. Jeff Allen asked who authorized this? Letendre said nobody. Allen asked who gave Wojek permission to hire somebody to install this fence. Letendre said nobody. Allen asked why the Blandford residents should pay for it when it was not authorized by the Select Board and was not part of the Town of Blandford budget. Letendre is not requesting it be taken down. Letendre is requesting Mike Wojek be invited to the next Select Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

7. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None

Submitted by Joann Martin

Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

J. Allen, Member