



TOWN OF BLANDFORD
Select Board

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

**SELECT BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
March 10, 2025
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

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 non-union personnel **to reconvene** to the Select Board Agenda
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

ROLL CALL IN at 6:00 pm:
C. Letendre – Yes T. Cousineau – Yes J. Allen – Yes

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to adjourn 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 non-union personnel to reconvene to the regularly scheduled Select Board meeting.
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

ROLL CALL OUT AT 6:25 pm to regularly scheduled Select Board Meeting:
C. Letendre – Yes T. Cousineau – Yes J. Allen – Yes

1. EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2025

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of December 20, 2025, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

b) Examination of the Joint Water Department and Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2025

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Joint Water Department and Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2025
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

c) *Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2025*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of January 13, 2025, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

d) *Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 03, 2025*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 03, 2025, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

e) *Examination of the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2025*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve the Select Board Meeting Minutes of February 10, 2025, as written
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

1. **AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION / PUBLIC COMMENT***

None

2. **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

a) *Highway Department – Interim-Superintendent Rene Senecal/Highway Superintendent Ray Hultay*

-Huntington Road: Ray Hultay joined the Board to Discuss the work on Huntington Road. The road washed out completely. Highway was able to get the materials needed to repair and took care of it.

b) *Conservation – Dick Gates*

a. ***Battery Storage Systems***

Dick Gates joined the Board to talk about the installation of High-Voltage Battery Storage Stations in Blandford on N. Blandford Road. These containers are similar to a shipping container and are lithium-ion batteries and there will be about 100 of them. The idea is to store energy for use during peak times. The State will be submitting what is called a notice of intent, which is a higher-level permit application. Gates is ‘pretty sure’ this is going to happen. One of the developers is a National firm that has installed these stations all over the country. They will be coming to the Conservation Commission for approval. The State has passed a bill for large scale green energy projects. What that means is they are hopefully passing these regulations by 2026. The result being that they will remove approvals for these facilities from towns and cities. The permit will be received from the State. The criteria are driven by the size and the rating of the facility. Gates notes that quite a bit of changes are coming out of Boston, however this is happening all over the country. Gates assured the Conservation Commission will stay on top of this as he believes these vendors ‘will not behave.’ Gates reminded the Board that the Town bylaws were amended last year to allow battery storage units.

b. **Conservation Agent**

Nick Pietroniro left in December. Gates stated he advertised for Conservation agent and has received no interest. He will look to Pioneer Valley Planning but believes we do not pay enough.

c) *Town Administrator – Cristina Ferrera*

-City Point Partners: Ferrera met with City Point and put them on a ‘soft pause.’ She reported they are still our project managers, just taking a break. Ferrera reported she is looking for a bare bones estimate to have the fire

facility at the Town Hall. Once we hear from Weston & Sampson, we will have to have a contract amendment with Weston & Sampson and then we will go back to City Point in an effort to keep costs low but investigate every site possible. Hopson commented on the idea of having the Fire Station in the Town Hall and pointed out that we will need to get the numbers for this to share with the residents. The cost of this project would be \$10,000. The Board believes this is a good idea. The downside to having the Fire Station in this building is that the Town Hall will now have to be up to code. City Point noted that this project could be as much or more than the original project. Letendre pointed out that it may be this will cost as much or more but this cost includes all the upgrades the aging Town Hall needs, like a new roof, updated electrical work, upgraded heating system, etc., so it may have a big price tag, but it will take care of a lot of problems at once. No matter what, the Board will need to go back to Town meeting for approval. Letendre noted that there are many people in Town that are adamant about having the Fire Station in the middle of Town, so we have no choice but to move forward with looking into any location and the additional financing needed to investigate this possibility.

-MA DOT Bridge Inspection Reports: Ferrera reported the reports were for Town bridges in Town. Both came back as good or satisfactory. Ferrera is holding the reports if anybody wants to see them.

-Novus IT Upgrades Needed: Novus is recommending a new Network for the Town. A new network for the Town would be approximately \$20,000. After speaking with Novus, Ferrera learned Novus can ‘host’ the server at a cost of \$3,600 per year. Servers are typically good for about 8 years. If we decided to have Novus host the server, we will break even in about 6 years, however, we would not have to pay for licenses, on-site equipment maintenance and even save on our electric bill if we allow Novus to host. The Select Board believes this is the way to manage this.

-Water Department Vadar Training: The Water Department contacted Cristina to inquire about getting Vadar training. Ferrera contacted Vadar and found the training is \$790.00 and they have two training sessions remaining. Other departments also need training; Select Board Admin, Board of Health, Tax Collector, Town Clerk.

-OSD (Operational Services Division) Training: Ferrera reported she attended Buyers Training with FRCOG for purchasing off of Commbuys or post bids, etc. This training was very helpful. She will have them come out to do a more in-depth training here for whatever department is purchasing for the Town.

3. **ACTION ITEMS**

a) *Approve Warrant #19 Town of Blandford Accounts Payable for payment*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to approve Warrant #19 Town of Blandford Accounts Payable for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

b) *Approve Warrant #19 Town of Blandford Payroll for payment-tabled*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to **TABLE** Warrant #19 Town of Blandford Payroll for payment
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

c) *Approval for Town Accountant to Pay Previous Fiscal Year bills from the Water Department*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to direct the Town of Blandford Town Accountant to pay for previous fiscal year bills from the Blandford Water Department
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

d) *Approval for Town Treasurer to remove interest and penalties from Fiscal Year bills from Water Department*

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to direct the Town of Blandford Treasurer/Collector to remove interest and penalties from Town of Blandford Water Department bills
J. Allen Seconded
All in Favor

4. NEW BUSINESS

a) All Departmental Expenditure Report - table

b) Climate Leadership Focus Group – D. Lundgren, C. Benson, P. Dirschka

Deb Lundgren joined the Board to let them know that they have established a committee called Climate Leadership Focus Group. This group would be Deb Lundgren – Beech Hill Road; Paul Dirschka – Beulah Land Road and Chuck Benson – Haight Road. The group is asking to be appointed. Ferrera reported the Town will need a bylaw which will outline the intent and objective which will be done at the annual town meeting which will be June 2, 2025.

5. EXECUTIVE SESSION

a) Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government’s bargaining or litigation position – Treasurer

MOTION: C. Letendre made a motion to enter into Executive Session in accordance with G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(2) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the government’s bargaining or litigation position not to reconvene
T. Cousineau Seconded
All in Favor

ROLL CALL OUT: C. Letendre – Yes T. Cousineau – Yes J. Allen - Yes

Meeting Adjourned at 7:10 pm

Submitted by Joann Martin
Administrative Assistant to the Select Board

Cara Letendre, Chair

T. Cousineau, Member

J. Allen, Member