

**Town of Bernardston
Selectboard Meeting Minutes**



Board Members

Brian J. Keir

Stanley D. Garland, Chairman

Kenneth R. Bordewieck

Minutes for the meeting of October 18, 2023

Meeting held at Bernardston Town Hall
38 Church St, Bernardston, MA 01337

Selectboard Members Present:

Stan Garland
Ken Bordewieck
Brian Keir

Others Present:

per sign-in sheet

Stan called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Warrants

Ken motioned to approve the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$61,838.16.
Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Ken motioned to approve the Vendor Warrant in the amount of \$64,339.22.
Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Minutes

Ken motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on October 4
2023. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Ken motioned to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting on October 12,
2023. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Calendar and Announcements

Stan read the calendar and announcements as presented on the attached
agenda.

(continued on next page)

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2023

(continued)

Appointment

Leyden Selectboard:

Katherine DiMatteo, Leyden Selectboard, called the Leyden Selectboard to order at 6:04 pm. Leyden Selectboard Chair, Glenn Caffery, Erica Jensen and Katherine DiMatteo were present.

The Leyden Selectboard provided an update on the MVP grant and the procurement process and issues. This is a partnership with Leyden and Bernardston but Leyden is the lead on the grant project and no action is required by Bernardston.

The grant is a reconcilable grant, therefore, Leyden has to pay for the work upfront. There is a risk involved and concern that if they procure or report incorrectly to MVP, MVP may not be reimbursed. They stated that equipment will be purchased through the grant and that Leyden: iPads, drones, moisture soil meters will be purchased through the grant will become municipal property on Leyden's property books.

Project Managers' will send reports with updates and monies spent to both Town's Selectboards. Next steps are sending out bids, getting quotes and reconciling the Leyden Budget, etc., to get the project moving. A recommendation was made to check with the state if they could get an extension beyond July 2024. Leyden Selectboard is waiting on the revised budget, signed contracts and quotes from the Project Managers.

Katherine DiMatteo, Leyden Selectboard, motioned to close the Leyden Selectboard, seconded by Erica Jensen at 6:24 pm.

Peter Shedd / Lloyd Grover - Virtual testimony was given for House Bill H4064: An act authorizing the town of Bernardston to continue the employment of Fire Chief Peter Shedd. The plan is to appoint Lloyd Grover as the Acting Fire Chief until the Bernardston Fire Chief situation is resolved.

House Bill H4064 has not been approved. The Town is concerned with the liability on the town and Pete Shedd and has to decide how to backfill the Fire Department with a Fire Chief until there is resolution.

The plan is to appoint Peter Shedd as a Volunteer Fire Chief with approval from Town Counsel and in the meantime appoint someone within the Fire Department as a Volunteer Acting Fire Chief. Lloyd Grover confirmed that he is not interested in the appointment of Volunteer Acting Fire Chief and to get someone else within the Fire Department. Tim Snow was then considered as the Volunteer Acting Fire Chief but was not willing to accept an appointment at this time until the Fire Department had an internal discussion. Last option is to go outside the Town of Bernardston. Ultimately, Pete Shedd is going to have to step down until the situation is resolved.

A motion was made by Ken to grant Pete Shedd a temporary leave of absence from his role as Chief of Bernardston Fire Department, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

(continued on next page)

Selectboard Meeting Minutes

October 18, 2023

(continued)

New Business

BES Usage Requests: The Bernardston Recreation Fall & Winter Sports Program and the Suburban Basketball practices (Nov 2023 thru Mar 2024).

Ken motioned to approve the BES usage requests, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Cushman Library Board of Trustees resignation and appointment:

Cathryn Thomas resigned effective September 1, 2023. A motion was made by Ken to accept the resignation of Cathryn Thomas, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

The Board of Trustees has requested that Elizabeth DeMarco be appointed to fill the vacancy until the time of the next town election. A motion was made by Ken to appoint Elizabeth DeMarco, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Employee Retirement: Lou Bordeaux, Town Coordinator, has submitted his letter of retirement. Lou's last day will be November 11, 2023. Karen Kelly was appointed as the interim Town Coordinator on October 12, 2023, until we recruit and hire a new Town Coordinator.

A motion was made by Ken to accept the letter of retirement from Lou Bordeaux, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Job Analysis Project: Employee turnover, coupled with other concerns raised separately about the Town's salary structure in comparison to other municipalities that operate with similar demographics (population, cost of living, etc.), has prompted the Selectboard to consider conducting a job analysis of each position in the town.

A job analysis is an assessment of a position that looks at the specific tasks, responsibilities, skills, objectives, and work environment needed to perform a certain role and how that role affects other parts of the town. One of the key components of a job analysis is the development of an effective job description, underlying what is accurately required in a specific role.

We recognize that failing to conduct an in-depth analysis may lead to further employee turnover.

The Selectboard is convinced that the outcome of an effective job analysis will ensure that employees understand the expectations of their positions, are appropriately trained, determine fair compensation, improve current practices, and ultimately determine how the role fits within the budget.

Ken made a motion to appoint Karen Kelly to manage the Job Analysis Project, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

(continued on next page)

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2023
(continued)

Senior Center HVAC: The Highway Superintendent, Brian Miner proposed a way forward on the HVAC situation at the Senior Center. The Senior Center director, Jen Reynolds has applied for a modernization grant that would allow the installation of mini-splits at the Senior Center.

Ken motioned to approve the installation of mini-splits heat pumps at the Senior Center totalling \$35,840.00; there is a rebate of \$18,140.00 for the units. Funding out of ARPA to be committed. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Street Flag Request. Jody Coleman proposed replacing the bracket sets and flags on the street poles in Bernardston. Out of 41 flags, three-quarters of the flags are degraded. The wooden poles are degrading due to weather. Recommending that we purchase brackets, metal poles with loops, flags, for every other telephone pole. Estimated cost would be between \$50.00 to \$60.00 per pole. Jody also requested a flag flying schedule.

Ken motioned to approve the purchase of up to 41 bracket sets and street flags. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Old Business

Council of Aging Appointments: Jen Reynolds would like to request the reappointment of 2 Council on Aging members and make 1 new appointment. Jen is requesting that we reappoint Chris Beaulieu and Nancy Pride to the COA. And, she is requesting that we appoint Marcella Hebert to the COA.

Ken made a motion to reappoint Chris Beaulieu and Nancy Pride to the COA and appoint Marcella Hebert to the COA. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Employee Resignation: The Assistant Town Clerk gave written notice today that she wished to terminate her position, effective on or about June 30, 2024. Motion to approve the employee resignation of the Assistant.

A motion was made by Ken to accept the resignation from the Assistant Town Clerk. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Other business unknown at time of posting:

Northfield EMS Regionalization and Efficiency Grant: Last night the Northfield Selectboard voted to establish a Regional EMS Task Force to begin the work that will hopefully end up in a grant application (in January 2024) for an implementation grant for an Inter Municipal Agreement for EMS services with Northfield, Bernardston, Gill and a portion of Erving. The Northfield Selectboard is asking for each town to appoint two representatives to send to this committee to work on this issue.

(continued on next page)

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
October 18, 2023
(continued)

A motion was made by Brian to appoint Peter Shedd and Ken Bordewieck as representatives to the Regional EMS Task Force. Stan seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0

Bylaw discussion: The Town of Bernardston has an existing Unregistered Motor Vehicle Bylaw that is seldom enforced. The Bylaw does not outline the administrative procedures on how violations and penalties are identified, processed and enforced.

Ken made a motion that the Selectboard will send a letter or have a police officer serve a letter of enforcement to the property owner who is in violation of the bylaw. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved 3-0.

Town Coordinator Report: Ameresco and the landfill solar project, Dan Ingold responded with an update. The Bernardston project was bumped up to a level 3 study due to proximity to other projects utilizing the same substation. The project is working through the system but not finalized. Dan will continue to provide updates as necessary.

The Community One Stop Grant awards were released and the application for playground equipment at BES was not approved. Waiting on a written explanation as to why we didn't get the grant.

The HCA payments arrived from Heirloom Collective: \$8750.00 for cultivation and \$28,125.00 for retail.

Dropbox will be installed at Town Hall next week.

Jeff Gale will be installing the plywood at the highway garage in the next few weeks.

The Police Department received grant money (\$15,000.00) for body cams.

With no further business to be discussed, Ken motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:54pm. Brian seconded and the meeting adjourned.

Attest: Karen Kelly, Interim Town Coordinator


_____, Chairman
Stanley D. Garland



Kenneth R. Bordewieck



Brian J. Keir

