

**Town of Bernardston
Selectboard Meeting Minutes**



Board Members

Brian J. Keir

Stanley D. Garland, Chairman

Kenneth R. Bordewieck

Minutes for the meeting of February 7, 2024

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

Selectboard Members Present:

Stan Garland

Ken Bordewieck

~~Brian Keir~~ *KJK*

Others Present:

See sign-in roster

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

Warrants

Stan motioned to approve the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$65,427.83. (Increase due to payout of Employee Retirement Settlement Cost - Karen Stinchfield of \$5620.74). Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Stan motioned to approve the Vendor Warrant in the amount of \$362,648.77. (Increase due to down payment on Raymond property). Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Minutes

Stan motioned to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting on January 23, 2024. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Stan motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on January 24, 2024. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Stan motioned to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting on January 31, 2024. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

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Calendar and Announcements

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

Citizen Concerns: None

Appointments: None

New Business:

-Ginny Rockwood: Ginny Rockwood is a resident of Leyden who is an active participant with the Bernardston Senior Center. Ginny is a group leader in art classes at the Bernardston and Northfield Senior Centers. Ginny made a proposal for a Gravestone and History Tour Fundraiser for the Senior Center at the old cemetery in Bernardston. The Gravestone and History Tour Fundraiser will share Bernardston's history and create awareness about the old gravestones.

Ken made a motion to approve the Gravestone and History Tour Fundraiser on Saturday, October 19th, 2024 (rain date Sunday, October 20th, 2024). Brian seconded the motion and it was approved.

-Brandon Grover: President of the Cushman Library Board of Trustees:

Brandon Grover and Ann Marie Mallon (Library Trustee) provided an update on Cushman Library. The Cushman Library has been closed since January 9th, 2024 and remains closed as of this date. Peggy Shippa, Library Assistant, has been appointed by the Cushman Library Board of Trustees as the Interim Library Director. The Library Board of Trustees have been working diligently, cleaning the library and preparing for the reinspection. Reinspection is scheduled at 5:00 pm on Thursday, February 15th, 2024. Brandon has hired a professional cleaning team that will take care of the floors and carpets. The goal is to pass reinspection and reopen on Saturday, February 17th, 2024. Brandon also provided a plan on bi-weekly custodial services moving forward. Stan mentioned having the Highway Department clean out the bank in the back of the library. The library has a sensory system that monitors the temperature of the library and Brandon will get a quote to extend the service into the vault. A quote will be forwarded to the Town Administrator. Donations of books will be the new Library Director's task to figure out. A major topic of the Library Board of Trustees will be to discuss the vacant Library Director position which will be advertised and recruited soon. The library FY25 budget will remain generally the same as the FY24 budget. Some capital expenses, like the rug in the basement and the children's room may need to be replaced.

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-Town Clerk: The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) Security Assessment for First Entry (SAFE) is designed to rapidly evaluate a facility's current security posture and identify options to mitigate relevant threats. The assessments will make recommendations on improvements. It is a free assessment from the State Government.

-Green Committee: Green Communities Grants provide funding opportunities to reduce municipal energy use and costs by way of clean energy projects in municipal buildings, facilities and schools. The Green Committee would like to try and get reimbursed for the mini split purchased for the Highway Department. This is important so we can reapply for the next Green Communities Grant. Energy assessments are ongoing throughout the Town buildings this week. The energy assessment is free.

-Tax Classification Hearing - Board of Assessors: The Town of Bernardston received final certification on February 2d, 2024 from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue that the Commissioner of Revenue has determined that the locally assessed values of real and personal property in the Town of Bernardston represent full and fair cash valuation as of January 1, 2023 for FY2024 and that these proposed property assessments satisfy the minimum requirements for certification. Tonight we are holding a public hearing on the issue of selecting a residential factor, which will determine the percentages of the tax burden to be borne by each class of property for FY 2024. Russ and Melissa were this evening to discuss the factors and options.

Ken made a motion to approve the proposed single rate tax of \$16.54 for the Town of Bernardston. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

-Fire Department Key Access Boxes: The Fire Chief, Peter Shedd, recommends the purchase of Knox Key Access Boxes for certain Town buildings. Key access boxes help responders enter the buildings more quickly, reduces forced entry property damage, makes re-securing property easier and faster and it is a one-time purchase that requires no monthly recurring monitoring fee. The Fire Chief recommends the aluminum Door Hanger mount type, model #1667 at \$407.00 per box. However, the Selectboard directed the Town Administrator to schedule a walk through of all the Town buildings with John Lively, Locksmith, and get a quote on how much it will cost to rekey all the buildings and produce a master key for each building.

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-Onboarding of New Employees: New employees to Town positions and persons who are elected or appointed to boards, commissions and committees. Onboarding is one of the first interactions a new hire has with the Town and their peers. When done correctly, the onboarding process can be a positive and streamlined experience for everyone involved. The onboarding process quickly determines how new employees will perceive the Town both in the short term and long term. As a friendly reminder, new employees will not start employment with the Town until the new hire paperwork packet has been completed with all supported documentation and turned-in to the Treasurer. New employees to Town positions and persons who are elected or appointed to boards, commissions and committees will be appointed in writing and subject to a vote by the Selectboard and must take and subscribe to oath of office with the Town Clerk under the Massachusetts Constitution, Amending Article 6, and Chapter 30, Section 12 of the MGL.

Ken made a motion to approve the onboarding process as written above. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

-Appointment Historical Commission: Stan made a motion to appoint Mark Gilmore to the Bernardston Historical Commission, effective February 7th, 2024. Mark's appointment will fill the vacancy left by the passing of Louella Atherton whose term would have ended on March 31, 2024. Ken seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

-Cushman Library Director Retirement: Karen Stinchfield submitted a letter to the Library Board of Trustees announcing her retirement, effective January 26th, 2024. We appreciate Karen's contributions to the Cushman Library and we wish her all the best in her next endeavor!

Ken made a motion to accept the retirement letter of Library Director Karen Stinchfield, Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

-Appointment Cushman Library Director (Interim) - Peggy Shippa: Stan made a motion to appoint Peggy Shippa, Cushman Library Assistant, as the Interim Library Director, effective February 7th, 2024. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

-Appointment Senior Center Maintenance Worker - Shannon Wissman-Hoar: Stan made a motion to approve the hiring of Shannon Wissman-Hoar as the Interim Custodian for the Bernardston Senior Center, effective February 7, 2024 with an hourly wage of \$15.77. Shannon is the temporary employee to backfill Chuck Adams. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

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Old Business:

-Municipal Website Design: In response to the discontinuation letter the Town received in December 2023 from our current website provider coupled with less than positive feedback from residents and Town employees about the existing website, the Selectboard Office began a search for other 'resident-first' website design companies. An email was sent out on December 27, 2023 to all Department Heads, Town offices, and pertinent commission, board and committee Chairs inviting them to attend the demonstrations. Three website vendor demonstrations were scheduled and completed over the last 6 weeks with the following website design vendors: Munibit, Town Web and CivicPlus. The Town was looking for a website design vendor that focused on local government technology solutions to help the Town streamline our operations and improve civic engagement. The goal is to have a website that is accessible to all residents. Residents will be able to pay bills, submit forms and applications online. Town residents will have access to calendars and information for all of the Town's municipal communication and event management needs to include but not limited to, agenda and meeting minute management and recreation activity management. CivicPlus was the last of the three website design vendors scheduled. With more than 25 years of local government experience, CivicPlus provides public sector technology that automates processes, digitizes services, and enhances civic experiences. Their wide range of government software solutions are designed to be flexible, scalable, and customizable, ensuring a frictionless experience for residents. The group that participated in attending all three demonstrations would like the Selectboard to approve the CivicPlus quote for the Premium Design. The Premium Design includes:

1. A one-time fee for Integratable Meetings Management Migration & Configuration: \$850.00
2. Hosting & Support Annual Fee: \$3795.00
3. 20% discount off the total for agenda and meeting management AND codification.
4. Total out of ARPA funds: \$3716.00

The Selectboard decided to table the vote on the website design company until February 21st, 2024 so that they can take the time and review other CivicPlus websites.

Town Administrator Report: As read by the Town Administrator

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Other Business Unknown at time of posting

- BES Dishwasher Replacement: CFO Jordan Burns is asking for the Town of Bernardston to purchase a new dishwasher for BES. This is a capital expense that the district will order and the Town of Bernardston can:

1. Pay for the dishwasher directly to the vendor (B&G Restaurant Equipment and Supplies). B&G cost is \$7,354.99;
2. Have the cost of the dishwasher deducted from the Bernardston E&D refund;
3. or, another method that the Town prefers.

Ken made a motion to purchase the new dishwasher from B&G Restaurant Equipment and Supplies for \$7354.99 and the Town will pay the vendor directly out of the BES capital account. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

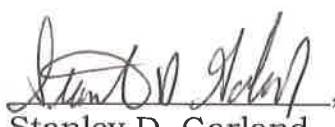

- New Road Plate for Highway Department: Due to the changes in rules with OSHA now ruling municipalities in Massachusetts we are in need of a trench plate while doing culvert replacement and digging over three feet deep along the roads. The Highway Department received a quote from United Rentals for \$6969.29.

Ken made a motion to approve the purchase of a new road plate from United Rentals for \$6969.29. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

Adjourn

Ken made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

Attested by: Karen Kelly, Town Administrator

 Stanley D. Garland, Chairman
 Kenneth R. Bordewieck
 Brian J. Keir

Town of Bernardston
Selectboard Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, February 7, 2024, 6:00PM



Bernardston Town Hall, 38 Church Street, Bernardston MA

Board Members

Brian J. Keir

Stanley D. Garland, Chairman

Kenneth R. Bordewieck

Call to Order – 6:00pm

Warrants

- Payroll and Vendor; weeks ending January 20, 2024

Meeting Minutes: Special Meeting of January 23, 2024; Regular Meeting of January 24, 2024; Special Meeting of January 31, 2024.

Calendar & Announcements

- The Bernardston Planning Board will conduct a public hearing at 6:00 pm on Monday, February 12, 2024, in the Town Hall meeting room. The purpose of the hearing is to solicit public comment regarding a proposed citizen petition amendment to the Bernardston Zoning Bylaw to change the definition of “Restaurant” in Article VI, Definitions. A copy of the proposed amendment and petition can be obtained at the Town Hall.
- A Joint Meeting with the Finance Committee and the Selectboard is scheduled for Monday, February 12th at 6:30pm. The purpose of this meeting is the FY25 Budget Review with selected departments, boards, committees and commissions.
- The Senior Center is offering “Tax Help with Vita”. Volunteers will prepare your tax return. Tax preparation appointments are available February through April. You can make an appointment by calling (413) 376-1136.

Citizens Concerns

Appointments

- Ginny Rockwood - Discussion on a project concerning the members of the Senior Center and the Bernardston community
- Brandon Grover - President, Library Board of Trustees - Library Update
- Town Clerk - SAFE Cybersecurity Assessment for town elections
- Green Committee - Green Communities Grant

New Business

- Building walk-thru and Fire Department Key Access Boxes
- Onboarding New Employees
- Appointment of Mark Gilmore - Historical Commission

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PROPOSAL for a GRAVESTONE TOUR

Why? To share Bernardston history, to have a fundraiser for the Senior Center, to create awareness about the old gravestones, and, of course, to have fun.

- The event would take place at the Old Cemetery.
- Saturday, October 19th or rain date Sunday, October 20. This is the weekend closest to the full moon, Oct.17. The almost full moon should provide some good light.
- It would be sponsored by the Bernardston Senior Center and serve as a fundraiser, \$15 per person, \$10 for Bernardston seniors.
- There would be three tours, 6:00, 7:00, and 8:00 PM. Each tour would consist of 10-12 people. There could be a fourth tour by adding a 9:00 show.
- Each tour would be led by the "facilitator" (me) along a path that contains 12-15 gravestones that deserve discussion. Stones would be staffed by costumed volunteers who would share information about each former resident residing beneath the soil as each tour group gathered around. As each group is led along the path, I would share information about historic gravestones, local gravestone cutters and their styles, the types of stones typically used and their characteristics, etc.
- Solar outdoor lights would be inserted into the ground to line the path.
- Participants bring their own flashlights (BYOF) and wear sturdy shoes. The graveyard grounds are pretty flat, thank goodness.
- One Porta-Potty will be provided.
- Parking: at the Senior Center (home base) and then each group as a whole would be vanned or bused to the graveyard while being regaled with ghost stories by a volunteer. At the senior center there would be sign-in, payment, snacks, water, and bathrooms. Perhaps T-shirts could be made and sold. Other?
- Call-in registration, payment before boarding van/bus.
- Reach out to the Historical Society to see if they want to help in some capacity.
- Rigorous advertising in the newspaper, radio, newsletter, etc. And posters, too.
- A police presence?
- I have helped plan and run two successful gravestone tours in Leyden.

We need your permission first, and then we need to recruit volunteers to make this happen.

Ginny Rockwood

Jimon Keets Rd., Leyden

413-774-2694

ginnyrockwood@gmail.com (preferred)

Advertise in North County Week.

Historical Society

Bus for transport.

**C in to*

Register.

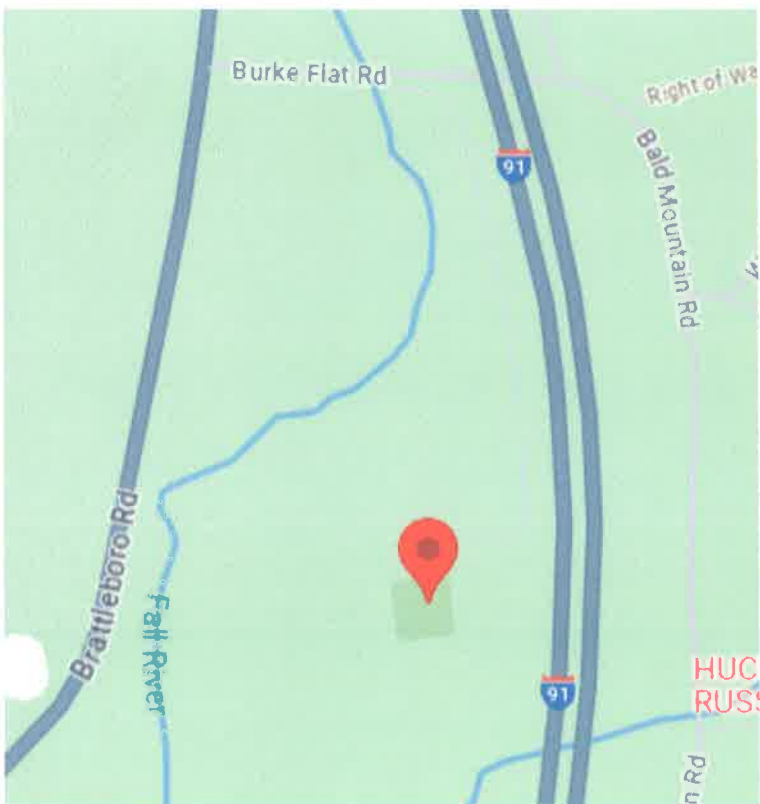
Portable porta-potto.

School sell

stunt.

T-shirt.

Old Cemetery Tour



Who: The Bernardston Senior Center & Ginny Rockwood

What: BSC & Ginny Rockwood would like to host a "Old Cemetery Tour & Oral History". We would like to make this a fund raiser to benefit BSC. There will be characters playing the role of ancestors and Ginny will give guided tours. In the tour you will learn about stone makers and quarries in the area, types of stone and the ancestors story.

When: October 2024, We would have 3 tours on a Saturday in October when there is a full moon for light. This event would be weather dependent.

Where: The Old Cemetery, Meadow Road Bernardston.

Why: To fundraise for the Senior Center, encourage community participation and to learn the history of Bernardston.

Costs: We will propose a \$10 per person for admission.

