

**Town of Bernardston
Selectboard Meeting Minutes**



Board Members

Brian J. Keir

Stanley D. Garland, Chairman

Kenneth R. Bordewieck

Minutes for the meeting of May 1, 2024

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

Selectboard Members Present:

Stan Garland
Ken Bordewieck
Brian Keir

Others Present:

See sign-in roster

Stan called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Warrants

Stan motioned to approve the Payroll Warrant in the amount of \$51,371.44. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0. Stan motioned to approve the Vendor Warrant in the amount of \$44,340.41. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Minutes

Stan motioned to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting on April 17, 2024 and the Special Meeting on April 24, 2024. Brian seconded and the motion was approved 3-0.

Calendar and Announcements

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

Citizen Concerns: None

Appointments:

Brian McHugh, Community Development, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority: Brian McHugh presented a budget amendment request for the Community Block Grant. The budget amendment is to increase the grant award by adding an additional \$27,165.97 in program income to activity 4C housing rehabilitation.

(continued on next page)

Selectboard Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2024
(continued)

New Business

-Appointment Order for Ingrid Skiff, Council on Aging: Ingrid Skiff has been appointed as an regular member on the Council on Aging Board for the Town of Bernardston, effective May 1, 2024.

Ken made a motion to approve the appointment of Ingrid Skiff to the Council on Aging Board, effective May 1, 2024. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

Old Business:

-Advantech: Understanding that the final decision for the ongoing IT support costs was pending the Annual Town Meeting vote, AdvanTech has been on standby to move forward as soon as the results are confirmed. Upon receiving a favorable vote, the Selectboard needs to decide if we are going to go with a Cloud Hosting Service or are we going to go with a physical server, converting to a Cloud Hosting Service in 5 to 7 years when the physical server will need to be replaced. The next step for AdvanTech will be to work on a project timeline, schedule the electrician and order the hardware or coordinate.

Ken made a motion to approve the onsite physical server. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 3-0.

Town Administrator Report: as read by the Town Administrator

Other Business Unknown at time of posting

-Town Clerk: The Town Clerk initiated a discussion about scheduling the Special Town Election for the 2.5 Debt Exclusion. The Special Election will be held on Tuesday, June 25, 2024 at Town Hall. The Public Hearing to determine if the Town will opt out of vote-by-mail and the Selectboard vote to approve the language for the Proposition 2 ½ ballot question will be held on May 8, 2024.


-FRCOG Representative: Stan nominated Ken Bordeweick as the FRCOG for the Town of Bernardston. Brian seconded the motion and it was approved, 2-0. Ken abstained.

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

_____, Chairman
Stanley D. Garland


Kenneth R. Bordeweick


Brian J. Keir



BERNARDSTON SELECTBOARD - MEETING SIGN-IN SHEET

Meeting Date: 5/1/2024

Meeting Time: 6:00 AM/PM

Name

Address

Phone/Email

LOU BORDEN

144 BRATTLEBORO RD

Brian McHugh

Fenwick

Christina Stocum-Wyck

Town Clerk

Jan Whitaker

Fenwick

Kim Garland

Smelugh@ferkta.org

Town of Bernardston
Selectboard Meeting Agenda
Wednesday, May 1, 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 April 27, 2024

Meeting Minutes: Regular Meeting April 17, 2024; Special Meeting April 24, 2024

Calendar & Announcements

-Board of Health Meeting, Thursday, May 2, Town Hall @3:30pm

-Planning Board Meeting, Thursday, May 2, Town Hall @6:00pm

-Annual Town Election, Monday, May 6, Town Hall, from 11:00am to 7:00pm

-Spring Bulky Waste Day on May 11th at the Erving Senior Center, 1 Care Dr. (off Rt 63) (instead of Northfield Hwy) Mohawk Trail Regional High School, 26 Ashfield Rd, Shelburne Falls (Rt. 112 S.) Whately Transfer Station, 73 Christian Lane (off Rt. 5/10). Details are posted on the Town website at townofbernardston.org

-Historical Commission Meeting, May 14, Senior Center @5:30pm

-Franklin First Federal Credit Union will be presenting a FREE Lunch & Learn event on Elder Financial Exploitation and Scams on Friday, May 24th @11:00am. Please RSVP by May 17th to the Bernardston Senior Center at 648-5413.

-1st Annual 5K Hop (5K Race & Walk), Saturday, June 8th @9:00am, Pratt Field. Registration details are available on the Town website at townofbernardston.org.

Citizens Concerns

Appointments

-Brian McHugh, Community Development, Franklin County Regional Housing and Redevelopment Authority, Budget Amendment request for the Community Development Block Grant

New Business

-Appointment Order for Ingrid Skiff, Council on Aging

Old Business

-Advantech, final decision Cloud hosting service versus physical server

Town Administrator Report

Other Business Unknown at time of posting

(Continued on next page)

Adjourn

This meeting was posted on Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 12:20pm

Subject **CDBG Budget Revision to Add Program Income**
From Sharon Pleasant <spleasant@fcrhra.org>
Bernardston Selectboard <bos@townofbernardston.org>
Date 2024-04-22 16:24



Good afternoon,

HRA would like to be placed on the next available selectboard agenda to request a Budget Amendment to the 2022/2023 Bernardston Community Development Block Grant # 00952 in order to add \$27,165.97 in Program Income Funds to the 4C Housing Rehabilitation Activity of the grant.

Brian McHugh, Community Development Director, will present the amendment at the meeting.

Please let me know when HRA might be able to be on the agenda.

Thank you,
Sharon Pleasant

Sharon L. Pleasant (she/her)
Community Development Program Manager
Franklin County Regional Housing
and Redevelopment Authority
241 Millers Falls Road, Turners Falls, MA 01376
413.863.9781 x 156
Direct Line 413.223.5215
413-863-9289 Fax



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Subject **IMPORTANT: Cloud Option with Advantech - Proposal**
From Karen Kelly <bos@townofbernardston.org>
Stan Garland <uped@comcast.net>, Ken Bordewieck
<ken.bordewieck@comcast.net>, Brian Keir <brkeir@msn.com>
Cc COA Director <coa@townofbernardston.org>
Date 2024-04-17 12:54



- Cloud_Infrastructure_Quote.pdf(~253 KB)

Gentlemen,

Since our initial conversation at the ARPA meeting, I met with the Town Administrator from Erving yesterday, who recently transitioned to the Cloud.

The reason the Town elected to transition to the Cloud was to avoid the cost of replacing their physical server. Erving transitioned to a MicroSoft 365 Cloud environment and they used a vendor out of Orange to help support the configuration of the platform and the training with their staff to implement. (This would be Advantech for us) They have been set up for about 3 years and they continue to expand their platform and infrastructure. The savings come into play from not having to replace the physical server and equipment every 5 to 7 years. Otherwise their IT costs for support and services remain the same with an increase in platform licenses for the Cloud hosting service.

Some benefits of a Cloud Provider include:

- Quick to set up and scale. No physical equipment is needed. You will also pay for only what you need.
- Less Capital Required. Even though the upfront cost of a physical server is covered with the grant, physical servers have a life expectancy of 5 to 7 years and will have to be replaced.
- Easy to back-up and restore.
- Improved recovery time
- Enhanced security and compliance

Drawbacks of a Cloud Provider include:

- Latency issues: When you move everything to the cloud, your access is only as good as your connection to the internet. Both user experience and the service itself are limited by the speed of the internet connection.
- Security Risks: Some third party cloud services may be able to access our data. That is why it will be important to choose only the most trustworthy providers that operate under strict regulations. Even tech giants like Amazon and MicroSoft have fallen victim to attacks and service outages.
- High costs of data recovery: In the unfortunate event that we need full data recovery, the process is often expensive and time-consuming.
- Internet disruptions
- Potential data caps: you can upgrade your cloud data storage limit anytime you like, however, you may not always be able to afford the costs of extra storage.

Some benefits of a Physical Server include:

- Physical control: We will have greater control over data backups. If something does go wrong, we can work on solutions immediately rather than waiting for a Cloud service provider.
- No Third-Party access: All our data will be physically stored in-house. No need to worry

about the possibility of unapproved third-party access to our information.
No reliance on Internet connection. An interruption in our internet connection will separate us from the Cloud. A physical server eliminates this concern as well since you have an access all our Town data as long as the power is on.
Fewer compliance concerns.

Drawbacks of a Physical Server include:

Higher costs. It's more expensive to host physical servers than it is to store data in the Cloud. It requires a sizable capital investment upfront (that the grant will cover), both for the hardware and network infrastructure.

More space and in-house support. Outsourced IT support to maintain the server.

More susceptible to data loss due to disaster situations like fire, flood.

Erving's comments are similar to Crystal's comments below. Attached is the proposal for a Cloud hosting service provided by Advantech. You already have the quotes for the physical server.

So, we have to decide between the physical server or the Cloud hosting service. I recommend that we set up a special meeting for a discussion on both options and hopefully make a decision before Annual Town Meeting. Any thoughts?

Karen A. Kelly

Town Administrator

Town of Bernardston

38 Church St., PO Box 504

Bernardston, MA 01337

Phone: 413-648-5401

----- Original Message -----

Subject:RE: Community Contact IT Grant - Proposal

Date:2024-04-17 12:08

From:Crystal Calouro <ccalouro@advantechit.com>

To:Karen Kelly <bos@townofbernardston.org>

Cc:Brian Lech <blech@advantechit.com>

Hi Karen,

Attached is the cloud option vs on-premise server we discussed over the phone last week. Please add it to the binder previously sent, as your option 2.

Here are some Pros and Cons for each setup:

Original On Premise Server-Based Setup

Pros:

1. **Control and Customization:** Having physical servers on-premises allows for greater control over the hardware and software configurations. This can be advantageous for meeting specific performance or security requirements.
2. **Performance:** Local servers can provide faster data access within the network, reducing latency compared to cloud services, especially where internet connectivity is inconsistent or slow.
3. **One-Time Costs:** Although the initial investment in hardware can be substantial, on-premises servers do not entail recurring subscription fees. This was the major factor in opting for an on-premise server;

keeping operating costs down.

Cons:

1. **Scalability:** Scaling up requires additional hardware purchases and can be time-consuming. (though we have scaled the server for some growth already)
2. **Vulnerability to Disasters:** Physical servers are vulnerable to local disasters like fires, floods, or power outages. Good backups need to be in place.
3. **Energy Costs:** Running and cooling servers can lead to high energy costs.

Cloud-Based Setup (Microsoft 365 Entra, SharePoint, and Exchange)

Pros:

1. **Scalability:** Easily scalable to accommodate growing data needs without the necessity for physical hardware expansion.
2. **Disaster Recovery:** Enhanced data protection and disaster recovery capabilities; Microsoft routinely syncs data in multiple locations for availability. We also included data-loss prevention licenses and backup.
3. **Access Anywhere:** Provides the flexibility for employees to access data and work from anywhere, which is particularly useful for remote work scenarios.

Cons:

1. **Dependence on Internet Connectivity:** Requires reliable internet access; poor connectivity can impact access to data and applications.
2. **Ongoing Costs:** While initially more cost-effective, the recurring subscription fees for cloud services can accumulate and typically surpass the cost of on-premises solutions (ROI not quite there yet for servers).
3. **Less Control:** The municipality has less control over the physical infrastructure and must rely on the cloud provider's security and data management practices.
4. **Minor but mentionable:** Vendor lock-in, pricing for features can be complex, performance may lag at peak times, data migration to the cloud initially will be more time consuming.

Please let me know if you have any other questions.


Thank you,

Crystal Calouro, President & COO


AdvanTech, 283 Flint St Fall River, MA 02723

 <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8c9b0b47f60bde3a61e7cf9b6/images/66ddba20-aca1-4781-939d-9da23e77e5d4.png>

CCalouro@AdvantechIT.com

 <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8c9b0b47f60bde3a61e7cf9b6/images/67a51e5b-27e5-494c-8a36-2ca796bc136a.png>


(508) 676-7800

 AdvanTech

 <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8c9b0b47f60bde3a61e7cf9b6/images/13c718c3-88b6-419a-8e4e-bc0e631ac6b3.png>

www.AdvantechIT.com

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From: Crystal Calouro

Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2024 2:44 PM

To: Karen Kelly <bos@townofbernardston.org>

Cc: Brian Lech <blech@advantechit.com>

Subject: Community Contact IT Grant - Proposal

Karen,


I hope this message finds you well. Again, I want to extend my sincerest thanks for allowing AdvanTech to participate in the recent bidding process. We greatly appreciate the chance to contribute to Bernardston's initiatives and support the community with our technological solutions.

Understanding that technology can sometimes be confusing, I want to reiterate our commitment to transparency and open communication throughout this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, concerns, or require further clarification on any aspect of our proposal (attached). Our team is here to provide the necessary support and to ensure that you have all the information needed to make the best decision for your community.


We look forward to the possibility of working closely with you and are excited about the potential impact we can achieve together. Thank you once again for considering us.

Crystal Calouro, President & COO

AdvanTech, 283 Flint St Fall River, MA 02723

 <https://gallery.mailchimp.com/8c9b0b47f60bde3a61e7cf9b6/images/66ddba20-aca1-4781-939d-9da23e77e5d4.png>

CCalouro@AdvantechIT.com


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Community Compact Information Technology Grant Program FAQ

Answers to your frequently asked questions about the Community Compact IT grant program.

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- What is the deadline to apply for the Community Compact IT Grant Program? (#what-is-the-deadline-to-apply-for-the-community-compact-it-grant-program?-)
- What if my Community Compact already includes an IT best practice with tech assistance or a grant? (#what-if-my-community-compact-already-includes-an-it-best-practice-with-tech-assistance-or-a-grant?-)
- What kind of IT projects are eligible? (#what-kind-of-it-projects-are-eligible?-)
- What kind of IT costs are NOT eligible? (#what-kind-of-it-costs-are-not-eligible?-)
- Is Software-as-a-Service eligible? (#is-software-as-a-service-eligible?-)
- What size grants will be awarded? (#what-size-grants-will-be-awarded?-)
- Can communities have a joint application to the Community Compact IT Grant Program? (#can-communities-have-a-joint-application-to-the-community-compact-it-grant-program?-)
- How do I access the application? (#how-do-i-access-the-application?-)

What is the Community Compact IT Grant program?

The Community Compact IT Grant Program is a competitive grant program to drive innovation at the local level via investments in technology.

Grants will support the implementation of innovative and transformative IT projects by funding one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure and/or purchases of equipment or software. See below for eligibility specifics.

What is the deadline to apply for the Community Compact IT Grant Program?

Applications from eligible municipalities will be accepted from September 11, 2023 until October 13, 2023 at noon. Projects awarded grants must be completed within 18 months of the grant award.

What if my Community Compact already includes an IT best practice with tech assistance or a grant?

You are still eligible to apply for this Information Technology grant program.

What kind of IT projects are eligible?

Grants will support the implementation of innovative and transformative IT projects by funding one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental costs related to the capital purchase such as one-time planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible. In order to maximize the impact of this grant program across the Commonwealth, we kindly request that each grant application be limited to one project. We realize that technology initiatives can be multi-faceted and require multiple components to be successful, but if possible please limit requests to one project (or one component of one project) that would have the most significant impact on your community and be the most sustainable in the long term.

What kind of IT costs are NOT eligible?

On-going maintenance, operational costs or support are NOT eligible. Feasibility studies are NOT eligible. See below regarding eligibility of Software-as-a-Service/Cloud Service.

Is Software-as-a-Service eligible?

Software-as-a-Service costs such as subscription costs, cloud hosting costs, on-going maintenance, operational costs or support are eligible.

IT start-up costs related to Software-as-a-Service, such as design, consulting, planning, and implementation on the municipality's end MAY be eligible.

What size grants will be awarded?

This is a competitive grant program. Grant requests of any size up to \$200,000 will be considered. A local match is not required. Applications will be evaluated based in large part on the impact of the proposed project on the community. For example, a small community's low-dollar funding request may support a project that would have a big impact on that community.

Applicants are encouraged to apply for the amount needed for their program and at a level of support that can be successfully implemented by the project completion deadline.

Can communities have a joint application to the Community Compact IT Grant Program?

Yes, multi-community applications are encouraged. Two or more communities can apply to undertake an IT project together. The participating communities should complete a joint application. The application should be submitted by the community that will be the project lead.

How do I access the application?

In order to fill out the application, you will need the link that was included in FY24 Community Compact Cabinet kickoff letter from Lt. Governor Driscoll emailed to your community's Chief Municipal Executive (Mayor or City Manager in a City, Selectboard Chair or Town Manager/Administrator in a Town) in August 2023.

RELATED

[Community Compact IT Grant Program \(/community-compact-it-grant-program\)](#)



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-The Senior Center received a new six passenger, wheelchair accessible FRTA van that will replace the 12 passenger bus last Friday.



Subject **Re: 2.5 Debt Exclusion**
From Christina Slocum-Wysk <townclerk@townofbernardston.org>
Karen Kelly <bos@townofbernardston.org>
Date 2024-04-24 09:07



- Procedure for Debt Exclusion.docx(~16 KB)

Good Morning,

I am attaching a brief summary of the process for a debt exclusion. I quoted text from the DLS Guide for Prop 2.5 Ballot Questions. Because the question on the ATM warrant is "contingent" upon the town vote, it appears we will not be able to meet the deadline unless we have another election by the end of July, within 90 days of the ATM vote.

1. **DEADLINE:** for obtaining voter approval of override or exclusion questions for contingent appropriations made at an annual town meeting is September 15. More than one election may be held but September 15 is the deadline.
2. Questions to be placed on the state biennial election ballot must be received by the first Wednesday in August preceding the election. L. c. 59, §21C(i).

The deadline for obtaining voter approval of override or exclusion questions for contingent appropriations made at any other town meeting is 90 days.

Christina Slocum-Wysk

Bernardston Town Clerk

413-648-5408

P.O. Box 504

38 Church St., Bernardston MA 01337

Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 9am to 1pm, Wednesdays 3pm to 6pm, Other times by appointment

----- Original Message -----

Subject:2.5 Debt Exclusion
Date:2024/04/23 02:46 PM
From:Karen Kelly <bos@townofbernardston.org>
To:Townclerk <townclerk@townofbernardston.org>

Hi Chris,

Are we all set with the debt exclusion for the purchase of the fire truck? Was there something required that we have to prepare?

--

Karen A. Kelly

Town Administrator

Town of Bernardston

38 Church St., PO Box 504

Bernardston, MA 01337

Phone: 413-648-5401

Procedure for Debt Exclusion:

1. Proposition 2.5 questions are placed on the ballot by vote of the Selectboard, NOT Town meeting. G.L. c. 5,9 § 21C(a).
2. The purpose used in the override or exclusion question must be a spending or borrowing purpose.
3. The question must simply specify the personnel, services, or programs for which the additional funds will be used. An appropriate purpose would be "funding the town's operating and capital expenses".
4. Capital expenditure exclusion questions must also include the total amount of additional taxing authority being requested in the fiscal year in which it will be used.
5. Multi-year overrides: A community may seek voter approval of an override for more than one year.
6. A debt exclusion covers debt service on the amount of borrowing authorized or contemplated for the stated purpose at the time of the election.
7. Annual Exclusion: The annual exclusion amount may be adjusted from year to year in order to moderate the impact on taxpayers, provided that (1) in any year in which the exclusion raised is more than the actual local share of the debt service due for that year, the accounting officer reserves the excess for appropriation to pay debt service costs for the future years and (2) the total amount excluded during the adjusted schedule does not exceed the amount that would be excluded otherwise.
8. The deadline to submit questions for the biannual state election is August 1st.

9. CONTINGENT APPROPRIATIONS:

Another budgeting approach available only to towns with town meetings to adopt a balanced budget and then appropriate additional amounts to supplement that budget expressly contingent on the subsequent approval of an override or exclusion question. A contingent appropriation vote does not place a question on the ballot.

The decision whether to present any Proposition 2½ question to the voters is still made by the selectboard. It may choose to present a question for any or all contingent appropriations made by town meeting. The selectboard retains the power to decide the content of all questions and may include several contingent appropriations within a single override or exclusion question. Each question must state the purpose of each appropriation it is intended to fund.

10. DEADLINE: for obtaining voter approval of override or exclusion questions for contingent appropriations made at an annual town meeting is September 15. More than one election may be held but September 15 is the deadline.
11. Questions to be placed on the state biennial election ballot must be received by the first Wednesday in August preceding the election. G.L. c. 59, §21C(i).

12. The deadline for obtaining voter approval of override or exclusion questions for contingent appropriations made at any other town meeting is 90 days.

TOWN OF BERNARDSTON
Office of the Town Clerk
P.O. Box 504
38 Church Street
Bernardston, MA 01337
(413) 648 – 5408
(413) 648 – 9318 FAX



Regular Office Hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
8:30am to 11:30am
Wednesday – 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Other times by appointment
townclerk@townofbernardston.org

November 9, 2017

Michelle K. Tassinari
Director and Legal Counsel, Elections Division
Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
One Ashburton Place, Room 1705
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Discontinuation of using LHS AccuVote Voting Equipment.
Re: Adoption of LHS ImageCast Voting Equipment.

Greetings Director Tassinari,

This is to officially inform you that the issues of discontinuing the use of the LHS AccuVote system and adopting the LHS ImageCast system were discussed by the Bernardston Selectboard and agreed to pursue same at its properly posted and public meetings of January 18, 2017, February 1, 2017 and March 2, 2017.

On March 2, 2017 they voted to enter in to an agreement to borrow an ImageCast machine for our Annual Town Election on May 1, 2017 as a means of testing and determining whether it was the system appropriate to our current and future needs.

We used the ImageCast system properly coordinated with the AutoMark system to conduct that town election on May 1, 2017. Our Annual Town Meeting on May 11, 2017 voted to acquire the ImageCast system for all future elections.

Please accept this as official notification that the Bernardston Selectboard voted unanimously on November 8, 2017 to discontinue use of the LHS AccuVote system and adopt the LHS ImageCast system for our Annual Town Election on May 7, 2018 and all future local, state and federal elections in Bernardston.

The actions described above amply satisfy the 120 day lead time required before the next election which in our case is our Annual Town Election on May 7, 2018.

Please let me know if we need to do anything else to complete this process.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Luther
Bernardston Town Clerk