

**Brandon Select Board Meeting  
December 30, 2024**

**NOTE: These are unapproved minutes, subject to amendment and/or approval at the subsequent board meeting.**

**Board Members in Attendance:** Doug Bailey, Heather Nelson, Brian Coolidge, Ralph Ethier, Tim Guiles

**Others In Attendance:** Seth Hopkins, Bill Moore, Ray Marcoux

**Others by Zoom:** Jack Schneider, Keith Whitcomb, Tom Kilpeck

**1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30PM by Doug Bailey – Board Chair.

***a. Agenda Adoption***

**Motion** by Heather Nelson/Tim Guiles to adopt the agenda as written. **The motion passed with one abstention – Brian Coolidge.**

Brian Coolidge stated he did not receive the Board packet in time to review the information for this evening’s meeting.

**2. Select Board Remarks**

Tim Guiles stated the Select Board tries to ensure the Board is acting responsibly in how the Town’s money is spent in operating the Town. He learned that the Rec Department’s garage is heated and is troublesome to him and has requested the heat be turned off and questioned when it is not going to be heated. He would like to have an inventory by tomorrow evening of what is in the Rec garage and what needs to be heated and why the equipment can’t be kept in the highway building. Bill Moore stated he has been tasked with taking care of the equipment that would require heat.

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Doug Bailey to direct management to turn off the heater in the Rec garage.

Mr. Guiles stated he has previously asked management to empty the garage and discontinue heating it, but it is still being heated. Mr. Moore advised the garage is heated to 48 degrees. Mr. Guiles stated this is a garage and is not fully insulated. Mr. Moore reiterated he was tasked with taking care of all the Rec equipment and has spent money to support the programs. There are balls that need to be kept warm as cold degrades and cracks them. He appreciates Mr. Guiles’ concern but he has taken care of the equipment as there is limited space available at the Neshobe school. Heather Nelson stated this is micro-management and she does not know what is in the garage or how it is supposed to be kept and she does not agree with the motion. Mr. Guiles noted we all have sports equipment and these are not expensive things that are going to freeze and break. Doug Bailey noted he sees both Mr. Guiles and Mr. Moore’s sides and asked Mr. Moore to update the Board on this situation at the next meeting on storing the equipment differently. Mr. Moore will report back to the Select Board at the next meeting.

**This motion was not voted on.**

**3. Recurring Matters**

***a. Approval of Select Board Meeting Minutes – December 9, 2024***

***b. Select Board Public Hearing Minutes – December 16, 2024***

***c. Select Board & Budget Advisory Committee Minutes – December 16, 2024***

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to approve the minutes of the Select Board December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Select Board December 16<sup>th</sup> public hearing and the Select Board & Budget Advisory Committee December 16<sup>th</sup> meeting, with the amendment to the December 16<sup>th</sup> hearing. **The motion passed with one abstention – Brian Coolidge.**

In the Select Board Public Hearing minutes, Page 1, second from the last paragraph, a correction of the designated village acreage from .25 to .125.

***d. Warrant – December 30, 2024 - \$109,995.25***

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to approve the warrant of December 30, 2024, in the amount of \$109,995.25. **The motion passed with one abstention – Brian Coolidge.**

Doug Bailey questioned the warrant for body armor carrier. Seth Hopkins advised this is the bullet proof vest for the police department that was partially grant-funded from VLCT for 1/3 of the amount and the rest will be under professional supplies and will not be an over expenditure. Mr. Bailey questioned the warrant for Miller Hill Farm trees. Mr. Hopkins advised this is the shrubbery for the stormwater system rain gardens and it seemed the best place to address it as there is not a stormwater system line item. Seth Hopkins clarified this happened earlier in the fall and the Town is just getting the billing.

**4. Town Manager’s Report**

A Town Manager’s report was provided by Seth Hopkins and is available for viewing in the Board packet on the Town’s website.

Mr. Hopkins advised things have been quiet around the holidays and had nothing more to add since he prepared the report.

Doug Bailey requested clarification in the information about plowing concerning the statement that Brandon does not have a Bare Road policy. Seth Hopkins stated the Town has a Safe Roads and Safe Speeds policy. When it snows during the daytime, there are going to be times when roads will accumulate snow faster than can be cleared due to the number of operators and equipment. It was noted this is the Winter Operation’s policy.

**5. Community Development Report**

Bill Moore reported there will be a concert on January 4<sup>th</sup> in the Town Hall. The Town has been given permission and has officially started the project on 110 Newton Road. The Code Enforcement Officer’s decision was appealed to the DRB and the DRB has since issued a finding that sided with the Town’s Code Enforcement Officer and the 30-day period has passed. An extension was received from FEMA and demotion will begin.

**6. Selling Town Assets via Municibid**

Seth Hopkins stated the use of Municibid was previously allowed last summer and he outlined the process to the Select Board. Mr. Hopkins asked the Board to find that using Municibid for items such as the four vehicles that are to be sold would satisfy the provisions of the Town’s policy. He is trying to enter into the Municibid auction and approve the winning bidders, and then approve at the next Select Board meeting. Tim Guiles advised he was involved with drafting this policy and he thought that Municibid satisfies the transparency issue and would not require the delay of the sale.

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to add a line to the policy as Item #6 indicating the use of Municibid satisfies the transparency process and avoids the delay of a sale. **The motion passed with one abstention – Brian Coolidge.**

Doug Bailey asked if the bid is too low whether the Town would have to accept it. Seth Hopkins advised the Town could put a reserve on the item to avoid a bid that is too low. Tim Guiles stated Mr. Hopkins assured that even going with Municibid, the Town Manger will still post items for sale in the Reporter, Front Porch Forum and on the Town’s website to make items for sale available to everyone. Heather Nelson stated kudos to Chief Kilpeck for advising the Town of this option.

**7. Adopt Revisions to the Brandon Land Use Ordinance (Zoning)**

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Heather Nelson to adopt the revisions to the Brandon Land Use Ordinance. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Heather Nelson thanked the Planning Commission for their work on the revisions to the BLUO.

## **8. Ratify Proposed FY26 Budget Produced by Workshop Series**

Doug Bailey stated the Select Board voted on the budget already during the last budget committee meeting and the Town is against a timeline of getting it into the annual report. He has not heard of any suggested changes. Seth Hopkins stated no changes have come to his attention. Heather Nelson noted it is the same as the December 16<sup>th</sup> workshop budget that has a 2.58% increase. Ms. Nelson felt comfortable voting on this. She noted everyone can relate to not getting everything they wanted but it is a budget that was developed and shook out. The budget is fair, everyone was heard, and she is comfortable moving forward. Tim Guiles advised there is a printing imperative in ratifying this. Mr. Hopkins noted he will have to proceed with the printing if the Board does not vote on it tonight with the assumption there will not be changes. It was noted Sue Gage also would like to get the tax estimator available. Mr. Bailey felt the Board needs to vote on the budget at this meeting.

**Motion** by Heather Nelson/Ralph Ethier to ratify the FY26 budget that was produced by the budget workshop series in the amount of \$3,403,965 with an amount to be raised by taxes of \$2,876,645 that has an increase of 2.58% to be raised by taxes. **The motion passed with one no vote – Brian Coolidge.**

**Motion** by Heather Nelson/Ralph Ethier to place on the ballot a \$50,0000 appropriation for capital funding. **The motion passed with one no vote – Brian Coolidge.**

Heather Nelson thanked the budget committee for their work. Brian Coolidge stated the Town had a chance to have a lower municipal budget with what is coming from the State and schools. The State is going up by over 9% and the school is increasing 5%. Ms. Nelson asked what items Mr. Coolidge did not agree with as she had not heard him indicate any issues previously. Mr. Coolidge noted that the Select Board had the choice to reduce the police force spending and some other excessive spending. Ms. Nelson noted she did not see any excessive spending in the budget. Mr. Coolidge stated he was in favor of lowering the police department by one person.

## **9. Public Comment and Participation**

Ray Marcoux asked if the police budget is before or after losing two officers. Doug Bailey stated the Board only knows of one officer that will be leaving. Heather Nelson stated the budget is not replacing the officer that is known to be leaving. Mr. Bailey stated there will be part-time officers without benefits. Mr. Marcoux suggested eliminating the entire police department and subcontracting for services. Mr. Bailey advised this option had been previously discussed but the Sheriff's Department does not respond to crimes and can only do things like speeding tickets, and the State Police does not have the manpower and would only be on-call and would not have an immediate response time. The idea of having one or two part-time officers that work on an hourly basis would be used to round out the schedule.

Heather Nelson stated in conversation with a medical professional, the Town was complimented on having Narcan available for mitigating drug overdoses. Ms. Nelson noted it is free and is available at the town office. The person she was speaking to indicated they have given it to people who have needed it. Bill Moore thanked the Town Clerk and Treasurer, Sue Gage, for her work in obtaining this and having it available for pick up at the town office.

## **10. Adjournment**

**Motion** by Tim Guiles/Brian Coolidge to adjourn the Select Board meeting at 7:01PM. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene Bryant  
Recording Secretary