

BLSG Meeting of October 15
Unapproved Minutes

Location: Upper floor of the Salisbury Library, and through Zoom

Present:

BLSG Board: Paul Vaczy, Rich Russ, Jeff Whiting, Jeff Schumann, Doug Perkins, Mike Blaisdell, Steve Belcher

by Zoom: Wayne Rausenberger, Brad Lawes

BLSG Staff: Will Mathis, Jay Michaels (PR)

Agenda

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Covid-19 and safety measures
- 3) Introduction of guests
- 4) Public comments
- 5) Update from State(if applicable)
- 6)Approval of Minutes from September 17th partial meeting and of October 8th Special meeting
- 7)Treasurer/Budget report (Brad L.)
 - A) District Finances
 - B) Placement of 2020s budget surplus
 - C) 2021 Budget proposal
- 8) Operations Report (Will M.)
 - A) Past
 - B) Present
 - C) Future
- 9) District Coordinator position
- 10) PR
- 11) Other Business
 - A) Old
 - B) New
- 12) Adjournment

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm.

1. Mike Blaisdell reviewed Covid precautions for the employees; BLSG activities have been suspended for the season. There were no public comments. Wayne Rausenberger was recognized as a representative for Brandon.

2. The minutes for the regular meeting of Sept. 17 were approved. With an amendment, the minutes of the Special Meeting of Oct. 8 were also approved. (The revised minutes will be sent to Town Clerks).

3. Treasurer's Report

No Treasurer has yet been appointed to replace Wayne Rausenberger. Brad Lawes spoke as an

interim filling the function. He reported that Eloise Crane is willing to continue as book-keeper, and has committed to give a 3-month notice before leaving the post.

The major question, requiring much discussion, was the bank balance that shows a large surplus at this time. Documents provided to the Board members showed a balance of around \$120,000; Jeff Schumann, considering other elements, opined that the balance should be closer to \$165,000. This question led to a discussion of the timing of the financing, and the anticipation of needs.

The town that contribute to the BLSG funding work on a fiscal calendar, in which July 1 starts a new year. The BLSG follows the annual calendar (Jan-Dec). The amounts that the towns budget for the BLSG at their town meetings do not get paid until the end of the year, and are thus payments for the BLSG activities in the following year. The BLSG record of town payments, recorded per calendar year, thus does not reflect the difference in assessments from one year to the next: the case in point was Brandon, whose payments in the first half of 2019 were made under the assessment of 2018, paid quarterly after taxes were received.

The large bank balance invited the possibility of reducing assessment on towns (the revised budget proposal did include 3% reduction). The discussion that followed noted that the funds on hand are intended to cover BLSG activities up to the time (in the late fall of 2021) when they again receive funds from the participating towns. This led to the question of how much money was required to provide the services. This figure is unpredictable. In 2020, the District benefited from a drought, that meant fewer mosquitoes and so less need for treatment. We cannot be confident of similar conditions in 2021.

The question of good faith and transparency, in relations to the towns then arose.

The question arose of aligning the BLSB calendar with the Fiscal Year (July 1-June 30) calendar used by the towns. This would require putting forth an 18-month budget, with complications in the arithmetic and in the politics.

After points raised by Wayne Rausenberger, the question of an audit came up. The timing of the audit was considered, and the consensus was that it should await the end of the BLSG (calendar) year.

There was discussion, but no clear agreement, on the idea that towns should see their assessments reduced. Steve Belcher argued that the funds on hand were intended to pay for the activities in the 2021 mosquito season, and that the Board should wait to see how that season went before offering reductions, and stressed that future conditions cannot be reliably predicted from past conditions in this time.

Given the questions about the details of the budget, a vote on approving the budget was tabled until the next meeting.

4. Operations Report

Will Mathis had submitted, by email, an operations report. This will probably become the last 'Brandon Buzz' column of the year, and will inform the BLSG end-of-year report to the Towns for inclusion in their town reports.

Paul Vaczy relayed questions from constituents: one on the visits to private residences, on or off the normal routes. The answer requires revisiting the the logs.

On a motion by Jeff Schumann, seconded by Doug Perkins, the Operations report was accepted.

5. Job Description for District Coordinator

Mike Blaisdell had sent out a draft of the job description, and invited comments for future

consideration. Issues raised in discussion included the financial oversight, the educational requirements, and the practical experience. The description will be rewritten for presentation at the next meeting.

6. Other business

Doug Perkins questioned some of the financial oversight included in the job description for the District Coordinator, and cited the BLSG By-Laws on the need for a Treasurer: to be appointed at the next meeting following a resignation. It was admitted that the lapse had gone by general consensus. As Brad Lawes, the acting Treasurer, had left the meeting, possible nominations were tabled for future consideration.

Mike Blaisdell reported that the NE Mosquito Control Association would not be holding a conference this year (the BLSG normally sends one or two representative to the conference). Mike also reported receiving some lumber with which to make bat-houses, as a comfort to those who opt out from spraying.

On a question from Wayne Rausenberger about clarifications from the State, Mike acknowledged that he had not pressed Patti Casey.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 pm.

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be on Nov. 19th. This is the Annual Meeting, at which officers are elected. The currently planned location is again on the second floor of the Salisbury Town Library; the meeting will also be accessible through Zoom. No presence at the Stephen Douglas House in Brandon is planned. N.B. A question has come up about ADA compliance at the Library, so a new venue may be chosen.