

BLSG Meeting of December 3
Unapproved Minutes

Agenda

- 1) Call to order
- 2) Introduction of guests
- 3) Covid-19 and safety measures
- 4) Public comments
- 5) Update from the State
- 6) Treasurer's report
 1. Current year budget
 2. 2021 budget proposal
 3. Allocating 2020 Budget Surplus
- 7) Operations Report
 1. Current year
 2. 2021 expectations
- 8) End year notices
- 9) Elections of Officers for 2021
- 10) Adjournment

In attendance, through Zoom:

BLSG Board: Jeff Schumann, Paul Vaczy, Jeff Whiting, Doug Perkins, Brad Lawes, Chad Beckwith, Wayne Rausenberger, Richard Russ, Michael Blaisdell, Steve Belcher.

Others: Will Mathis (BLSG), Tom Hogan (Proctor) and Seth Hopkins (Chair, Brandon Select Board)

The Meeting was called to order at 7:04 pm.

Wayne Rausenberger requested additions to the agenda, supplementing listed items, and Steve Belcher added a request to include approval of minutes of October 15. Mike Blaisdell, seconded by Wayne Rausenberger, moved to approve the changes and the motion passed.

1. Guests were then introduced. Seth Hopkins, of the Brandon Select Board, spoke against the suggestion that the next assessments should be reduced, and in favor of stable year-to-year assessments. Mike Blaisdell noted that John Haverstock, in Pittsford, had sent an email to the same effect. Others spoke up echoing that opinion. Paul Vaczy noted that Salisbury had now put the BLSG assessment up to vote in the proceedings of the Town Meeting.

2. The Minutes of the BLSG Meeting of October 15 were approved.

3. Update from the State.

Mike Blaisdell had emailed the new grant from the State to Board members. The grant covers the last 9 months of the Vermont State fiscal year, in the amount of \$52,500 (3/4 of the \$70,000 annual grant), the first quarter having already been allocated.

Wayne Rausenberger offered a number of concerns, after summarizing the sections of the grant. These included mileage, that Will Mathis noted were a good chunk of change; questions about the personnel labor rates, and worry about the insurance on the trucks, which is suspended during the months of inactivity, and finally the carry-over of funds from the first quarter of the fiscal year to the rest of the year (amounting to some \$11,000).

Mike Blaisdell answered that he had raised the questions in an email with Patti Casey but had not received an answer. A Zoom meeting with State personnel was suggested to resolve the issues before the grant was signed.

N.B. On the day after the meeting, Mike reported a conversation with Patti Casey that resolved the concerns on all issues. He has signed the grant.

4. Treasurer's Report

Given the season, there was little activity to report. The report was approved.

The Board then addressed the Budget Proposal, little changed since last presented. In the discussion, Steve Belcher noted that the cash balance could not be considered a surplus until after the work to be performed (mosquito-abatement activities in 2021) had been completed.

Doug Perkins asked for information about the method by which towns were assessed their shares of the BLSG annual budget. Jeff Whiting observed that he had documentation on the issue and would send out the relevant documents to the Board. Factors include population, miles of roadway, and exclusions such as National Forest areas that are not treated. [He has since the meeting provided the Board members with his documentation.]

On a motion by Wayne Rausenberger, seconded by Rich Russ, the Budget was approved.

Jeff Schumann, who had submitted an alternative budget proposal, noted that he and Paul would have to face voters at the Salisbury Town Meeting to explain the budget request. Brad Lawes noted that when the BLSG re-opened its doors in March of 2021, it would face some \$30,000 in insurance payments, and further, that in contrast to past years, the Board could expect no assistance from the State in the case of cost-overruns in larviciding.

5. Operations Report

Will Mathis had no activity to report. The principal question that arose was involvement with the two Mosquito Control Association meetings: the American MCA meets in March (on Zoom), with a fee of \$365; the New England MCA meets in January, with a fee of \$30. This led to other questions: would employees who participated be paid? What would be the cost? How many employees might participate? It was noted that the budget has a line-item for Continuing Education in the amount of \$4,000, and so this amount would serve as a cap for the cost of participation.

On Public Relations, it was noted that Jay Michaels would like to send out another mailing, smaller than the one sent out last year, at a cost of \$2,000. On a motion by Brad Lawes, seconded by Jeff Schumann, the action was approved.

6. Town Report materials

There was discussion of a first draft sent out by Mike Blaisdell that appeared to be a mix of the Town Report material and the cover-letter for the Town assessments. A revised cover letter has been submitted to the Board. Doug Perkins had put together a report, based on the final Operations report presented by Will Mathis at the October meeting, and it was proposed that this might serve as the BLSG submission for town reports; he has since reviewed the report that

appeared in the Leicester Town Report and withdrawn his document. Will Mathis and Mike Blaisdell are now expected to provide the report.

7. Other Business

Mike Blaisdell noted that the notice for a full-time District Coordinator position needs to be rewritten and asked members to help draw up the description before the next Board meeting.

There was discussion of the scheduling of the next Board Meeting, that in this season is largely devoted to addressing concerns that might be raised at Town meetings. It was agreed that the Board should, unusually, meet in January, given the changes in voting patterns and the larger use of mail-in ballots.

Wayne Rausenberger then spoke up to protest the need for a proposed protocol for hiring a District Coordinator. The topic has been under discussion for years. Paul Vaczy noted that the proposal makes the position a full-time job, with a substantial change to the budget, and that transparency in the process is essential. Rich Russ noted that a job description was needed before the position could be advertised.

Wayne Rausenberger also had a question about an email he had seen to the Secretary of State, to the effect that the Board was governed by the towns. Jeff Whiting pointed out that the BLSG is similar to schools in that we are a Municipal Union District.

8. Election of Officers

Wayne Rausenberger nominated Jeff Schumann for Chair, and Jeff declined. Mike Blaisdell proposed to make Wayne an Assistant Treasurer, a nomination that Wayne accepted with some stipulations. Further discussion suggested participation in a Finance Committee, rather than a new position. Brad Lawes noted that he and Wayne had been cooperating very well, and that Wayne was doing the bulk of the work.

On a motion put by Steve Belcher, with some hesitation on the question of self-interest, seconded by Doug Perkins, the current slate of officers was approved for another annual term: Chair, Mike Blaisdell; Vice-Chair, Jeff Whiting, Treasurer, Brad Lawes, Secretary, Steve Belcher

The meeting was adjourned at 8:46 pm.

The next scheduled meeting will be on January 21, 2021, at 7:00 pm, under conditions to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,
Steve Belcher