

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN
WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES
BLACKSTONE MUNICIPAL CENTER
15 ST. PAUL STREET
JOHN ELDRIDGE MEETING ROOM**

Town Clerk
Town of Blackstone

FEBRUARY 10, 2026 (5:00 PM)

FEB 25 REC'D

Time: _____
RECEIVED

1. Pledge of Allegiance & Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM by Chairman Keefe. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the Board members and meeting attendees.

2. Roll Call - Attendance

Present were Chairman Daniel Keefe, Vice Chairman Sweeney, Selectwoman Mary Bulso, and Selectman Edward Castongauy. Selectman Gino Olaes was absent. Also present were Assistant Town Administrator/Town Accountant Lauren Taylor, Parks and Recreation Chairwoman Celeste Langlois, Parks and Recreation Vice Chairman Robert Gilbert, Lieutenant Brodeur, and residents Chie Ferrelli, Charles Warner, Cris Morin, Matt Ryan, Matt Catalano, and Derek Markle. There were also additional unnamed residents and volunteers present. There was a Zoom link option for anyone interested in attending virtually.

3. Old Business

- **a) Discussion on the Semi-Quincentennial Celebration**

Event Dates & Facilities

The Semiquincentennial Celebration is scheduled for July 24 - 26, 2026. Carnival dates are July 23 - 26 (set-up begins July 22). Event hours will be Thursday and Friday: 4 PM - 9 PM, Saturday: 5K in morning, event 12 PM - 9 PM, fireworks at 9:30 PM, and Sunday 12 PM - 6 PM.

OpenGov Forms

Ms. Langlois informed the Board that OpenGov applications are now live for registration of bands, food trucks, and vendors. So far 8 bands, 9 food trucks, and 7 vendors have registered. Some bands requested fees of up to \$1,600. The Board discussed setting a flat rate or exploring volunteer/community acts. Final vendor/music decisions expected by the end of April.

Art Contest

Promotional efforts underway across local Facebook groups and Discover Central Mass. The contest focuses on 4 historic locations in Town. Daniel's Farmstead has requested that any contest participants entering Daniel's Farm property complete a waiver. Ms. Langlois confirmed with Town Administrator Chad Lovett that the language at the bottom of the art contest rules for participants should be sufficient enough. Selectwoman Bulso will speak with the Daniel's Farm representatives at their upcoming Board meeting Thursday night otherwise Daniel's Farm may need to be removed from the contest. Contest participants are not required to register at this time.

Video Project

The Board is collecting short video clips of residents, particularly seniors and children, speaking about life in Blackstone to be compiled into a "loop" video during the event.

Site Planning & Logistics

Port-a-potties to be stationed in multiple areas including beer garden and carnival grounds. Vice Chairman Sweeney stated that the event calls for a formal Emergency Action Plan and Incident Action Plan to ensure safety. The Board needs to involve the Town's Emergency Management

Director to develop the plans and once that step is complete, the layout of the event can be designed. Volunteers will be needed to assist with traffic and crowd logistics.

Fireworks

Fireworks tentatively scheduled for Saturday night, July 25 at 9:30 PM. Final site still pending full inspection, though previous site visit in 2025 by fireworks contractor suggests feasibility. Final confirmation will depend on updated layout and compliance with the State Fire Marshal.

Transportation & Accessibility

Shuttles will be needed from the parking area at the JFK/AFM school complex to the high school in addition to the shuttles needed for the historical tours. There will need to be designated handicap parking at the event.

Budget

The Board discussed expenses (music, staging, safety, etc.) for the event. The Town may need to do a warrant article for funding, to be approved at Town Meeting in May. Efforts ongoing to secure grants and donations.

Parade:

There will not be a parade during the July celebration due to logistical concerns. There will also not be a parade in May. Instead, Memorial Day will have a solemn remembrance event at the Civil War Monument coordinated by the Memorial Day Committee and Historical Society.

● **b) Choose What Subcommittees are Necessary for the Event**

The following subcommittees were established to distribute responsibilities effectively. Subcommittees will meet independently and report updates. All volunteers and residents are welcome to join any committee.

- Public Safety & Emergency Planning: Work with Emergency Management Director to develop Emergency Action Plan and Incident Action Plan, including traffic control, medical access, evacuation routes, and safety coordination with police/fire. Members include Vice Chairman Sweeney, Fire Chief Roy, Police Chief Gilmore, Police Lieutenant Brodeur, and Matt Ryan.
- Food Trucks, Vendors, Music: Review and approve applications for food trucks, vendors, and bands; ensure no duplication; coordinate layout and fees; recommend budget limits for performances. Members include Celeste Langlois, Chris Morin, Bob Gilbert, and Becky (resident).
- Ceremonies: Coordinate opening and closing ceremonies, flyovers, speakers, and honor guards. Members include Chairman Keefe, Bill Nay, Selectman Castonguay, and Memorial Day Committee Members.
- Historic Tours: Coordinate participation of local museums (e.g. Quaker Meeting House, Daniels Farmstead, churches) and promote guided/self-guided tours. Members include Selectwoman Bulso and Helen (resident).
- Staging & Sound: Coordinate stage setup, sound systems, band transitions, potential rentals. Members include Derek Markle (limited availability) and Tony Catalano.
- Art Contest: Manage contest logistics, coordinate with library for display (July 1–17), recruit judges, coordinate awards and “People’s Choice” vote. Members include Charles Warner, Chie Ferrelli, and Celeste Langlois.
- Advertising & Communications: Distribute flyers, run social media, contact news outlets, and post ongoing event updates; include sponsorship appeals. Members include Mr. Lovett and Charles Warner.

- 5K Road Race: Organize route, insurance, coordination with Cross Country team, police support. Members include Mr. Lovett.
- Volunteer Coordination: Organize general volunteers and runners (e.g., scouts, NHS, parents), assign support roles during event days. Members to be determined.
- **c) Decide Layout of Event, i.e. Carnival, Music, Vendors, Food Trucks, etc.**

The final layout will be decided dependent on the outcomes of the Emergency Action Plan and Incident Action Plan. The event will take place on the Blackstone Millville Regional High School grounds. The following placements were discussed.

- Carnival to be placed on the side of the track and side parking lot (not on the track itself).
- Food Trucks to be placed along the semicircular front driveway, accessible but not obstructing main entry points.
- Vendors tentatively set around the flagpole area and potentially can be expanded into the front lawn.
- Beer Garden's final location TBD, but preference is for the courtyard (fenced for ID check) or tennis court (already enclosed). It must be within earshot of music for atmosphere, but alcohol will not be allowed to roam the event.
- Music/Stage Area options include courtyard or back lot. Needs sound system, stage, and potential overhead cover due to July heat.
- Parking will be limited onsite to handicap only. Primary Parking will be at JFK/AFM school parking lots with shuttle service via senior vans, school vans, etc. There will need to be coordination of one-way flow, potential road closures (Lincoln Street area), and residential impact will be part of the Public Safety plan.
- The Fireworks launch area will potentially be behind the softball field ("beyond the rock") as it maintains a 200-ft buffer zone. Crowd control and safe viewing zones to be mapped by Fire Marshal and fireworks contractor.
- **d) Update on Volunteers and Logos**
- Volunteers: Boy Scouts confirmed as vendors and support team (potential runners). Local students, NHS, Divine Mercy youth expected to assist also. Residents Charles and Whitney Warner volunteered for general labor and art contest support. Additional community volunteers were encouraged to join subcommittees.
- Logos & Communication: Charles Warner assisting with communication and visuals. Flyers and online materials being developed. Sponsorship requests and outreach to representatives (local, state, federal) to be coordinated by Mr. Lovett.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 24, 2026 at 5:00 PM with both in-person and virtual attendance options.

4. Adjournment

- Motion: Mary Bulso made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:08 PM; seconded by Michael Sweeney. Vote unanimous; motion passed.

Time: 6:08 PM

Next Meeting: February 24, 2026

Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted By: Sara Peters