

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Kate Merrill, Kellee Easler, Nicole Hoyt, Gary Moore, Dean Hollins, Jason Killary, & Tim Kenney

Guests: Kaleb Jacob & Amy Jacob

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Chairman Matt Burdick called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Consent Agenda Items:

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Nonpublic/Public Minutes for Approval—10/26/23
- BTLA Letter AFMI for SB Signatures
- Appointment for Noelle DeLorie for SB Signatures

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey noted clarifications and grammatical changes to the 10.26.23 public minutes.

Selectman Bill Bevans noted a grammatical change to the 10.26.23 public minutes.

Selectman Bevans motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Department Head Updates: Chairman Burdick suggested deferring the Technology Services follow-up until Town Administrator Katie Phelps can attend. Selectwoman Carey inquired about the rubric grid. Finance Director Kate Merrill will resend the grid in a separate email. FD Merrill noted that the Department Heads met regarding the technology services contract and collectively agreed that they lacked knowledge on the necessary information. She mentioned that TA Phelps would be able to provide insights into what the current vendor provides, and insurance and contract review processes. FD Merrill informed all the vendors that a decision would be deferred until TA Phelps returned. Selectwoman Carey reviewed the rubric grid and recommended the inclusion of training and access information to better understand vendor limitations. She also suggested creating a separate section for additional billing. No further discussion.

Health Officer Kellee Easler reviewed the yearly Board of Health report that she filled out. The first section pertained to the Local Health Officer. Ms. Easler provided details regarding her position as Health Officer, length of service in the role, and the trainings she has completed. She noted that appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) was available for the Health Officer to conduct inspections. The second section focused on the Municipality. Ms. Easler noted that

SB FM 11.02.23

Boscawen has a preparedness plan for public health threats, which was developed by the Emergency Management department and Hazard Mitigation. The Health Officer, Deputy Health Officer, and Emergency Management Director would alternate attending meetings with the Regional Public Health Network. In the third section, Ms. Easler listed the Health Officer and Select Board as members of the Board of Health. She indicated that they have held 10+ meetings in the past year. In the narrative section, PCD Director Easler described the public health-related successes and progress achieved in the last year. She noted an Order to Vacate for the dilapidated building on High Street, the septic replacement, the sewer issue at Town Hall, the hoarding situations in town, and the environmental release of freon on N. Main Street, that were successfully mitigated. Selectwoman Carey suggested including Commercial Street due to their efforts in securing the area to prevent an attractive nuisance. Chairman Burdick recommended adding the situation where they tested for lead paint. Ms. Easler listed septic issues, hoarding, and mold complaints as the top three public health and/or sanitation challenges that Boscawen faces. Due to the issues, she indicated that the primary challenge was the time commitment involved. Chairman Burdick suggested that cost was also a significant challenge. Lastly, Ms. Easler had to indicate the resources needed for the Health Officer to better respond to local public health threats. Selectwoman Carey suggested including hazmat suits. PCD Director Easler will send out the report next week.

PCD Director Easler presented a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Assessing contract. She reviewed past RFP's for assessing and reviewed the Technology Services RFP to understand what needed to be included. Selectwoman Carey inquired whether there was enough clarification regarding the expectations of the town versus of the assessors. PCD Director Easler didn't provide details because after reviewing past RFP's, not all included that information. She suggested discussing expectations with the bidders. Selectwoman Carey suggested adding a line to define clerical expectations. PCD Director Easler suggested posting the RFP on the town website as well as sending it to NHMA and different assessing firms. All concurred. The Board agreed on November 30th as the deadline to turn in proposals and on December 7th as the date they will make a decision.

Selectman Bevans motioned to approve the Request for Proposals for the Assessing Contract. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

PCD Director Easler gave an update on the Planning and Community Development Department. She attended the NH Business and Economic Conference with PCD Assistant Kara Gallagher. The conference addressed challenges and needs in the community. It was predicted that there will be a huge loss of staffing over the next 10 years. They spoke about different incentives to offer employees and housing efforts. At the next Planning Board meeting, PCD Director Easler said they will have a draft for a new zoning ordinance that will allow easier acceptance for detached Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) for 1 and 2 family homes within all districts. PCD Director Easler mentioned that currently, if someone wanted to replace their manufactured home with a newer one, they would have to get a Special Exception. The Planning Board would like to make the process easier by converting Special Exceptions into Conditional Use Permits. PCD Director Easler noted the article on housing changes will be published in the Concord Monitor

next week. She noted she was included in the interview as well as Central NH Regional Planning Commission. (CNHRPC).

Selectwoman Carey gave an update on the Seven to Save King Street nomination. She received an email with a video link on the Seven to Save award that Boscawen received for King Street. The nomination was awarded from the Board of NH Preservation Alliance as a result of Boscawen's 10-year transportation plan. Selectwoman Carey noted it would provide the opportunity for Boscawen to repurpose older units. She mentioned that Boscawen had the largest concentration of Federalist style houses, other than the Town of Portsmouth. The nomination also provided opportunity with free technical assistance. Homeowners would be allowed to access their services and there would be funding assistance opportunities as well. Selectwoman Carey suggested inviting NH Preservation Alliance attend a meeting to provide a presentation on what they could provide for the town. She recommended both land-use Boards be in attendance. PCD Director Easler will reach out to the Boards.

Facilities Director Gary Moore received a \$7,075 Moose-Plate grant to refurbish the windows in the Town Municipal Building attic. The Select Board must approve the grant and sign the grant agreement to initiate the process. FD Moore noted there was a Municipality Certificate of Authority that Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt must complete, naming Facilities Director Moore as the authorized official to handle all documentation. Selectwoman Carey noted that residents pay extra for the Moose-Plate grant, and they are now seeing a return on their investment in Boscawen. Chairman Burdick inquired about the timeframe on the project. Facilities Director Moore said the contractor would not be able to start the project until November 2024. He noted they have until September 2025 to complete the grant. The contractor had no issues with the timeframe. Selectwoman Carey asked if the Penacook Advisory Academy Committee was aware about the grant. FD Moore will let them know.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Moose-Plate grant awarded by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources and Division of Historical Resources in the amount of \$7,075 for repairs on windows at the Municipal Building. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Facilities Director Moore gave an update on the Facilities Department. He has been in touch with the State in regard to the generator project. The funding increase will take place around December 20th. The gas piping project was initiated this week and has been on schedule. Liberty Utilities removed the tree on the gas lines. The Town Municipal Building painting project has been completed. Selectwoman Carey suggested reaching out to Penacook Academy Review Committee as they previously had a concern about the paint. FD Moore presented options for the bike rack request near the Police Station. The prices ranged from \$300 to \$3,000. Selectman Bevans presented an anonymous donation of a bike rack.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the donation of a bike rack from an anonymous donor. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Moore asked for guidance on changing the town logo. He was told that the Hannah Dustin Memorial was controversial. He has been discussing ideas with PCD Director Easler and FD Merrill. FD Moore suggested having a public contest to get residents involved with the design. Selectwoman Carey recommended to keep it simple. One of the challenges with the current seal was there was too much going on. She suggested using the municipal building in the Police badge design but to add more color. Selectman Bevans pointed out that the church on the current logo was used as an historical piece because it was one of the oldest buildings in town. FD Moore will work on updating the logo.

Finance Director Merrill presented the 2024 insurance rates from HealthTrust. The medical insurance rates increased by 15.6% and dental increased by 4.7%. FD Merrill estimated, based on retirees and staff plans, that the increase would be \$106,847 for medical and \$35,076 for dental. The Department Heads reviewed a different plan that would save money and allow them to stay with their current providers. The plan is called Access Blue Site of Service (ABSOS 20). The cost difference in savings would be an increase of \$1,900 with a proposed HRA of \$10,750, for a total increase of \$12,650. It would be a \$94,196 savings compared to the current plan. The major differences between the plans were the deductibles and that it was a Site of Service plan. The Department Heads proposed an HRA, with the town contributing \$500 towards the second half of the deductible. There would be additional changes to some copayments and out of pocket maximums. FD Merrill sent out the proposed annual costs of each plan with a weekly cost breakdown. The contribution for employees and the town would be cheaper with the new plan even with a 15.6% increase. There would still be an overall increase in cost due to the plan changes this year. With the HRA, the employee contributions would increase \$6,000 and for retirees, it would increase \$6,500. FD Merrill noted next year there should be significant savings for the retiree plan. She will send out more information as it comes. Discussion ensued on a decision.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve changing the benefits plan to the Access Blue Site of Service plan for 2024. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill presented a budget line transfer for approval. Last year when completing the Finance budget, she included an additional line for Finance office supplies. The line showed up in the budget with an amount, but it was not added to the dollar amount of the budget. FD Merrill asked for approval on a budget line transfer from the Vacation Buyout line to the Finance Office Supplies line to fund it as the Board had intended.

Chairman Burdick motioned to transfer \$1,340 from account #4155574 PA Vacation Buyout to account #4150573 Finance Office Supplies. The line appeared and was approved in the 2023 budget as a new line but did not get added to the dollar amount of the budget. The transfer would fund the line as intended by the Select Board. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill presented the preliminary 2024 Parks and Recreation Budget on behalf of Parks & Recreation Coordinator Kearsten O'Brien. The budget remained the same other than the wage scale and COLA impacts. The goal was to offset the increase with the cost of the program. To cover the costs of the program, the proposed rates for 2024 will be \$580 per child. FD Merrill said they included some conservative revenues but the overall goal would be to fully fund the budget so there would be no impact on taxpayers. The Board can make a decision on the rate increase at the next administrative fee update. FD Merrill noted a parent called last week about the program and she discussed the possible increase in price. The parent still expressed the rate was a good deal compared to other program costs. Chairman Burdick inquired about line 4520689: Civic Program Support. He noted last year there were no expenditures. FD Merrill clarified there were expenditures, and she will update the budget to reflect the expenses. The budget line was used for events that the Parks and Rec program organized separately from the Summer Park program. For example, the Police vs Fire game, movie nights, and the latest Economic Development Committee event. To date, they have spent \$475 and also received donations to offset. Discussion ensued. FD Merrill and PRC O'Brien met with NHMA and discussed a Parks and Recreation revolving fund. The rates would need to be above what the town would payout. They will discuss further in the future.

Selectman Bevans motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Parks and Recreation budget. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill presented the preliminary 2024 Finance Administration Budget. There was a 3% increase due to COLA and the wage schedule. FD Merrill noted the Finance Assistant line was a minimal increase because Finance Assistant Crystal Tilton was budgeted for 25 hours a week, but she worked 24 hours a week. FD Merrill reduced the budget line by 52 hours for the year. Line 4150301: Annual Audit Services increased 13% due to the new contract signed this year. Chairman Burdick asked what the difference in increase was between the new vendor and the current vendor. FD Merrill did not have a definite number but estimated a \$3,000 increase if they stayed with the current vendor. Line 4150303: Payroll Service decreased by 3%. The Travel and Meetings line decreased by 8% because both FD Merrill and FA Tilton completed their certificate programs this year so next year there won't be as much travel. FD Merrill noted that she attended an NHMA conference, and they stated for any changes to stipend positions such as Select Board or elected positions, they should be included in a separate warrant article. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans asked for clarification on if the Board can vote to decrease the stipend. Selectwoman Carey asked if it applied to COLA increases. FD Merrill will follow up with NHMA for clarification on both questions. Chairman Burdick stated approval was deferred until next week once they receive more information on stipend positions.

Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt presented the preliminary 2024 Tax Collector budget. Under line 4151332, Equipment and Software, there was a \$400 increase added for any anticipated increases for software. Town Clerk Hoyt noted that last year they didn't receive the software increase until after the budget was passed and it was slightly above. Typically, the increase has been 30%. She also noted that the copier agreement was for the large copier in the kitchen. The agreement was split between the Executive budget and the Tax Collect budget. Selectwoman

Carey inquired about the shift in positions. Town Clerk Hoyt said the department lost a Deputy Tax Collector, so they shifted the Assistant into the Deputy Tax Collector position. The position was adjusted on COLA and step increase. Finance Director Merrill noted the position was 70% Deputy Tax Collector and 30% Assistant Town Clerk. Town Clerk Hoyt noted the previous individual was splitting responsibilities evenly (50/50). Town Clerk Hoyt clarified that Lien Expenses pertained to recording liens, researchers, releasing liens and certified's for notices. She noted that the 2023 actuals for Equipment and Software and Supplies were not correct. The actual budget line for Equipment and Software should reflect \$4,500.19 and Supplies should reflect \$306.96. Chairman Burdick deferred approval to next week until revisions were made. He further asked to include details in the notes section for budget lines 4151111 and 4151112.

Town Clerk Hoyt gave an update on the Tax Department. Many residents have called about the election next week. Town Clerk Hoyt clarified that the Town of Boscawen does not have an election next week. There were 10 to 12 surrounding cities that are having elections next week for Mayors and Aldermen. Town Clerk Hoyt noted she has been working on the Welfare standard of needs. She gave the Board a copy of the draft to review and vote on next week. She mentioned she could also provide the approved standard of need from last year. Town Clerk Hoyt will be attending the annual NHMA conference in November. For the open Welfare position, they have received applications, but the individuals were either overqualified or underqualified, so they have not started interviewing. Town Clerk Hoyt will attend a demo in Newport on November 16th at 6:00PM for the new ballot tabulator from Voting Works. The Ballot Law Commission approved two machines but have not approved orders yet. Town Clerk Hoyt will notify the Select Board if there are any additional demos. She looked at the spring deed of properties. There was a total of \$46,498 taxes that were still not paid on the 2021 Liens. The hope was that all liens would come in by the deadline. Town Clerk Hoyt noted there was still no date for the Primary election, but it will most likely be held in January.

Fire Chief Tim Kenney gave an update on the Fire Department. There was a reported building fire on Main Street. The resident leaned debris against their wood stove but there was no damage to the home. Fire Chief Kenney spoke with Facilities Director Moore about getting estimates from a contractor for shower installation at the Fire Department. After the estimate, Chief Kenney would like to get another estimate on how much it would cost to put a shower area in the other building. He noted that the costs would likely be too expensive. The fire department calls have picked up rapidly because Penacook Rescue has been busier, so they have been helping with medical calls. Fire Chief Kenney will have the 2024 Fire Department budget ready for review next week.

Public Works Director Dean Hollins provided an update on the Public Works Department. They have been finishing up fall cleanup and preparing the plow gear to mount. The paving has been wrapped up for the season. A strip of Raymond Road was completed and will just need shoulder gravel. Knowlton Road was reclaimed, and they put a base coat on. Next year they will put the final coat and gravel. A section of Corn Hill Road and Pine Street were still waiting to be graveled by GMI. PWD Hollins noted all the Public Works trucks were inspected. One truck failed for the front-end king pin which cost \$3,500. Another truck needed brake work. PWD

Hollins noted they were still waiting on the new pickup truck. He provided a recap on the trees next to the Maplewood Cemetery. They plan to cut them down next week and leave the good wood for residents to take. Overall, the department has been preparing for winter. In the next month, they will screen the winter sand for next year in case it will be a bad winter. Selectwoman Carey asked for an update on the Treasure House. PWD Hollins stated there were no issues since the notice went out. Everybody has been in agreeance and were following the rules. Chairman Burdick mentioned he went to the Treasure House last weekend and noticed there were significantly more materials available to view.

Police Chief Jason Killary provided a quick update on the Police Department. Officer Noelle DeLorie started on Monday and has been completing Primex training and administrative tasks. The department was excited for her arrival and highlighted her 11 years of experience and police work that will be beneficial for the town. Overall, the department has been busier with more calls coming in.

Selectwoman Carey received an email from one of the new younger members of the Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway about hosting a 1st annual luminary bike ride at Jamie Welch Field. They would like to hold the event on Saturday, December 9th at 5PM, starting and finishing at Jamie Welch Field. The bike ride would go on the Northern Rail Trail to the plan start of Merrimack River Greenway trail. Helmets and seasonal appropriate clothing would be required. Selectwoman Carey noted they would like to have a fire truck present to greet bikers at one end of the ride. They will be encouraging individuals to wear festive colors for the holiday. Selectwoman Carey suggested they contact Town Administrator Katie Phelps. Finance Director Merrill will provide the request to TA Phelps when she returns.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 7:18 PM.

Kaleb Jacobs from Eagle Network Solutions introduced himself and said that he was here to get to know the Town more as his company has a bid submitted for the IT Service Proposal RFP. Mr. Jacobs said he was excited about the possibility of working with the Town and would be in attendance for the meeting regarding the selection of an IT vendor.

Joshua Crawford commented on the town logo change. He felt that the seal was more than a marketing device. On the current town seal, it included the Church and statue of Hannah Dustin. He noted that on many NH town seals there was a church included. He expressed that when people think of Boscawen, they think of the church at the split. He stressed the importance of symbolism on the town seal. He noted that although history has been controversial, it was important to remember the town history. He said if they want a marketing structure, there will be a flag presentation at the next Economic Development Committee meeting. He suggested it would be a better marketing device because they could make flag bumper stickers and people could purchase a flag for their property. He felt that Boscawen's current town seal was very unique amongst all the town seals. He suggested a town flag would be a better marketing tool than changing the town seal.

Town Clerk Hoyt asked how many places would need to be updated with a new seal. Selectwoman Carey said they would need to update uniforms, vehicles, stationaries, and Welcome to Boscawen signs. The town has had the current seal since the early 2000's. Chairman Burdick questioned how many seals the town has had over the years. Police Chief Killary noted the current Police badge displayed the front of the Penacook Academy and the prior patch was the current town seal. They also had one patch that said, 'House of the Elder Tree', but Police Chief Killary was not aware of the history behind it. He will turn in the patch to a town staff member to research further.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 7:23 PM.

Non-Public Sessions:

Chairman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:23 PM under RSA 91-A:3 II(C). Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to exit the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(C) at 7:38PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic minutes under RSA 91-A:3 II(C) as it would adversely affect the reputation of any person other than a member of the Board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 7:39PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner