

**Town of Boscawen
Advisory Budget Committee Public Meeting
Boscawen Municipal Facility
January 25, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

Members Present: Dale Randall – Chair, Gary Tillman, Tom Laliberte, & Joshua Crawford

Members Absent: Margaret Daneau

Select Board Members Present: Matt Burdick – Chair, Lorrie Carey & Bill Bevans

Staff Present: Katie Phelps – Town Administrator, Kate Merrill – Finance/HR Director, Kellee Jo Easler – Planning & Community Development Director, Jason Killary – Police Chief/Emergency Management Director, Dean Hollins – Public Works Director, Gary Moore – Facilities Director, Tim Kenney – Fire Chief & Kara Gallagher – Recording Secretary

Chair Randall opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Roll call completed by Recording Secretary Gallagher.

Minutes:

Requested two changes:

- Line 50 – Sentence to read “Mr. Tillman requested that the budgets look the same, whether they show percentage of change, dollar amount change, or both.”
- Line 198 – Change “arrant” to “warrant”.

Mr. Tillman motioned to approve the January 18, 2024, minutes as amended. Seconded by Mr. Laliberte. All in favor. None opposed.

New Business:

Summary from Select Board: Select Board Chair Burdick explained the only change brought forward was a \$15,000 reduction by Police Chief Killary to the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund.

2024 Budgets by Department: Chair Randall asked if there were any topics the Budget Committee wished to revisit from the previous meeting.

4155 Personnel Administration: Mr. Laliberte said he inquired further about 4155120-Health Insurance (Retirees/Other) since the previous meeting. He wanted to know why there was such a large gap between the 2023 budget and actual, and if this was a common practice every year. He received the numbers from previous years and stated that \$19,000 was spent in 2021, \$46,000 was spent in 2022, and \$55,000 was spent in 2023. He felt as though budgeting almost \$100,000 was too high. He asked if that line item was cut down and more money was needed in the future, how

would that be funded. Town Administrator Phelps replied there is a Contingency Fund that could be utilized, or money would need to be taken from a different department. Selectwoman Carey clarified that this line item included an extra family plan and single plan. Town Administrator Phelps said that was correct, the purpose of which was to plan for mid-year staff insurance changes. Mr. Laliberte stated that because that scenario hasn't happened within the last three years this could be a potential area to reduce.

4130 General Government: Mr. Crawford asked one question about 4130571-Meetings and Travel. He asked how many meetings Town Administrator Phelps is required to attend. Town Administrator Phelps replied that she is not required to attend any, but they are beneficial if she is able to attend. This line item is mostly for mileage reimbursement throughout the year for all staff.

4194 Town Buildings: Mr. Crawford mentioned that the Municipal Buildings operating budget was \$100,000 as well as \$100,000 being requested on the CIP. Mr. Crawford asked for clarification on the difference between the two. Facilities Director Moore said the CIP is a wish list for capital improvements. The operating budget is for building maintenance requirements to keep the facilities running smoothly. Mr. Crawford asked why 4194449-Torrent Station has a budget if Penacook Rescue plans to purchase the building. Town Administrator Phelps said any plan to purchase Torrent Station would need to be approved by Town Meeting. There needs to be a budget in case it gets voted down. Discussions with Penacook Rescue are ongoing. Discussion ensued.

Townwide Safety Capital Reserve Fund: Mr. Crawford discussed the percentage of vehicles who yield to a Flashing Rapid Beacon versus a typical Yield Sign. He said the Flashing Rapid Beacon seems to have slightly better results, especially in the dark. He spoke with someone at the NH Department of Safety and that type of sign is not required. If that was chosen, however, any other new crossings on that street would need to have the same type of sign installed. Discussion ensued. Mr. Tillman felt it would be irresponsible to remove this CRF.

2024 Warrant Review: Chair Randall suggested placing more money into the Public Works Building CRF. He felt as though there needs to be an end date in sight for some of the projects on the CIP. He said the building needs to be fixed or replaced. Mr. Crawford agreed. Discussion ensued. Mr. Tillman asked if the Public Works building or Fire Department could be covered under the Municipal Buildings CRF. Facilities Director Moore replied neither were covered within that budget. If there was an emergency funds could be taken from other budgets or CRFs. The Committee felt as though a bond would be the best course of action to pursue some of the high-cost projects.

Mr. Laliberte inquired about the Fire Department Command Vehicle CRF. He asked how many years the Fire Department would need to contribute to this CRF. Fire Chief Kenney said \$10,000/per year for 6 years, for a total of \$60,000. Mr. Laliberte asked if Fire Chief Kenney was currently using a retired police cruiser. Fire Chief Kenney said that was correct. Mr. Laliberte asked how many miles the cruisers typically have before they retire. Police Chief Killary said it's variable, but they try to run the cruisers to 100,000 miles. There is potential that before that 6-year period is up, Fire Chief Kenney could get another retired cruiser instead of a command vehicle.

Committee Recommendations:

- Mr. Laliberte recommended reducing 4155120-Health Insurance (Retirees/Other) to \$60,000.
- Prioritize projects from the Capital Improvement Plan.

Next Meeting: February 1, 2024, after 6:00 p.m. at the Boscawen Municipal Facility.

Mr. Tillman motioned to adjourn at 6:52 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Laliberte. All in favor. None opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Kara Gallagher