

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

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kate Merrill, Kearsten O'Brien, Kellee Easler, Sarah Gerlack, Tim Kenney, Kevin Wyman & Gary Moore

Guests: Loren Martin, Cindy Yanski – CAPBM, Terri Page – CAPBM, and Bill Heinz

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Consent Agenda Items:

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Public/Nonpublic Minutes for Approval-03/30/23and 04/04/23
- Cash Handling Policy
- Select Board Rules of Procedure
- Boscawen Chain of Command
- Intent to Cuts 23.049.01T, 23.049.02T, 23.049.03T, 23.049.04T
- Veterans Credit Landowner S - \$500
- Veterans Credit Landowner B - \$500
- Solar Exemption Map 81D Lot 97 Sublot 2 - \$12,000
- Welfare Standard of Need 2023/2024
- March Treasurer Reports

Selectwoman Carey noted grammatical changes to the 03.30.23 minutes. There was one content-related change, line 148, Selectwoman Carey seconded the motion to make Matt Burdick the Chair of the Select Board.

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

Scheduled Guests & Hearings: Ms. Cindy Yanski and Ms. Terri Page from the Merrimack County Community Action Program (CAP) gave an overview of the transportation programs they offer in the Merrimack county area. Programs included a public bus service with a fixed route system that runs through the City of Concord; senior buses that are based geographically around the Merrimack county area; and a demand response service for individuals who are over the age of 60 or who have a disability in those areas. Individuals who reach out for transportation assistance are connected with a taxi voucher program that helps senior citizens get to their medical appointments. It is primarily used for individuals who cannot take the bus. Ms. Yanski explained that they finally received funding to start an expansion route that would go from Concord to Laconia, running through Boscawen. The State of NH Department of Transportation (DOT) approved the funding two year ago. This year, Merrimack County used their ARPA grant money to fund \$114,000 needed to match the federal funds. Ms. Yanski noted she has already

started collecting funds for fiscal year 2025 to keep the route maintained. They started the process of finalizing stops along the route and times. They are working on finding two additional CDL drivers to run the route, but it will be a challenge because staffing is already short for the regular routes. Ms. Yanski asked the Board and general public for advice or suggestions on the expansion route. Community Services Director Sarah Gerlack noted she has clients that come from Concord and their last stop is Penacook. There is currently no transportation in Boscawen for clients to get to and from services. CS Director Gerlack asked if there was a plan to have stops in Boscawen. Ms. Yanski explained that NHDOT used a state-wide transit study that they conducted 3 years ago. The study proposed a commuter route which would be more direct with fewer stops. Ms. Yanski noted she is open to looking at other stops that may be useful to the public. She suggested if a client is over the age of 60 or has a disability, to use the senior buses offered in Merrimack County. It starts in downtown Concord and connects with the Penacook route at Penacook Family Physicians. Ms. Yanski noted the first year is a trial period. If they put a stop in and don't get ridership, they can pull it. If they receive feedback to add a stop, they can rework the route. The plan is to have the route running by the end of the summer. CS Director Gerlack suggested putting a bus stop at N Main St or King St. Ms. Terri Page suggested if they can't add a stop, to discuss the first/last mile to Penacook. Ms. Yanski noted they will have a stop at the new Exit 17. CS Director Gerlack explained that many residents need transportation to county facilities, and she felt that Boscawen would provide great ridership if they had regular stops in town. Ms. Yanski asked to identify a stop in town with a gathering point for people. CS Director Gerlack will reach out to Ms. Yanski to discuss further. Ms. Yanski noted the expansion will offer on-call stops to the Veteran's Cemetery. Individuals who want to be dropped off or picked up at the cemetery can call and they will do a deviation off the route. No further discussion.

CAP has been working with an advocacy group for public transportation in NH to get funding in the state budget that allows them to do projects such as an expansion route. NH is low on the scale for transportation funding per capita, per person. Ms. Yanski noted they receive some capital match that has been traditionally in the budget for purchasing vehicles. It is difficult to get a match for operations such as gas for the vehicles and drivers. Ms. Yanski said it is included in the budget as of now. It passed through the House and still needs to be reviewed by the Senate. She encouraged Boscawen to reach out to representatives to support the funding.

Mr. Bill Heinz presented a concern with the Merrimack Valley School District's tuition agreement with Andover. He brought his concern to the annual school meeting but authority rests with the Select Board. The school district is currently in a 15-year agreement, and they just brokered a new 10-year agreement. Mr. Heinz was concerned that Merrimack Valley's Financial Administration was not billing correctly, causing taxpayers to be shortchanged by a significant amount. Mr. Heinz noted he went to the last school board meeting and suggested they try to reconcile some recent billing statements, dating back 2 to 3 years. He said the school board has not been executing any reconciliations. Mr. Heinz will be reaching out to other town Select Board's in the District to share this information. He is asking the Boscawen Select Board for support in making taxpayers aware of this issue. Mr. Heinz presented the Board with his own calculations and noted Ms. Louise Andrus sent a Freedom of Information request to the district so they can verify data. Town Administrator Katie Phelps wondered if the school district could make up the deficit in future payments. Selectwoman Carey asked if Mr. Heinz believed the

deficits were mistakes or a crime. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey suggested relaying this information to Chairman Matt Burdick and then write a letter to the School Board. The Select Board will follow up on the topic at their next meeting when all members are present. Mr. Heinz asked the Board if he could use a town office meeting room to meet with colleagues to discuss the issue further. All concurred.

Mr. Heinz also noted that the MV School Board denied the Select Board's request to change March 12, 2024 to a teacher's workshop for town voting. They needed to move the teacher's workshop because the annual school board meeting is on a Friday.

Non-Public Session(s):

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 6:28pm under RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll call vote completed. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to exit nonpublic session at 6:30pm under RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll call vote completed. Roll call vote completed. All in favor. None opposed.

Public meeting reopened at 6:30pm.

Selectwoman Carey explained that the Select Board agreed to offer the Police Chief position to an internal candidate. Next week they will find out if the offer was accepted.

Department Head Updates: The building inspector and code enforcement discussion was deferred until next week.

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler gave an update on land use. This month Planning Board worked on the Master Plan and InvestNH with Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC). The Planning Board had concerns that the Penacook-Boscawen Water Precinct was not interested in the InvestNH plan. Public Works Director Dean Hollins met with a water commissioner and found they were very interested in doing grants and working with the town. CNHRPC was also interested in helping with grants. PCD Director Easler noted she has a training set up in May with a woman at Merrimack County. She has a computer that specifically looks for grants. PCD Director Easler will be able to bring back the computer for anyone who needs it.

PCD Director Easler gave an update on the Planning and Community Development department. One of her staff members will be on vacation next week and she will be on vacation the following week. The Cote's septic plan has been drafted and will start soon. The contractor found that the water table was very high, so they had to do some plumbing. They're going to run part of where the water softener is out of the back which is an additional cost. All of the costs will be funded because it will be liened. PCD Director Easler will provide more information next week.

TA Phelps noted the Administrative Fees public hearing has changed from Thursday, April 20th to Thursday, April 27th at 6:00 PM. Furthermore, two Select Board members are unable to attend the April 20th Select Board meeting. TA Phelps recommended canceling the April 20th Select Board meeting. All concurred.

CS Director Gerlack presented a formal payment plan for Resident A for approval. She has worked with the resident for a while, and they have applied for everything possible. The resident would like to enroll in a payment arrangement in case those programs fall through. CS Director Gerlack noted the resident was affected by COVID and lost her business. Resident A has paid a good portion of the taxes and plans to pay the remainder prior to the next taxes. CS Director Gerlack asked the Board to accept the formal payment arrangement for the resident.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to accept the formal payment plan for Resident A. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy Tax Collector Gerlack received the new download for sewer rates. At the annual Penacook-Boscawen Water Precinct meeting they discussed how they are now measuring and billing differently. CS Director Gerlack will send Avitar the file tomorrow to ensure that there are no issues with the software when importing. Sewer rates used to be imported and adjusted based on the decimal values so this will make sewer readings easier.

CS Director Gerlack noted that the welfare department received a \$16,000 grant from the Emergency Food and Shelter Program. Last year the town received the first half at \$8,000. CS Director Gerlack said there were communication issues for the last several months until TA Phelps reached out. The funds have to be spent by April 30th and the town will be reimbursed. CS Director Gerlack will be attending a welfare meeting on April 20th. No further discussion.

Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien presented a Timber Warrant for operation number 22.049.10T in the amount of \$3,266.65 for Tax Map 94 Lots 38 & 40.

Selectman Bevans motioned to approve Timber Warrant 22.049.10T in the amount of \$3,266.65 for Tax Map 94 Lots 38 & 40. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien updated the Board that assessing is very busy right now. All exemptions and credits need to be in for April 15th for the assessors to review. The Board will have to approve or deny any credits or exemptions that come through after the deadline. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien sent an email about the Economic Development Committee's discussion on Community Comprehensive Economic Development (CCED). It establishes regional goals and objectives set forth for a regional action plan and identifies investment priorities and funding sources for the region. EDC discussed the 1913 library, the Commercial St project, the King St project and the study on King St and N Main St. They took the 1913 library off due to town meeting feedback. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien noted more projects are needed. She reached out to Fred Reagan at the school and the Penacook-Boscawen Water Precinct. She encouraged everyone to send any project ideas so they can be reviewed.

Finance Director Kate Merrill noted legal reviewed and updated the liability letter from Vertical Entertainment as a vendor for Old Home Day. In previous discussion, Vertical Entertainment presented their services to the OHD Committee which included inflatables. In the town's insurance contract with Primex, it specifically states they will not cover bouncy houses. The letter from Vertical Entertainment stated that the vendor would be responsible for all liability.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to accept the letter of liability as reviewed by legal, to allow Vertical Entertainment to provide liability coverage on behalf of the Town of Boscawen Old Home Day Committee. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill completed the ARPA reporting for 2023. She will email the report to the Board. The audit was concluded this week. FD Merrill noted they have not received anything formal but there were no issues in the process. They did suggest improvements for the library. FD Merrill will send out the formal audit report once received.

Chief Tim Kenney gave an update on the Fire Department. The forestry truck that was purchased two years ago was listed as complete and is awaiting shipment back to NH. Once it is in NH, it will need a bed liner spray before going to the station. Chief Kenney noted the radios that were bought with ARPA money went into service Sunday night. Each radio identifies a specific position on a truck. Firefighters had training on the radios Monday night, and they have been installed in all the trucks. Chief Kenney noted he started running numbers to fill daytime coverage, per diem. The fire department is unable to handle calls that require a fire engine or more than two people, Monday through Friday during the daytime. In the future, the town will need to discuss this further. Chief Kenney will start the conversation with the new Safety Committee once it's started.

Public Works Director Dean Hollins gave an update on the Public Works department. They received a scale for the transfer station, and it has been inspected and certified. The Tuesday hours at the transfer station began on April 4th. They had a great turnout for the first evening. The town-wide leaf pickup day will be April 24th, a week earlier than usual due to staffing issues. TA Phelps stated a lot of individuals asked if they could do leaf pickup in the fall. PWD Hollins noted they wouldn't have enough staff members in the fall. Residents can dispose of leaves at the transfer station. PWD Hollins has been working with NRRA to find an outlet for their plastic. The NRRA representative suggested putting it on a separate compactor. As of now, it is being separated through the incinerator, but the box only weighs about half a ton when it's full. There is a minimum of a 1-ton tipping fee, so the town is paying more than necessary. PWD Hollins recommended putting a sign out for the public, giving them a 30-day notice that they will need to dispose of plastic in the trash. Selectwoman Carey suggested looking into Canterbury's recycling process. She also asked if they could collaborate with the county. Discussion ensued. PWD Hollins is not familiar with what the county does with plastic, but he will find out more information. PWD Hollins noted an employee will be out for shoulder surgery starting April 17th. The employee will be out for a minimum of 8 weeks but probably longer. Selectwoman Carey asked if they have people certified for weights and measures at the dump. There are two people certified. PWD Hollins said there is a third individual interested in filling out an application, but he will need to get his scale certification. No further discussion.

Chief Kevin Wyman gave an update on the Police department. He has been transitioning all of his responsibilities over to Lieutenant Jason Killary and Police Administrator Lynne Davis. Chief Wyman has been working on the firearms training so it is completed for the year. There are three people in the department that are in the process of transferring to different agencies. The department will be short-staffed, potentially down 4 people. There is an officer out on light duty until June and another officer at the academy until May.

Facilities Director Gary Moore gave an update on the Facilities department. He has been in touch with Yeaton Associates for the generator project. They will be converting the new generator to gas. FD Moore has been working on the Police Department Sally Port issue. He spoke with the Department of Environmental Services in Concord to get a permit to have a dry well in there. FD Moore scheduled a meeting next week with a company that can give a recommendation on putting in a french drain going down to a 55-gallon container of crushed stone. Lieutenant Killary told FD Moore that it averages, at most, 20 gallons of water from snowmelt as long as they don't wash the vehicles or change oil. This week the HVAC Company has been working on hooking up the pumps on the roof for the air conditioning. They are hoping to have it finished before it gets too hot. FD Moore presented 3 pictures of the windows on the torrent building. They were smashed and FD Moore had to clean the glass out of the parking lot. Selectwoman Carey asked if they could put plastic on the broken windows. A lift truck would be needed to reach the windows. FD Moore is aware of the step hazard at the 1913 Library. He estimated \$700 to \$1,000 for the cost to repair. They could bring in a contractor or PWD Hollins previously mentioned he could fix it for less of a cost. PWD Hollins noted they would need to clean it out and replace the brick for the foundation so the granite can slide in. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien suggested fixing the steps if they plan on showing the 1913 Library to buyers. FD Moore researched more information on the \$18,000 request from Otis Elevator. He found that other companies can do the same annual work for half the price. By not having Otis Elevator, if the computer chip goes down, the elevator would not be functional for about 5 days. FD Moore found the original contract dated back to 2004 and he asked for an updated contract. Otis sent an updated contract with the same language. FD Moore renewed the contract a couple of weeks ago when the bill was due. At that time, he found that the town must give Otis Elevator a minimum notice of 90-days, maximum 120-days if they do not want to renew. FD Moore will research other elevator companies next year. Selectman Bevans suggested staying with the original contract and not signing the updated one. He recommended giving a 90-day notice when they find another company unless Otis owes the town a service within the 90-days. Discussion ensued. The updated contract was signed by FD Moore. He will send a notice of non-renewal to Otis Elevator between the 90-day to 120-day window, next year.

No public comment.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 13, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Selectman Bevans motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner