

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 11, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kate Merrill & Nicole Hoyt

Guests: Bill Heinz, Ray Fisher, Loren Martin, Tom Laliberte, and Joshua Crawford

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—01/04/24
- Re-appoint Hoyt—Municipal Records Committee
- 2024 Letter to the Advisory Budget Committee

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey noted grammatical changes to the 01.04.23 public minutes.

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

Department Head Updates: Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt received suggestions from Select Board members for the Town Report cover. She presented the three suggestions in a mockup draft and mentioned that the final cover would be decided by the Tax Administration department town staff. The two pictures not chosen will be included somewhere in the report. Discussion ensued on a dedication. The Select Board decided to dedicate the honor to Mr. Roger Sanborn and acknowledge Mr. Bob Carey in memoriam.

Town Clerk Hoyt gave an update on the Tax Administration department. Delinquent notices will be sent out tomorrow, Friday, January 12th. Town Clerk Hoyt noted the town took in over \$1 million in online payments for taxes this year. Residents enjoy the convenience of online payments. She noted the online donations have not started yet. No further discussion.

Finance Director Kate Merrill presented three Capital Reserve Fund transfers.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Trustees of the Trust Funds to transfer \$11,596.50 from the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to reimburse for the following expenditures: Ossipee Mtn. Electronics (Invoice #89652)—\$11,596.50. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Trustees of the Trust Funds to transfer \$58,710 from the Highway Heavy Equipment Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to reimburse for the following expenditures: Grappone (Invoice #6062789)—\$58,710. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Trustees of the Trust Funds to transfer \$21,060 from the Municipal Buildings Capital Reserve Fund to the General Fund to reimburse for the following expenditures: Giguere Electric, Inc—\$21,060. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey presented the findings on grant money the town received. The Human Services Department received two grants in the amount of \$8,563 and \$1,500. The Police Department was awarded the Highway Safety grant for \$6,600 and a Radar grant for \$11,766. The Facilities Department received a Generator grant for \$75,000 and a Moose Plate Window Restoration grant for \$7,075. The Public Works Department received an additional Bridge grant for \$15,233.08 and an additional Highway grant for \$23,886.25. The Planning and Community Development Department was awarded \$26,950 for the HOP grant. In total, employees secured \$176,573.33 in grants for 2023 to assist the town.

Chairman Burdick and Selectwoman Carey attended the Merrimack Valley School Board meeting where they decided on dates for the elections. The general election will be held in November at the Boscawen Elementary School. The primary election was tentatively approved for September 10th for either a remote or day off for Boscawen Elementary School. The Select Board suggested asking the Parks and Recreation Program Director to hold a program at the Boscawen Town Park for parents and students affected by the election. Students cannot be at the school during the election due to potential firearm carriers. Discussion ensued. TA Phelps noted counselors may not be available. Selectwoman Carey suggested teachers may volunteer to help. The staff would need to be paid for the day. FD Merrill noted that the expense was not budgeted for. She also mentioned that they may need to onboard the staff. Selectwoman Carey suggested paying staff a stipend. FD Merrill will research requirements further. The discussion will continue next week.

TA Phelps received a letter for the Boscawen Congregational Church regarding the floor bouncing in the sanctuary. Turnbuckles were installed in the Town Hall that support the floor above. The turnbuckles were installed to replace fixed columns in the Town Hall to make it more open. The Church asked if the town was looking into engineers to fix the issue. Facilities Director Gary Moore reached out to a few engineers, but most of them don't do that type of work. TA Phelps mentioned that Mr. Keith Pratt from Underwood Engineers suggested reaching out to some structural engineers. They will continue to work on the issue and reach out to the suggested engineers. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey suggested putting the columns back up. TA Phelps said they could ask an engineer if that would be feasible. She noted Facilities Director Moore originally thought about tightening the turnbuckles to save money, but some engineering firms mentioned that overtightening can cause other issues. Selectman Bevans will share a list of structural engineers with Facilities Director Moore.

TA Phelps mentioned there is not a current procedure in place for volunteers of the town, who are not employees, to contact vendors funded by the town. She was made aware that a volunteer Selectwoman Carey suggested for contracted vendors, to use the same procedures they were using for legal counsel. For any committee, all communication should go through the Chair member and then the Chair would contact the department head or town administrator. From there, questions could be brought to the contractor as needed.

TA Phelps presented the 2024 draft Town Warrant for review. The warrant article related to having two separate sessions for Town Meeting was removed because it must be a petitioned warrant article. A Contingency article was added with a budget amount of \$30,000. It can be up to 1% of the preceding year's budget, excluding capital expenditures and amortization of debt. In total, contingency could be increased to \$44,259 if the Board wanted to increase it. The Town Warrant has been reviewed by legal counsel and the Board has received their feedback. The Board reviewed warrant articles to recommend.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recommend Warrant Article #10 rescinding the authority to accept dedicated streets for public use, from the Select Board, and giving authority back to Town Meeting in accordance with the provisions of NH RSA 674: 40-A. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

The Board deferred recommendations on the Operating Budget and Contributions to Capital Reserves previously established.

The Board discussed warrant article #13 to Establish a Fire Department Command Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund in the amount of \$10,000. Selectman Bevans was not in favor of recommending. The fire department currently uses an old police cruiser as their vehicle. Chairman Burdick mentioned at some point it will need to be replaced, but it could be replaced with another used police cruiser. It may require some work to meet requirements. The Board discussed why it had to be a command vehicle and not just a vehicle capital reserve fund. FD Merrill suggested it may be because Fire Trucks are covered under the Fire Truck Capital Reserve Fund, and this would be a different vehicle type. The Board asked for further follow up on how restrictive the current Fire Truck capital reserve fund is and whether that would be sufficient to cover both.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend Warrant Article #14 to authorize the Trustees of the Trust Funds, to pay for Professional Banking or Brokerage Assistance for Capital Reserve Funds. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend Warrant Article #15 to adopt the provisions of NH RSA 162-K, Municipal Economic Development and Revitalization Districts, which will authorize the establishment of one or more development districts at a future Town Meeting. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps noted that warrant article #15 requires a public hearing according to NH RSA 162-K:4, at least 15 days prior to Town Meeting, with a 7-day notice. She scheduled a public hearing for Thursday, February 15 at 6:00PM. The Board members were agreeable to that date.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend Warrant Article #16 to Establish Walker Pond as a Town Forest. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend Warrant Article #17 to adopt the Boscawen Community Power Plan, to authorize the Select Board to implement the plan, and to take all action in furtherance thereof, pursuant to RSA 53-E. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recommend Warrant Article #18, to Establish a Contingency Fund in the amount of \$30,000. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recommend Warrant Article #19, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$500 to contribute to the recruitment efforts of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) of NH. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recommend Warrant Article #20, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$100 to contribute to the operating costs of the American Red Cross. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend Warrant Article #21, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,600 for the continuation of services to the residents of Boscawen through the Concord area Center of the Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans motioned to recommend Warrant Article #22, to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,500 to contribute to the operating costs of the Boscawen Historical Society. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps noted that Christy Goodhue will be providing her information in the next few days regarding the Torrent Station. TA Phelps will follow up with Penacook Rescue Squad as well.

Chairman Burdick asked for an update on the chalkboard discussion. TA Phelps noted Facilities Director Moore has been out but he does have some offers. She will follow up with him on Tuesday.

Selectman Bevans asked a question regarding the Torrent Station. He mentioned the Penacook Rescue Squad increased their operating budget to include a percentage for repairs to the Torrent

Station, as if they were acquiring it. Selectman Bevans was unaware that they could do that without acquiring the building first. Chairman Burdick asked if there was any further follow up. There has not been any follow up with Penacook Rescue Squad. TA Phelps noted they were waiting to see information from the realtor first. Once she has more information, she will follow up with the Board.

In regard to the 1913 Library, they have been waiting on NH Preservation Alliance to meet and provide information on what type of historical covenants they recommend for the building.

Selectwoman Carey noted the Economic Development Committee met this week regarding the Parks Grant for the Boscawen Town Park. They put together an outline for the grant application and will submit a letter of intent. They discussed equipment that may be down at the park including a pavilion that is electrified to be used 24/7. They discussed ideas such as building a stone wall with repurposed materials from the Commercial Street mill site to create a fence. Additionally, having an observation area where the bridge was. They felt good about the prospects of getting it done and successfully obtaining the grant. No further discussion.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 6:40 PM.

Mr. Bill Heinz asked why elections couldn't be held at the Town Hall. Selectwoman Carey noted that the expected attendance for elections wouldn't fit in the Town Hall. In 2012, they had to move to the school because voters couldn't fit, and it turned into non-compliance. Election regulations are even stricter now with the square footage, and number of election workers. Mr. Heinz questioned how it would be compliant at the library. Selectwoman Carey mentioned the Town Hall had ADA and code compliance problems. The library does not have any code compliance problems and the ADA accessibility would be through the elevator.

Mr. Ray Fisher suggested turning off the meter by the Fire Station for the Christmas tree because it was not being used. He put up the community Christmas tree this year. He noted in the past the Fire Department was doing it but stopped last year. When he was putting up the lights, he called Unitil to activate the meter and found that the meter had been on, and the town was paying monthly. Mr. Fisher suggested deactivating it and only turning it on during the Christmas week. He noted when he was Fire Chief, they put a tap in the lines and ran it for the month of December. In his last year as Chief, they put in the meter but never used it. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey clarified that Fire Chief Tim Kenney had asked the firefighters if they wanted to do the Christmas lights and they chose not to last year. Selectwoman Carey asked about the process of turning the meter back on for the Christmas lights, if a resident wanted to turn them on. Residents should contact Facilities Director Gary Moore by November 1st annually.

Mr. Fisher asked when he could give public comment on the budgets. TA Phelps said the budget hearing will be on February 1st.

Mr. Joshua Crawford asked if the School Board was waiting on a recommendation from the Select Board for the September election at the school. Chairman Burdick clarified that the School Board was waiting on the Select Board to confirm the Parks and Recreation program idea. From there, Principal Drouin would ask the parents in town to see what they would prefer. Mr. Crawford noted that if there were a snow day, parents would only have a few hours to find a solution for childcare. Mr. Crawford suggested that given the election would be in September, it would give parents plenty of time to request time off for the day, so that they could close the school for elections.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 6:53PM.

Non-Public Sessions:

Chairman Burdick motioned to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3:II (c) at 6:54 PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to exit non-public under RSA 91-A:3, II (c) at 8:05 PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to reenter the public session at 8:06 PM. 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 could affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of the Board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans motioned to adjourn at 8:07 PM. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 18, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner