

**Town of Boscawen  
Select Board  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

**In Attendance:** Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, and Kate Merrill

**Guests:** Charlie Niebling and Tom Laliberte

**Roll Call:** completed and guests introduced.

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

**Consent Agenda Items:**

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Public Minutes for Approval—03/14/24
- Report from Executive Councilor Warmingtton
- Police Dept Activity Report 03/01 – 03/17/24

**Selectman Matt Burdick motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Selectman Bill Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Affinity LED Follow Up:** Mr. Charlie Niebling, Vice Chair of the Energy Committee recommended that the Select Board proceed with entering into an agreement with Affinity LED to undertake the project of swapping out the town's streetlights with LED lighting. He noted the Energy Committee unanimously voted in favor of the recommendation. Mr. Niebling clarified some questions from last meeting. He met with Finance Director, Kate Merrill, Facilities Director Gary Moore, and the President of Affinity, Steve Lieber, to ensure they fully understood the financial mechanics of the project. The project total was \$38,000 based on approximately 68 streetlights in town. The pre-approved rebate from Unitil would be \$25,000. Unitil would pay the town back \$13,000 for the remaining balance. The remaining balance and the \$17,000 net book value owed to Unitil on the pre-existing fixtures must be paid back to Unitil within the 60-month financing contract at 0% interest. At the end of the 60 months, the town will have paid off the investment and saved approximately \$6,258. Mr. Niebling noted that 50% of the total would be due as soon as the Select Board signed the contract and the other 50% would be paid after Affinity completes the audit of all fixtures, and the lighting plan is approved by the town. They anticipated the project would be finished by June. Once the project is complete, the rebate paperwork would be submitted to Unitil and within 4 to 6 weeks the town would receive 100% reimbursement back. Finance Director Kate Merrill said they would treat the expense as a receivable. It does not have to come out of an expense line because they will be reimbursed, so they're floating the money. Discussion ensued.

**Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the streetlight project agreement with Affinity LED. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Finance Director Merrill noted Facilities Director Gary Moore said they will need to assign a point of contact and authorizer to sign the agreement. She said FD Moore suggested he should be the point of contact since he will be in charge of the project.

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to authorize Facilities Director Moore to be the point of contact for the project. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to authorize Town Administrator Katie Phelps to sign the contract with Affinity LED for the streetlight project. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Department Head Updates:** Mr. Niebling gave an update on the Land and Water Grant for the town park improvements project which included the picnic pavilion, expansion, improvement to accessibility of the bathrooms in the Dorval house, and construction of an observation deck or platform at the edge of the old bridge at the river. There will be fencing and landscaping associated with the project. Mr. Niebling said he has been having work sessions with Chairwoman Carey, Mr. John Porter, and Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler to develop a budget. They are developing a one-page document to inform people about the project and also promote donations. The total project costs will be \$250,000. The Economic Development Committee (EDC) will seek a \$125,000 grant through the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant. Mr. Niebling said they would raise the balance with private contributions. They have \$26,000 from the Department of Transportation (DOT) Bridge Removal. At the working session, they discussed using some of the Parks & Recreation Capital Reserve Fund, about \$10,000, to offset some of the costs for improved accessibility to bathrooms. It would provide another access to the Dorval bathrooms. There are no restrooms for people using the Northern Rail Trail, fields, or tennis courts, so having the outside accessibility would help. They would partner with the Northern Rail Trail Committee (NRTC) to allow them to access the Dorval House for restroom use. The NRTC's vision was to have multiple rest stops along the trail for users. Mr. Niebling said they would need to raise about \$90,000 for the project. He felt they could raise the funds between contributions of materials, services, and businesses in town that agree to participate. The pavilion could also generate revenue if they charged group fees for rental use. Mr. Niebling noted they need to submit a letter of interest in June for the grant. The Economic Development Committee will review and draft the letter in May. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans asked if they would need to go back to Town Meeting for approval for an addition. Selectman Burdick questioned if the doors and ramps would be considered additions. Mr. Niebling said there could be a bump out of the footprint because the bathrooms must be accessible simultaneously to people from the outside and to people on the inside of Dorval. He mentioned Mr. Porter found an architect in Bow, NH that agreed to assist and advise, pro bono. Discussion ensued. Mr. Niebling felt confident in the proposal for the state grant and that the public would be supportive. The EDC will proceed as if the grant is not available while the Select Board determines whether it is an appropriate use of funds.

Finance Director Merrill presented a Conservation Commission resignation for the Select Board to accept from Mr. Lyman Cousens.

**Selectman Burdick motioned to accept the resignation from Mr. Cousens as a member of the Conservation Commission with regrets and thanks. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.**

Chairwoman Carey asked if the Conservation Commission had an alternate member to fill Mr. Cousens role. Selectman Burdick clarified there were other members ready to fill the role.

FD Merrill presented an annual policy review schedule. The fund balance policy is updated in September near tax rate setting time, the safety manual for Joint Loss is updated at the discretion of the committee, and the Employee Manual is updated as needed and is currently being reviewed. Chairwoman Carey mentioned they usually received a Welfare Manual with updates and changes to approve. FD Merrill will touch base with TA Phelps and Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt. FD Merrill noted she sent TA Phelps the Select Board Agenda policy and Select Board Rules and Procedure Policy to update. The Select Board policies are usually updated after Town Meeting. Once she completes the edits, they will bring the draft policy and procedures to the Select Board for approval.

FD Merrill presented a memo from TA Phelps with Town Administrator updates. There was a ZOOM meeting with Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC), NHDES, EPA, and staff on March 19 to discuss the Cleanup Grant and RFQ update. They are planning to meet at Commercial Street on April 2nd at 1:00 PM. The RFP will be revised. They will also likely seek a one-year extension for the EPA Cleanup Grant. Chairwoman Carey inquired if there would be an increase in cost due to the new RFP. FD Merrill will ask TA Phelps.

For Boscawen Community Power, the Cost Sharing Agreement, Member Services Contract, and Final Electric Aggregation Plan have been sent to the appropriate contacts at CPCNH.

There is a Torrent Station work session scheduled for Thursday, March 28th at 5:00 PM. A quorum of the Select Board will be required at the office and member(s) of Penacook Rescue Squad have been invited along with the potential buyer.

PCD Director Easler, PCD Coordinator Kara Gallagher, FD Merrill, and TA Phelps will be attending training with Primex in Portsmouth on Wednesday, May 15th and Thursday, May 16th. FD Merrill noted it was a free training that Primex hosted. The only costs would be lodging and meals, if necessary.

The Town's IT Provider, Cybertron, will be switching everyone over from passwords to passphrases effective Friday, April 5th. This change was per recommendation from Primex. TA Phelps sent staff out the auto-generated passphrases from Cybertron. If staff members would like them changed, they need to email TA Phelps as soon as possible.

TA Phelps drafted a second letter to a homeowner on Prospect Street regarding chickens roaming on a neighbor's property. It was hand delivered by the Police Department and mailed certified and regular mail. Fines of \$275 per day will begin April 4th if the zoning violation has not been corrected. Chairwoman Carey asked if it was following up on multiple complaints by neighbors regarding the issue. Selectman Bevans clarified that it was a follow up from Mr. Alan Hardy, former Code Enforcement Officer, who addressed the complaints last year. Selectman Bevans has confirmed the issue exists.

Signups for the Parks and Recreation Summer Park Program will be Tuesday, April 16th from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM in the Town Clerk and Tax Collector's Office. Early registrations will not be accepted. Chairwoman Carey asked if they would receive updates on the number of registrations. FD Merrill will ask Parks and Recreation Director Lori Cronan to submit an update on registrations.

Chairwoman Carey asked if they could clarify and post for the public, the RFP process before they begin. FD Merrill will work on it.

Selectman Burdick gave an update on the PILOT project. They were waiting for the finalized assessment information from Avitar prior to moving forward on the project.

Selectman Bevans gave an update on the Impact Fee project. The updated policy was sent for legal review. He suggested verbiage stating departments could only use a certain percentage of impact fees. It was not written in the policy but was included in the RSA. Chairwoman Carey said it would be a good question to ask during the impact fee training. Selectman Bevans suggested there was a need to track the impact fee spending including why they were needed, how much was used, and the department. He recommended creating a specific form for department heads to fill out regarding the use. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans suggested adding a layer to the town's process and sending the form to the Planning Board first for approval and then the Select Board. Chairwoman Carey suggested using the same format used for the expenditure of ARPA funds for the Impact Fee form. FD Merrill will create the form and include a Planning Board review section. She asked if one member of the Board could make the decision to use fees. Discussion ensued. Chairwoman Carey suggested using the verbiage 'technical review', and if a review was needed it would go to Planning Board first. If no review is needed, a Board member can approve it. Selectman Bevans said TA Phelps sent the procedure to legal for review. Selectman Bevans reviewed it and was questioning whether to add the percentage portion in the verbiage because it was not in the procedure, but in the RSA. Chairwoman Carey clarified that the RSA was not specific as to what the percentage was. No further discussion.

Selectman Burdick was unable to attend the Old Home Day Committee meeting on Monday, March 18th. He was able to provide an update from Mr. Gary Tillman. The Spring Yard Sale will be Saturday, May 18th from 8 AM to 2 PM at the Municipal Office. The local food truck vendor, Teenie Wienies, will be serving breakfast and lunch. They agreed to Ms. Adele Sanborn's pig theme for this year's OHD parade.

Selectman Burdick noted the Conservation Commission had a two-hour long presentation by one of the non-game scientist officials from NH Fish and Game talking about frogs, turtles, and lizards. The Conservation Commission will be purchasing turtle crossing signs that will be put up during the appropriate season in a few locations throughout town to inform the public to be aware it is a highly populated area.

Chairwoman Carey noted there will be a presentation at the Webster Town Hall on Saturday, March 30th at 2 PM. The presentation will cover increases in property tax bills and discussion of the NH School Funding Fairness project.

FD Merrill presented a re-appointment on behalf of Fire Chief Timothy Kenney regarding a Forest Fire Warden for 2024. The Board signed the re-appointments. Chairwoman Carey read the re-appointments: Nicole Hoyt, Karyn Chagnon, Adam Egounis, Michael Fisher, Scott Dow, Timothy Kenney and Mark Bailey. Sarah Gerlack will be removed.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to approve the re-appointments of the Forest Fire Wardens. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

FD Merrill asked for clarification on the status change forms she has been working on for after town meeting. They have seen the wage schedule go into effect this year. She asked how to proceed. They previously discussed that the annual step increase would be awarded on the first Monday following Town Meeting. In exchange for your annual step increase, if you have your longevity year and receive the 5%, she asked for clarification on if it would be awarded at the same time as the annual increase or the longevity date. Selectman Burdick was in favor of it being awarded on their longevity date. FD Merrill said a department head asked if it was appropriate to give the 2.9% COLA during the annual step increases and give the difference of the 5% longevity, which is 2.1%, later in the year on the date of hire anniversary. Chairwoman Carey was in favor of that approach.

**Selectman Burdick motioned to approve that on 5-year intervals that employees receive the COLA and annual step increase on the Monday after Town Meeting. Furthermore, upon their hire date, if an employee is in their longevity year, they receive the difference of 2.1% longevity on their date of hire. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Chairwoman Carey listed pending tasks the Board members were working on. Together the Board needed to work on the covenants for the Torrent Station and 1913 Library. The initial discussion will be next Thursday, March 28th. They also need to prepare for the bond discussion regarding saving to build construction. They need to invite Canterbury and Salisbury to a Rescue Tri-Town meeting to discuss their vision for Penacook Rescue Squad. FD Merrill suggested Selectman Bevans could involve the Public Safety Advisory Committee. The County Boat Ramp project may be part of a PILOT agreement or a waiver agreement for public use. Chairwoman Carey would like to follow up on the project. There has been an ongoing discussion regarding Town Hall and updating the Emergency Management plan. There is one line left to perambulate

with Webster. Selectman Bevens will work on it. Selectman Bevens would like to reach out to Center Hill Barn in Canterbury to design a blueprint of the future Public Safety Building. It would help determine the costs. Selectman Bevens will forward the contact information over to Facilities Director Moore to look into. Chairwoman Carey brought up the discussion regarding the storage of items in the Town Hall that belong to town committees. Selectman Burdick said FD Moore suggested reconsidering and utilizing the facility for storage. Discussion ensued. The Board's recommendation to FD Moore was to proceed economically and to work with Public Works to remove the old Police Department building at the most efficient cost. Additionally, looking at using the Municipal Office building and Dorval House for storage.

Chairwoman Carey opened public comment at 7:02 PM.

Mr. Tom Laliberte, Corn Hill Road, asked if the public could attend the March 30<sup>th</sup> meeting at Webster Town Hall. Chairwoman Carey clarified that anyone could attend the meeting and encouraged it. Mr. Laliberte asked if the bond discussion would be on the Select Board meeting agenda or in another separate meeting. Chairwoman Carey noted it would become a subcommittee. The Board has discussed creating a committee for this summer. Mr. Laliberte was interested in joining the bond discussion task force.

Chairwoman Carey closed public comment at 7:04 PM.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, March 28, 2024, at 5:00 PM.

**Selectman Bevens motioned to adjourn at 7:05 PM. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.**

*Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner*