

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 22, 2022 at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Matt Burdick, Katie Phelps, Kearsten O'Brien, Kate Merrill, Kellee Easler, Nicole Hoyt, and Dean Hollins.

Guests: Alan H. Hardy, Conservation Commission Chairman; Keith Pratt, President of Underwood Engineers; and Meagan McCowan, Project Engineer.

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Chairwoman Carey opened the public meeting at 6:00 P.M.

Selectman Matt Burdick motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Chairwoman Lorrie Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

No public comment on the agenda.

New Business: Conservation Commission Chairman, Alan Hardy, proposed creating a document for emergency lane declarations and that it be the master document. The emergency lane would start at Water St and go to the boat launch. CC Chairman Hardy met with Public Works Director Dean Hollins to discuss the plowing issue at the boat launch. They found a solution to the physical issue. To move the matter forward, there must be a public hearing. Chairwoman Carey asked if the town had other emergency lanes. PWD Hollins said Best Ave and the beginning of Chadwick Hill Rd are emergency lanes. Chairwoman Carey stated all lanes must be filed. Selectman Burdick asked for a description of emergency lanes vs reclassification. CC Chairman Hardy stated emergency lanes protect Class 6 roads because they have a public safety aspect allowing it to be maintained, should an emergency vehicle need to get through. He said they need letters from the Town Administrator, Public Works Director, Fire Chief, and Police Chief for public record. PWD Hollins said Class 6 roads are not allowed to use tax dollars, but emergency lanes will help with maintenance. CC Chairman Hardy suggested the Town establish a revolving fund. There will be a 10-day public notice and the hearing held on October 13.

Members of Underwood Engineers, Keith Pratt and Meagan McCowan presented their update on the review of the sewer rate study and their recommendations. For background information, the last time rates were examined was in 2019. Mr. Pratt recommended reviewing rates every 2 years. They anticipated a 15% increase which the rates last increased in 2019 at 20%. The increase was based on a lot of capital projects in Concord. For the 2022 review, they refreshed on water and sewer data as well as what Concord has been charging and what they project. Underwood established and projected the Town's revenues and expenses for the next 5 years. Mr. Pratt said they considered Boscawen's capital improvements to maintain assets but, in the future, they will be dealing with more capital improvements such as sewer replacement projects. The general fund is contributing \$48,000 annually to the Sewer fund. Mr. Pratt drew attention to

two main points, one being, Boscawen is subject to the costs in Concord including the Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) costs. He also said they need to consider increasing the general fund contribution. The collection system that Boscawen owns and operates goes to a metering station on the Concord line and Concord Treatment Facility that they own and operate. Boscawen is subject to their rates through an agreement including capital costs. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Concord was signed in the 2005 when they reduced allocation in Penacook. There was a large, reserved capacity in the facility at Penacook and with the loss of the tanneries and the Commercial St area, they chose to lower capacity. This is important because it is the basis of how costs are shared. Mr. Pratt noted the total accounts have not had a lot of growth in system. The daily average production is 48,000 gallons a day from meter reads provided by the Penacook-Boscawen Water Precinct. It is the basis of billing. Mr. Pratt said Boscawen represents over a third of the water entering the Penacook facility. Paying attention to costs and water has a big impact on the budget. Ms. Meagan McCowan reviewed the revenues and expenditures. Revenues remained stable from 2019 through 2021. The majority of expenditures are from Concord, around 85% to 90%. There was a significant increase in operating expenditures. Ms. McCowan reviewed the historical charges dating back to 1998 from Concord. There charges have increased since 2018. Capital charges from Concord are predicted to increase significantly for Boscawen. Ms. McCowan noted it is hard to accurately predict when projects change. She recommended the town request documents from Concord on an annual basis. Ms. McCowan presented predictions of increases for Concord charges. Boscawen's four sources of revenue are sewer rates, the general fund, connection fees and interest on account balances. The main source is sewer rates, using 48,000 gallons per day for consumption. Ms. McCowan presented three scenarios to increase revenue. The variable was the general fund contribution because that amount would affect how much the rate needs to be raised. Scenario 1 would be keeping the general fund contribution at \$48,000 which would result in a recommended rate increase of 30% in 2023 and two 5% increases the following years. Scenario 2, Underwood's primary recommendation, would be to increase the general fund contribution proportionally to what is being charged by Concord. For 2023 the General Fund contribution would increase to \$85,920. Underwood recommended this option based on Boscawen's rates already being above the State's average. It would result in a 10% increase in 2023 and two 5% increases the following years. It would also result in reducing the amount above the state average to 30% in 2025. Scenario 3 would be to increase the general fund to \$65,000 per year which results in a 20% increase in 2023. Chairwoman Carey asked about increasing connection fees. Mr. Pratt said they would normally recommend proportionally increasing connection fees to 20% but it won't have a significant impact on revenues. Mr. Pratt recommended Scenario 2 which would take effect in January and would need a public hearing. Chairwoman Carey clarified the proposal was to increase the General fund to \$85,920 and increase connection fees to \$2,100. Boscawen will also invest money better to get a successful return. Selectman Burdick was concerned homeowners would get hit twice in taxes. Selectman Burdick clarified that the general fund comes through taxation of property owners, whereas rate increases go to users, including apartments. Chairwoman Carey asked if infrastructure money passed by the Federal Government was available to improve storm water. Mr. Pratt said they applied for the grant, and storm water would be eligible. Discussion ensued. The next steps for the rate increase are to decide on the recommendation and have a public hearing.

Department Head Updates: Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt made the Board aware of an upcoming foreclosure sale. She also presented a legislative update on upcoming bills. One bill allows farm tractors to have antique plates. The Marriage License bill changed, following the Restroom Access Act. It says person(s) to be married shall appear in person to the clerk of the town to file the marriage intentions and sign the application for their marriage license. The new law states both parties can agree on another location if they can't appear in person. Town Clerk Hoyt was concerned with how the town will implement the change. Discussion ensued. Town Clerk Hoyt will be attending a Town Clerks conference next month and will learn more about the logistics. She will also have more information on OHRV's being allowed on sidewalks and Class 4 through 6 roads.

Town Administrator Phelps and others met with members of Briar Hydro to start negotiations on the next Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement. The town took Briar Hydro's PILOT information and discussed suggested changes. Briar Hydro is reviewing the changes and will come back with a revised proposal.

TA Phelps informed the Board there have been two written complaints concerning Park St and Tremont St. Complaints refer to safety concerns. Chief Kevin Wyman told TA Phelps it is the Board's decision what direction to go. There could be 'No Parking' signs or a "No Parking" ordinance created. TA Phelps recommended putting signs on the corner of Park St and Oak St, the sharp corner on Chandler St, Tremont St and Eel St. A prior suggestion from Lieutenant Jason Killary was to create a 'No Parking' ordinance. It would have visible signs and could be enforced such as parking tickets.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to request that the Police Department proceed with a "No Parking Ordinance" and signage. Furthermore, to provide a list of the problem areas based on their records. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps asked for the Board's input on legislative policy and principle changes ahead of the meeting on Friday at NHMA. Chairwoman Carey suggested giving TA Phelps and Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler authority to act in the Town's best interest. She would like them to have the ability to vote on amended bills. She also noted that the Board votes for what NHMA supports.

Public Works Director Dean Hollins said they are working on vehicle inspections right now. The roadside mower needs a large repair. It broke three times last season and is now beyond reasonable repair. PWD Hollins sent out the hydraulic motor to be rebuilt. Replacement cost is \$2,200. A new mower would cost around \$100,000. If it can be rebuilt, they will start mowing next week.

Finance Director Kate Merrill said Health Trust had their public hearing on rates and return of surplus today. They gave those that attended, their estimated rates for next year. The rates aren't finalized until the Board of Directors approve it on October 4th. It's estimated that there will be an 11.7% increase in health insurance costs for 2023. FD Merrill researched different health insurance plans, but it is difficult to find companies who do COBRA and retiree administration. They could go to other plans, but it won't cover what HealthTrust does. FD Merrill

recommended to have their Benefit Advisor come in and talk to the Board about different plans in a work session. Chairwoman Carey suggested a condensed work session to ask questions. They will review the plans before the meeting with the Benefits Advisor.

FD Merrill reminded everyone about the Employee and Volunteer Appreciation event next Wednesday, September 28th beginning at 6:0pm at the Fire Station.

PCD Director Easler said Kenney's court status update will be on October 24, 2022.

PCD Director Easler said meeting dates will be changing for Boards, Commissions and Committees. She asked the Board to encourage everyone to go with a meeting date schedule that would help with staffing issues. Changes include having two meetings back to back on one night instead of a separate night.

PCD Director Easler said Mike Tardiff from Central NH Regional Planning Commission is working on an application the Invest NH. It is a grant for the Zoning Ordinance updates and Land Development Regulations. This year they are looking at Planned Unit Development, an amendment to Cluster, Renewable Energy and Master Plan updates. The application will need signatures from the Board or TA Phelps with authorization.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to authorize Town Administrator Phelps to sign the application for a grant for the Zoning Updates on behalf of the Board. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien informed the Board that they were able to get apple cider donuts for the Parks and Recreation Movie night. They are up to 300 people interested.

Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien said security cameras have been partially installed. The contractors will hopefully finish the installation tomorrow. Next week the key fobs will be in for the Police Station as well as alarm systems.

Chairwoman Carey announced this weekend is the 25th Anniversary of the NH State Veterans Cemetery. Currently, 1,800 people are planning to attend so there may be traffic in town.

Selectman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (A). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to exit nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (A). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (A) for three years. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (L). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to exit nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (L). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic under RSA 91-A, 3 II (L) for three years. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to exit nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C) for three years. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to exit nonpublic session under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic under RSA 91-A, 3 II (C) for three years. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 29, 2022, at 6:00 PM.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner