

**Town of Boscawen  
Select Board  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, February 16, 2023, at 6:00 PM**

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

Guests: George Reagan, Gary Tillman, Bill Bevans, Barbara Randall, Dale Randall, Bill Hines

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

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

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

**Public Hearings:**

*Notice is hereby given in accordance with RSA 261:153, VI ( c)(2) that: The Boscawen Select Board will meet on Thursday, February 16, 2023 after 6:00 PM in the 4<sup>th</sup> floor meeting room, 116 North Main St, Boscawen, NH 03303, to hold a public hearing to adopt provisions of RSA 261:153 VI at the March 2023 Town Meeting, to collect an additional \$5 fee in addition to the motor vehicle registration fees, for the purpose of supporting a municipal and transportation improvement fund, which shall be a capital reserve fund established for the purpose of general road improvements; and to see if the Town will authorize the establishment of a Capital Reserve Fund (pursuant to RSA Chapter 35) to be known as the "Transportation Improvement Capital Reserve Fund" for the purpose of said road improvements and to designate the Select Board as agents to expend.*

Chairwoman Carey opened the public hearing at 6:04 PM.

Chairwoman Carey clarified the purpose, to collect an additional \$5 fee from both homeowners and renters for each motor vehicle registered in order to fund future road improvements. Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien will post the fact sheet provided by Central NH Regional Planning Commission, on the town website under the transparency project.

Resident of Tremont St—Mr. Bill Hines asked about anticipated revenue. Chairwoman Carey said the anticipated revenue is about \$20,000 per year.

Resident of 83 N Main St—Mr. Gary Tillman stated he was against the additional motor vehicle fee because there are no exemptions for farm vehicles. It will affect farmers the most. Chairwoman Carey said there are 20 farm vehicles in town, and they are not all owned by the same farm.

Resident of 416 High St—Mr. Bill Bevans stated he was against the additional fee. He asked where the idea started. Chairwoman Carey said Central Regional Planning Commission brought it forward to Economic Development as well as the Town Clerk. It has been discussed with several committees. One of the issues in town is the conditions of the roads and sidewalks. The fee is a way to incrementally save over time in order to complete projects. Mr. Bevans said the RSA did not specifically state that it would be used for roads. He asked how much the town will keep of the \$20,000 in anticipated revenue. The town can keep up to 10% to put it into the general fund to implement the program. Chairwoman Carey said the town would keep .50 cents per vehicle. Mr. Bevans noted the Town would be taking \$2,000 of the anticipated revenue. All residents in Boscawen, including renters would be required to pay the fee. Mr. Bevans stated residents pay enough taxes on everything else. For those who have multiple vehicles, it will cost more than \$5. Mr. Bevans will have to pay \$25. He understood that the town is trying to make it fair for everybody, but renters will be affected, and they don't get decreases on their taxes.

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler clarified that RSA 261:153 VI specifically stated it would be used for the transportation system including roads and bridges.

Resident of 279 Daniel Webster Hwy—Ms. Barbara Randall, member of the Economic Development Committee was in favor of the additional fee. She understood that it could affect residents, but people also spend \$5 on a coffee every morning. Ms. Randall said the fee would be a better way for Public Works to raise money.

Chairwoman Carey closed the public hearing at 6:12pm.

*The Select Board of the Town of Boscawen will hold a Public Hearing at the Boscawen Municipal Facility, 116 North Main St, Boscawen, NH in the fourth-floor meeting room after 6:00pm on Thursday, February 16, 2023. The hearing is to discuss the issuance of \$6,500,000 of bonds or notes to replace sanitary sewer lines in the areas of Park St, Oak St, Prospect St, Lower Queen St, Chandler St, and North Main St.*

Chairwoman Carey noted the town of Boscawen needs to replace the sanitary sewer lines that are in failing condition. Underwood Engineering took pictures of the conditions and outlined phase 3 and 4 of the replacement project. The first two phases were completed during the Recession. It is a town wide issue because the storm water is getting into the sewer lines and in turn being sent to the Concord Wastewater treatment plant. This increases the cost to the town. The project will require issuance of \$6,500,000 of bonds or notes. Approval of the article at town meeting puts the town in a better position to receive grant funding through various avenues such as NH DES, rural development and CDBG.

Chairwoman Carey opened the public hearing at 6:14pm.

Resident of 279 Daniel Webster Hwy—Mr. Dale Randall is in favor of the issuance. Mr. Randall does not get the benefit of the sewer but agreed that it needed to be fixed for the community. He asked what the savings would be per year. Chairwoman Carey said the savings is noted in the Underwood Report. It was around \$60,000 per year. Mr. Randall noted 59% of the water that

goes through the lines is storm water. Public Works Director Dean Hollins clarified that storm water and infiltration (INI) goes through the pipes.

Resident of Tremont St—Mr. William Heinz was worried that many residents will not be in favor of the issuance because they won't think it benefits them. He suggested providing more information, so the public understands how it will affect them. Mr. Heinz noted the town would contribute \$85,000 annually towards the sewer charges. The \$60,000 in savings would reduce the town's annual contribution to \$15,000. Mr. Heinz asked for a ballpark of the revenue from all of the sewer users. He also asked where the runoff will go. PWD Hollins said the issue is all the catch basins are tied into the sewer. There will be new storm drains. As of now, there is no specific spot mapped out for runoff. Selectman Burdick noted at Town Meeting there will be pictures and information displayed so the public understands the need. Chairwoman Carey said every other year they have to adjust the sewer rates. Underwood explained that because the town has been conservative, they are now behind and there needs to be a big adjustment. Chairwoman Carey said they could make sewer payers responsible for the adjustment, but the entire community benefits because the storm water would be off the streets and in the wastewater treatment plant. Chairwoman Carey noted both her and Selectman Burdick do not use sewer but understand the benefit to the community as a whole. The Board also understood the longer they wait, the more expensive it will get. Mr. Heinz asked if the \$85,000 was equitable. Chairwoman Carey said Underwood offered 3 options and \$85,000 seemed the most equitable. They looked at the town's population that is served by sewer. It is an increase to sewer residents, but the town is taking more out of the general fund to assist. The town's goal is to mitigate some of the cost by improving the sewer system. Chairwoman Carey said after town meeting they would like to discuss the future plan with Concord. Mr. Heinz asked how much grant money will be used. Chairwoman Carey said Underwood recommended a couple grants to apply for, if approved by town meeting. They can't apply for grants without a commitment at Town Meeting. PCD Director Easler noted there is a lot of infrastructure grant money available and could be applied for. PWD Hollins stated 57% of the water that goes to Concord is clean. The sewer users are paying to treat that water. Mr. Heinz noted the sewer users aren't sending the water to Concord, it is the runoff and leakage in the pipes. Finance Director Kate Merrill presented last year's revenue from all sewer users. Sewer fee revenue was \$205,616.31.

Resident of 83 N Main St—Mr. Tillman was in favor of the sewer project. He said they need to get the storm water out of the treatment plant, lower bills, and lower taxes. Mr. Tillman agreed that displaying pictures and information at Town Meeting would be helpful for residents. It is important to get commitment at town meeting so they can start applying for grants.

Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt was in favor of the sewer project. She has sewer lines on Jackson St. There has been discussion on who has and doesn't have access to the sewer. Town Clerk Hoyt said it is the same situation with all town expenses. She said when the new roof was put on the Torrent building, it didn't affect her directly, but it benefited the community as a whole. Town Clerk Hoyt said if they don't commit to the sewer project, the town will see catastrophic failure which will definitely be on every resident's taxes.

Chairwoman Carey closed the public hearing at 6:26pm.

**Scheduled Guests:** Resident of Academy St—Mr. George Reagan spoke about solar exemptions. Mr. Reagan read the warrant articles and one was about solar, in which Selectman Burdick and former Selectperson Paul Dickey recommended to get rid of the exemption. Mr. Reagan said in 2020, there were 21 people with solar, a total of \$11,444 in expense to the town. Selectman Burdick said there are now 38 houses with solar. PCD Director Easler said there are potentially 8 more and the assessed value is over \$700,000. Mr. Reagan is not in favor of rescinding solar exemptions. It will affect 48 residents in town. Mr. Reagan spent \$30,000 on solar arrays last June and another \$10,000 to take down trees in order to benefit on the solar. Mr. Reagan said electric costs are continuing to rise and more people are going to attempt solar. He read an article about Eversource procrastinating because they don't want people switching to solar. Chairwoman Carey asked if people get a Federal tax credit for installing it. There is a 30% tax credit for this year. Mr. Reagan set his up, so it automatically gets sent back to Unitil and he receives a credit on his bill. He used to pay \$225 for electric but with solar he paid \$27 in June through October. Mr. Reagan commended Granite State Solar for installing his arrays. He wanted them to advocate and speak to the town. Mr. Reagan suggested giving half the amount in solar exemptions. Selectman Burdick stated he is not anti-solar, but they did not want everyone else paying for those 38 people's portion that they're getting from the exemption. Selectman Burdick suggested a credit versus an exemption because the dollar difference is vast. Mr. Reagan is in favor of any ideas that would still provide benefit to those that have solar but not having to lose as much revenue. Chairwoman Carey noted the Board took this recommendation from the public in regard to cutting the budget. The Board appreciated Mr. Reagan's feedback.

**Department Head Updates:** FD Merrill noted the Board signed 7 MS-636's and warrants. FD Merrill will fill in the town's hand and seal, day, and year.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked the Board if they are cancelling the Select Board meeting the week of February vacation. Chairwoman Carey will not be available so there will be no quorum for the March 2 meeting. All department heads will attend the following week's meeting. FD Merrill can have checks and payroll completed by February 28, the earliest. Two signatures are required. Discussion ensued. Ms. Barbara Randall, Deputy Treasurer can sign. FD Merrill will confirm that Chairwoman Carey can deputize a selectperson to sign.

PCD Director Easler presented Mr. Mark Kaplan's resignation from the Upper Merrimack River Local Advisory Committee (UMRLAC). She noted he will stay on the Conservation Commission. As of now, they don't have anyone interested in filling the position on UMRLAC.

PCD Director Easler presented the Energy Power Committee checklist and the update from Mr. Edward Cherian. The Board will review and provide feedback next week. PCD Director Easler asked if the Board wanted to use the town logo. All concurred. PCD Director Easler said they need to elect a primary contact liaison at the office.

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to approve the Town Administrator as the primary contact for the Energy Power Committee and the Planning and Community Development Director as the secondary contact. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented a letter of resignation from Ms. Tatyanna Wunschel as an alternate member of the Agriculture Committee. This was an ongoing situation. Ms. Wunschel only attended one AgCom meeting and was not notifying the Chair of her absence which was listed in the rules and procedures. It was received on Tuesday, February 14, at the AgCom meeting. The Select Board accepted Ms. Wunschel's resignation.

Town Clerk Hoyt presented a sewer abatement in the amount of \$1. There was a clerical error when applying the balance. It was applied to interest when it should have been applied to the principal.

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to authorize Town Clerk Hoyt to abate \$1 from Sewer Warrant 2022SO2 located at 48 Jackson St, 183C3O, owned by Steve Green. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

Town Clerk Hoyt presented a jeopardy assessment abatement in the amount of \$121. The jeopardy assessment was provided for a potential demo. The owner did not pull the demo permit and paid the property bill instead.

**Selectman Burdick motioned to authorize Town Clerk Hoyt to abate \$121 from a Jeopardy Assessment located at 1 Honey Dr, 183D24TI, owned by Robert and Kristen Laferriere. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.**

Town Clerk Hoyt gave an update on the Tax Department. Delinquent taxes for 2022 were due yesterday. They started putting together the lien and deed notices. Town Report will be sent to the printer and then they'll do a mockup. Town Clerk Hoyt said they may receive the report prior to the statutory 7 days. It will be available electronically on the town website as well as listed on various other organization's websites. Town Clerk Hoyt said Webster lost their town clerk, so their new clerk has been shadowing the town to learn about operations.

PWD Hollins gave an update on the Public Works Department. A resident on Commercial St found a 'sink hole' in front of their house. PWD Hollins ran the sewer camera into the canal and found a void with sand sifting through the rocks. They put construction fabric in and filled it with gravel. Chairwoman Carey asked if Commercial St is a private road. PWD Hollins said the road surface belongs to the town because of the use of the travel. Chairwoman Carey clarified that the street could be maintained with the additional motor vehicle registration fees.

FD Merrill presented ARPA transfers for approval.

**Selectman Burdick motioned to transfer \$1,966.61 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved to support Human Services (Backpack Program). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to transfer \$334.18 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved to support Human Services (Homelessness). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to transfer \$1,034.95 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved for an additional Police Officer position. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Selectman Burdick motioned to transfer \$2,020.38 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved for Security Cameras and the hardware with installation. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to transfer \$28,200 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved to update the HVAC units. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Selectman Burdick motioned to transfer \$1,308.06 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse for expenditures previously approved to support Human Services (Backpack Program). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.**

FD Merrill asked the Board to complete the Audit questionnaire. Chairwoman Carey noted they will complete the questionnaire after the meeting and send it to FD Merrill.

No public comment.

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:02 pm under RSA 91-A: 3 II(D). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Chairwoman Carey motioned to close a nonpublic session at 7:10 pm under RSA 91-A: 3 II(D). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.**

Public meeting reopened at 7:10pm

**Selectman Burdick motioned to seal the nonpublic minutes for 1 year under RSA 91-A: II (D). Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

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

*Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner*