

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Matt Burdick, Kate Merrill, Katie Phelps, Kearsten O'Brien, Kellee Easler, Nicole Hoyt, Sarah Gerlack, Kevin Wyman, Dean Hollins, Chief Kenney & Gary Moore

Guests: Charlie Niebling & Loren Martin

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

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

Chairwoman Carey noted grammatical changes to the 02.23.23 minutes.

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

Scheduled Guests & Hearings: Mr. Charlie Niebling, the Town Moderator spoke about the upcoming Town Meeting and election. They are confident that voting can be facilitated efficiently in the library by using both sides. Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt is working on the floor plan. Chairwoman Carey asked where Select Board members will be. There will be a roped off area for election officials. Chairwoman Carey asked about the transfer between the voting at the library and Town Meeting at the elementary school. Mr. Niebling said they will move as quickly as possible, but the meeting cannot start until tabulation of voting results is completed. He noted there are at least two paper ballot votes, one in which has to be opened for an hour. The voting results must be brought to the elementary school. In the rules of the meeting, there is a provision that stated at the discretion of the moderator and with consent of the meeting, they can postpone or recess the meeting to a later date. Moderator Niebling asked Board members to send, which warrant articles they will be discussing at the meeting. Mr. Niebling said they need at least two ballot boxes because there could be two paper ballots going on simultaneously. They are anticipating more voters this year as well. Mr. Niebling said voters will check in at the meeting to get a voting card. Once they are registered, they will receive a voting card and 5 colored ballots. Voters will be given instructions on how to cast their ballots. Mr. Niebling will ask Mr. John Keegan, the individual recognized in the Town Report, to lead the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Niebling asked the Select Board to approve the rules of Town meeting.

Board members reviewed the warrant articles they will be discussing at Town Meeting. Underwood Engineers will speak to the Sewer project. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien noted Ms. Barbara Randall will speak to the Municipal Transportation Tax.

Department Head Updates: Finance Director Kate Merrill presented a potential vendor, Vertical Entertainment, for activities for Old Home Day. The vendor offers a variety of different services, most of which are inflatables. Primex won't cover any inflatables. The Vertical

Entertainment owner has a letter that would transfer liability. FD Merrill asked the Board if the OHD Committee could send the letter to legal for review. The Board concurred.

FD Merrill presented a donation from James and Amanda Crowell in the amount of \$20 for the Beautification Committee.

Selectman Burdick motioned to accept the \$20 donation from James and Amanda Crowell for the Beautification Committee. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler updated the Board on the Certified Public Manger Boat Launch project with Merrimack County. She and Johanna Houman, County Grant Writer met with the Tim Fleury, County Forester at the Boat Launch to review setbacks from PBWP. Mr. Ross Cunningham, County Administrator suggested moving forward with applying for grant money for a pavilion and to discuss a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Select Board. PCD Director Easler received a template from legal and will send it back to the Board with revisions. Chairwoman Carey noted the MOU should list who is responsible for garbage, damage, the sign, maintenance, etc. Once the MOU is drafted, the Select Board will review.

PCD Director Easler presented the Building Permit Renewal Policy for the Select Board to review and adopt. The policy stated that if a permit expires, the Town allows a one-time renewal of \$100.00. Once the time has lapsed, the applicant must apply for a new building permit, including all fees and meeting all current building codes. The board signed the document.

Town Administrator Katie Phelps sent out information to the Select Board on establishing an Electric Aggregation Committee. Chairwoman Carey noted in December, the Board approved the Community Power Coalition of NH Joint Power Agreement and in January, they voted on primary and alternative representatives, Mr. Charlie Niebling will act as primary representative, and Mr. Ed Cherian as alternate representative.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to designate the Boscawen Energy Committee as the Electric Aggregation Committee, to research community power and develop a plan for an electric aggregation program. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented a request from Merrimack Valley Youth Baseball and Softball. MVYBS would like permission from the Select Board to do a Clean-Up day on Saturday, April 15. They also requested April 17 through June 30 for use of the field. The hours would be 5 to 8pm, Monday through Friday and Saturdays from 8am to 8pm. TA Phelps has a copy of their certificate of insurance and an updated Field Use Agreement.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the use of the Jamie Welch field for the Merrimack Valley Youth Baseball and Softball League for their clean-up day on April 15th and their season which runs from April 17th through June 30th. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Facilities Director Gary Moore presented an update on his projects. The generator will be powered by gas and there will be a cost for piping. FD Moore is working on a grant to replace the attic windows at the Municipal Building. He has been preparing for the upcoming Town Meeting. There were questions about why they needed to have an outside company assess town hall when they have a building inspector. Town hall was assessed last year by FD Moore, the building inspector, and an electrician. They anticipated over \$200,000 to bring town hall up to code but the public was not happy so this year the town brought in an outside source. Chief Tim Kenney noted when the threshold of 50% improvement or 50% of the cost of the building is met, it is required to bring it all up to current code. This would include a sprinkler system, fire alarm system and separation between the two buildings. FD Moore said there were several costs not included in the assessment such as the fireproofing the furnace room, updating the wiring, flooring, water damage and cosmetic needs. FD Moore noted the original quote for the assessment last year from the outside vendor was \$10,000 and now its \$12,000. The vendor stated in the quote that he cannot guarantee that the building will reach all code requirements. No further discussion. FD Moore updated the Board on the water issue at Town Hall. There is a big puddle in the kitchen where the sink is. FD Moore checked the lines into the building, tested the water faucets and checked the water lines. There were no signs of any leak. Selectman Burdick noted it could be coming through the foundation or the window over the kitchen sink. No further discussion. FD Moore noted Otis Elevator offered to upgrade the Town's elevator for \$20,000. From a risk management standpoint, it is not worth spending \$20,000. The current elevator from 2002 has been tested and used with no issues. If the town lost the original computer board, it could be repaired. With Otis, it is a preventative maintenance so if something happened, they could be down 1 to 2 weeks with no elevator.

Town Clerk Hoyt gave an update on legislative bills discussed at the Legislative Committee meeting on Tuesday. House Bill 99, relative to adding information on tax bills was voted down which would have been costly to the Town. There was discussion on HB 387, relative to election ballots being viewed pursuant to the Right-to-Know Act. The person who presented the bill, suggested requiring towns to buy high speed scanners and using them at all elections. Town Clerk Hoyt noted before boxing up ballots, they would have to scan each one. Town Clerk Hoyt said the Association is also opposed to the amendment of HB 496, relative to the delivery of ballots to nursing homes and elder care facilities. The Town would have to call someone from both the Democratic and Republican Committees, and Town Officials would be escorted to the nursing home to distribute ballots. The bill also discussed Town Officials staying there to watch the individual fill out the ballot and collect them. Town Clerk Hoyt said the current procedure is to deputize someone at the nursing home, usually the Activities Director. The residents fill out the ballots at their convenience. Town Clerk Hoyt gave an update on elections. Last week there was a webinar regarding affidavit ballots. If a new person to NH cannot prove their identity with a photo ID, and the clerk, moderator or supervisor cannot vouch for them, then the ballot will be marked as an affidavit ballot until proof is received. Mr. Niebling said the ballot is counted but it could potentially change the vote a few weeks later. Discussion ensued. Town Clerk Hoyt was invited to Milford on Wednesday to view one of the new tabulator machines being proposed for elections, the Dominion. It is about \$5,800 for everything included. The Dominion is similar to the Town's current machine, but it has a scan feature. It is 1 of 3 machines that the Ballot Law Commission will be potentially voting on this year. Town Clerk Hoyt said they may have answers before the next primary. No further discussion. Town Clerk Hoyt and Deputy Karyn

Chagnon are working with the Cemetery Trustees on adding missing data to their spreadsheets. They are also updating the Cemetery Deeds to Right to Inter Certificates due to the legal verbiage. A public notice will be posted on the Town website. Town Clerk met with Mr. John Renier from Sila Services to register 29 company vehicles. They acquired Total Climate Control and moved their car registrations to Boscawen. Town Clerk Hoyt met with the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) to finish the spring workshops for the Tax Collectors' Association. As the education chair, Town Clerk Hoyt will be facilitating the workshops. Ms. Karyn Chagnon and Ms. Norma Caporale will be taking the New Clerks' workshop in April.

Community Services Director Sarah Gerlack gave an update on the Community Services Department. The Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) will be ending on April 1. The program started during COVID to help the housing crisis in NH. Those in the program did not have to pay rent or the cost for hotels. CS Director Gerlack noted there are at least two past clients in Boscawen on the program. She is reaching out to these past clients to ensure they don't need additional assistance. CS Director Gerlack is assisting 3 households with applying for the NH Homeowners assistance fund applications. The three households were unable to apply on their own. The assistance helps with mortgage payments, utilities, and taxes. CS Director Gerlack said it has helped many residents get off the deed list. There was a legislative update for welfare, Senate Bill 110 in regards to implementing part of their NH Local Welfare Associations ethics resolution. The bill was already reviewed by the Senate and is being revised and sent back. As a member of the NHLWAA Executive Board, CS Director Gerlack spoke in favor of the bill. The bill would not require residents of other towns to change their residence unless they have been self-paying for 30-days. CS Director Gerlack said it would protect the town so that they know other towns are taking responsibility and assisting their residents. Right now, there is no residency in law as it pertains to RSA 165 which causes issues with other towns not claiming and assisting their residents. CS Director Gerlack said there was an increase for the cost per room at Elmwood Motor Lodge. The 2023 Community Services budget was built to accommodate the increase. CS Director Gerlack noted this year deeds are from 2020 and liens are from 2022. There were 9 deeded properties, with a total amount of \$23,143.79. Next week, the Select Board will decide which properties to deed or waive. Chairwoman Carey asked if any of the properties qualified for the Homeowners Assistance program. CS Director Gerlack said the owners most likely would not qualify. She noted they have been doing outreach for the program for over a year now including those that are on the deed list. For liens in 2022, there were 199 unpaid bills, in the amount of \$181,014.66. CS Director Gerlack noted she will be attending the School Board meeting and election tomorrow. On Monday, she will supervise the Penacook/Boscawen Water Precinct meeting.

Chief Kevin Wyman gave an update on the Police Department. During a recent snowstorm, an officer responding to a call slid into a pile up and hit a sign. It damaged the front bumper of the cruiser which they filed through insurance. An adjuster came out to review the damage. Next week they will have a quote for the repair. Chief Wyman clarified some questions about the Merrimack County Sheriff's Office and patrolling. The Sheriff's Office does not patrol the Town of Boscawen. It is open from 7am to 10pm. Their primary function is transporting inmates from the jail to either the court or the hospital. Chief Wyman noted the Merrimack County Nursing Home is the responsibility of the police and fire department to patrol. Chief Wyman said the Sheriff's Office called the department last week to handle an accident in front of the Sheriff's

office, in the parking lot. Chairwoman Carey clarified at the public hearing on the budget, a resident understood that the town could contract for police services with the NH State Police like Salisbury. Chairwoman Carey said Salisbury had interest in expanding the contract, but the State Police have a shortage of personnel. There was another suggestion to contract with the Sheriff's Office, but they have a different function from local police departments. Chairwoman Carey said a resident suggested for people at the jail and county home, to not receive any services from the Town of Boscawen even though they reside in Boscawen. Chairwoman Carey noted the town made a list of the number of services provided by the town to the county.

PWD Hollins gave an update on the Public Works Department. They did equipment repairs this week due to the snowstorm. One of the plow trucks had suspension issues but it was fixed today. PWD Hollins said they discussed the potholes on Commercial St. They are going to spread gravel and fill in what they can. Chairwoman Carey asked what road will be paved next. They will finish the Corn Hill Road project. Buxton Place and Sweat St. are on the list for a full reclaim and pave. There is a duplex being built at the top of Sweat St and it will tie into the sewer. There will be construction so paving will be put off until it is finished. Chairwoman Carey asked about leaf pick-up. PWD Hollins said as long as nothing else is cut from the Public Works budget, they will be able to continue leaf pick-up. He noted the equipment maintenance line may increase due to the cost of parts. They lost a set of bearings and a shaft on 1 spinner. PWD Hollins said the closest dealer was in MA. They spent \$1,000 for 4 bearings and 2 shafts.

Fire Chief Tim Kenney gave an update on the fire department. The pickup truck that was purchased in November of 2021 has been listed as completed and will hopefully be in use for brush season. The department cut back on expenses until they know what will happen at Town Meeting. They've been holding only established meetings to cut back on the payroll. In the first 3 months of doing payroll, they've stayed under the budget.

PCD Director Easler gave an update on the Planning and Community Development department. Planning Board approved a 16-unit apartment complex on King St and a duplex on Sweat St. They are both listed at market rate. PCD Director Easler clarified public concern regarding the Master Plan-Housing and housing needs in town. She said housing is needed in town and they have received grant money from InvestNH specifically for workforce and affordable housing. Boscawen will continue to grow and be seeing more housing in the future. PCD Director Easler encouraged residents to attend the Master Plan sessions with the Planning Board. Chairwoman Carey noted that Senate Bill 44, to add additional requirements to allow 4 units on a single family home lot, was defeated.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented an elderly exemption for Landowner A for approval. Chairwoman Carey asked for clarification on the current rate. PCD Director Easler said currently the highest exemption is \$31,600 and the lowest is \$15,800. Discussion ensued. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien noted the exemption for Landowner A was \$31,600. She noted that residents cannot have more than \$50,000 in assets (cars, boats, other property, etc.). If an owner has renters, they need to provide the rental income they received. If the update to rates is passed, residents who currently qualify for elderly exemptions will benefit more.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve Landowner A for an elderly exemption. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented a solar exemption in the amount of \$18,600 for Landowner D Map 79 Lot 106 Sublot 2. If approved, there would be a total of 40 solar exemptions.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the solar exemption for Landowner D, in the amount of \$18,600. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented a letter of resignation from Ms. Caroletta Alicea, an alternate member of the Economic Development Committee.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to regretfully accept Ms. Caroletta Alicea's resignation as an alternate member of the Economic Development Committee. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien noted on March 30, there will be a meeting with Avitar Associates and DRA for the reevaluation year. The new Select Board member will be present, and the Board will be able to ask questions.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien has been receiving numerous calls in regard to the Parks and Recreation program. They are waiting on applications until after town meeting. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said people are noticing the rate changes and \$5 t-shirt fee. Parents are trying to apply before the May 15 deadline. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien proposed an admin fee update next year to increase the cost per camper to \$560 for the summer which would include the t-shirt fee (\$70 a week). Deputy PCD Director O'Brien has been noticing a lot of interest with part-time parents. She clarified that the priority is for full-time care. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked for approval to clarify full time in the handbook. A child would need to attend 4-days a week to be considered full-time. Chairwoman Carey asked what would happen if a camper was deemed full time and only showed up once a week. The camper would be removed from the program with no refund. There was discussion on increasing rates next year. Chairwoman Carey suggested warning parents about the increase of rates next year.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the definition of full-time campers in the Parks and Recreation Program handbook. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairwoman Carey opened public comment.

Ms. Loren Martin discussed the Candidates Night that was held on Monday, March 6th. She also asked where people could advertise for voting at the election on Tuesday. Chairwoman Carey said Mr. Charlie Niebling sets up the boundaries and will notify people of the electioneering lines. Town Clerk Hoyt said it is typically 10 feet from the entrance.

Town Clerk Hoyt noted the procedure for after election. She has prepared letters for each candidate in every race. The swearing in is on the following Monday but for Select Board members, they can also choose to do it on the following Thursday. Town Clerk Hoyt suggested that employees park in the back of the building for Town Election.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:25 pm under RSA 91-A:3 II(L). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to close a nonpublic session at 7:30 pm under RSA 91-A:3 II(L). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Public meeting reopened at 7:30pm.

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

No public comment.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 16, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

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

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner