

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

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kate Merrill, Kellee Easler, Nicole Hoyt, Gary Moore, & Tim Kenney

Guests: Polly Dawson—Old Home Day Committee, Charlie Niebling—Town Moderator, & 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—11/02/23
- **Revised Job Descriptions:** Human Services Clerk and Tax Collector/Overseer of Public Welfare
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund Project Update
- October Treasurer Reports
- Penacook Rescue 3rd Quarter Report
- October 2023 Capital Reserve Balances

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey noted grammatical changes to the 11.02.23 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.

Scheduled Guests and Hearings: Ms. Polly Dawson, Chair of the Old Home Day Committee, presented the 2024 Old Home Day Budget. She noted that the committee added two BINGO lines (#3016 & #4100). BINGO has not been finalized, but the committee discussed bringing it back for the residents in town. Ms. Dawson mentioned that Ms. Kim Kenney confirmed with Alan's Restaurant that they could host BINGO on Sunday's around 12:30PM, The next step was to contact the State, which has been difficult. Selectwoman Carey asked if there was a fee for a BINGO license with the State. Ms. Dawson noted the fee was \$250 with an additional fee of \$25 each time they applied. She said moving from a different venue that was not owned by the town, has made it difficult to obtain a license. Ms. Dawson mentioned there was an option to hold BINGO that was for citizens aged 55 and older, which would be less restrictive with requirements. Discussion ensued. Town Administrator Katie Phelps asked if the committee planned to request funding for fireworks for 2024. Ms. Dawson confirmed the committee would not be requesting funding for fireworks. Chairman Burdick pointed out that line 4015 was for fireworks in the amount of \$3,000. He noted that the OHD committee previously discussed not

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requesting fireworks but to accept any donations to fund them. Finance Director Kate Merrill stated it was important to note that the budget wasn't raised by taxation, it was a revolving fund. Ms. Dawson said she would follow up on the status of BINGO events.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Old Home Day Budget. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Charlie Niebling, Town Moderator, inquired about when the Select Board would like to hold the Town Meeting. He suggested that Saturday worked well last year, and there was positive feedback received from voters. The Select Board would need to bring forth a warrant article for the voters to approve at Town Meeting. Once voted, the change would go into effect the following year. Mr. Niebling noted that the Boscawen Public Library was a good location to hold the elections and it would avoid conflict with the school during the day. The pertinent RSA 39:2-a allows the Select Board to bifurcate the Town Meeting so voting would stay on the second Tuesday of the month, but the business meeting would be held on a separate day. Mr. Niebling said the RSA specified the wording of the article in statute. Selectwoman Carey recommended investigating the additional costs associated because they would need two days for elections. The Board agreed to research the costs further.

Department Head Updates: Finance Director Merrill mentioned that at the last department head meeting someone suggested changing the Select Board meeting days back to Wednesdays. The suggestion was made because multiple department heads stated they had other meetings on Thursdays. Fire Chief Tim Kenney mentioned that he misses the monthly Capital Area meetings because he attends the Hazmat Committee meetings and Select Board meetings. Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler noted she will have quarterly Central Regional Planning Commission meetings on Thursday. FD Merrill stated another suggestion was to have an earlier start time to the meetings. Discussion ensued. Chairman Burdick asked if changing the meeting date would interfere with other town boards or committees. FD Merrill clarified that all town board and committee meetings were scheduled for Mondays and Tuesdays. Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt mentioned that changing the meeting days back to Wednesdays would provide town staff with additional time to complete tasks that arise from the meetings. Chairman Burdick asked when department heads would want to start the change in date. FD Merrill suggested starting January 1, 2024. The Select Board agreed to think about the suggestion and will follow up with a decision at a later meeting. FD Merrill will send the Board a list of reasons why changing the meeting date would benefit town staff.

FD Merrill asked the Board to decide whether to offer the Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) to retirees. The town currently has two retirees it would apply to. FD Merrill said they would budget 50% liability which would be an impact of \$500. She noted if the Board did not want to offer the HRA to retirees, they would need to send it out for legal interpretation of the RSA. Some interpret it as if it must be offered, and others may interpret it as it doesn't need to be offered.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve offering the Health Reimbursement Account to retirees. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Finance Director Merrill received clarification from NHMA in regard to elected officials and appointed members, and their stipends. She asked about whether the COLA applied to stipends and whether the Select Board could vote to decrease the stipend. NHMA stated there was a need to differentiate between employees and elected and appointed officials. FD Merrill read that elected and appointed officials must have their stipend approved by vote at Town Meeting with amounts to be approved within the Operating Budget or a separate warrant article. Furthermore, elected and appointed officials should not be given cost-of-living increases at the same time or in the same amounts that may be awarded to town employees as it could appear that elected and appointed officials are employees. FD Merrill noted that NHMA recommended that the Board review increases for elected and appointed officials separately from COLA increases for employees.

FD Merrill presented the 2024 Financial Administration Budget with clarifications on the elected and appointed officials' stipend. FD Merrill spoke with Treasurer Tama Tillman about the stipend amount. Treasurer Tillman had no issue with the amount but mentioned that she did not think it would be an appropriate amount for a new person. FD Merrill also spoke with Deputy Treasurer Barbara Randall, and she had no issue with the stipend amount. Selectwoman Carey mentioned there was an attempt in the past to increase the stipend, but townspeople were not in favor. In reference to audit services (line 4150301), FD Merrill clarified that although the price had increased, the bid they chose was \$2,515 less than their previous firm's proposal. Selectman Bevans suggested changes to the budget notes. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey suggested clarifying it as a \$2,500 savings with the new audit firm. Chairman Burdick suggested reflecting what the 2024 cost would have been with the current auditor and what the savings was for the new audit agreement. FD Merrill will update the budget notes.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Financial Administration Budget. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans reflected on the stipends discussion. He agreed that elected and appointed officials should get a set stipend amount without any COLA increases. FD Merrill noted NHMA's response to the Select Board's question about decreasing the stipend amount. They said the Select Board could propose a reduction in the stipend for inclusion into the Operating Budget or by way of a separate warrant article.

Tax Collector Hoyt asked for clarification on the office supplies line. FD Merrill noted there was a budget line transfer that was voted on but not added into the budget. Selectwoman Carey suggested removing the word 'New' on the line because it was an intended expense.

Tax Collector Hoyt presented the 2024 Tax Collector Budget with revisions. Selectwoman Carey noted there was a big increase in the deputy line. FD Merrill noted the increase was due to a 3% COLA adjustment, the wage schedule step increase, the 2023 Distribution at 50%, and the 2024

Distribution at 70%. Selectwoman Carey questioned the 33% increase in the Meetings and Travel budget line. Hoyt said the increase was to ensure Ms. Norma Caporale received all the necessary training. She also noted that the cost for conferences and workshops increased. To stay certified as a Tax Collector and Town Clerk, they must attend training. Hoyt pointed out on line 4151334: lien expenses, there was a transfer from line 4140332 for \$315. She explained that they did not budget enough for lien expenses and there was an increase of \$315 in the 2023 estimated budget. TA Phelps questioned if they should be reflecting it in the 2023 budget if it was transferred. FD Merrill argued they amended it with the transfer. TA Phelps said the numbers in the 2024 proposed budget would not match the budgets that were previously approved. Tax Collector Hoyt clarified they overspent on liens this year, but it was not reflected because there was a transfer of funds from another line. TA Phelps suggested reflecting the \$3,100 total in the 2023 actual. Additionally, Selectwoman Carey recommended including a note about the transfer in the notes section of the budget. Chairman Burdick questioned whether there was a specific reason the equipment and software line increased. Hoyt said line 4151332 increased because they underbudgeted for the software support last year and additionally they don't know the pricing for the tax collect software. FD Merrill asked if the office supplies line under Financial Administration should be reflected as \$0 for last year. She noted the budget wouldn't match their books. Selectwoman Carey confirmed she should reflect \$0 in the office supplies line. All concurred.

Chairman Burdick preliminarily approved the 2024 Tax Collector Budget with recommended modifications included in the finalized budget proposal. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Facilities Director Gary Moore presented the 2024 Town Buildings Budget. FD Moore handed out a listing of contracts and service agreements, in reference to line 4194507. He noted the items highlighted in yellow were not specific to 116 N. Main St. All other charges were maintenance required for 116 N. Main St. To reflect the expenses accurately, he reduced line 4194507 to \$3,000 and moved \$18,000 into line 4194447. FD Moore increased line 4194504 from \$2,000 to \$8,000 for vehicle maintenance. He noted that the current 2005 truck had 115,000 miles on it and in order to pass inspection, they may have to put a new exhaust system on it and lift the engine to complete it. The body of the truck was in excellent condition. FD Moore made a price comparison to a 2019 truck with 115,000 miles. He recommended it was worth spending \$8,000 to repair the current vehicle rather than spend \$30,000 on a newer vehicle with the same mileage. Selectman Bevans asked where FD Moore obtained an estimate for repairs. FD Moore received a quote from the Village Garage. He noted not only was the exhaust leaking but they have had issues with the engine light turning on and the brakes. He plans to get more estimates to compare. Selectman Bevans said he spoke to Village Garage, and they were concerned that something else may break when they pull the engine out. Selectwoman Carey suggested obtaining more quotes and asking more questions about the repairs. Selectman Bevans questioned whether FD Moore needed the pickup truck. FD Moore uses the truck almost every day. He drives to all the buildings, picks up building supplies and tools, and brings items to the dump. Discussion ensued. FD Moore will get more quotes and ask questions on the repairs. Selectman Bevans pointed out that the radio maintenance line had not been used for three years.

Fire Chief Kenney noted the Fire Department, Police Department, and Public Works use the line and it funds their emergency management channel. FD Moore noted he decreased the utilities line for 116 N. Main St by \$7,490. He said when they originally set the budget, the electricity costs were estimated to increase 77%, but they have gone down. In addition, FD Moore mentioned the installation and new HVAC system has helped lower the consumption. He noted as of 11/06, there was \$24,000 left in the budget line. He suggested using the overage to pay off the 3-year loan for the insulation. By the end of the year, they would owe \$20,300 on the loan. He suggested using the overage money up to \$21,000 to pay off the loan. TA Phelps questioned what the interest rate was for the loan. FD Moore clarified that the loan was interest-free. Selectman Bevans asked about the loan. FD Merrill clarified it was listed under Principals and Bonds in another budget. She said if the Board approved paying off the loan, they could reduce the interest loan for a few months versus a whole year, for the next couple of years. TA Phelps expressed concern that there were certain areas of the budget overspent for the year that they will need to transfer funds prior to making the decision to pay off a loan. Chairman Burdick asked FD Moore what he anticipated the next month to cost in utilities. FD Moore said they spent \$40,000 in 11 months. Finance Director Merrill said the costs fluctuate a lot between November and January so it would be hard to estimate. Discussion ensued. The overall budget will decrease by 4% (\$7,966).

Selectwoman Carey motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Town Buildings Budget. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps gave an update on the 1913 Library Final Decree. The Cy Pres petition was granted by the court. The 1913 Library now has a good title, and the town can sell it without any concern with the reverter clause. Selectman Bevans suggested putting the 1913 Library on the market. Board members recommended Christy Goodhue. TA Phelps will reach out to Christy Goodhue to discuss the next steps. Fire Chief Kenney pointed out that the townspeople must vote on the plan at Town Meeting to sell the 1913 library. The Board would like to establish a plan to sell to present at Town Meeting. No further discussion.

TA Phelps presented an amendment to the Credere Associates Archaeological Survey for Commercial Street. There was a decrease of \$200 for a clerical error. She requested re-approval from the Select Board.

Chairman Burdick motioned to amend the contract amount for Credere Associates, Task Order #2, for Archaeological Survey from \$9,600 to \$9,400, due to a clerical error. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented a request from Underwood Engineers regarding sewer projects 3 and 4. They are requesting to start working on the topographic survey this fall. The cost of the amendment would be \$61,500. Underwood Engineers plans to submit the NHDES SRF application by December. TA Phelps noted the town would not be expected to pay the full expense up front. Underwood Engineers would bill the town as the work is performed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to authorize Underwood Engineers to start Task #3, in the amount of \$61,500 for a topographic survey for sewer system improvements projects 3 and 4. Once loan funding is available from the Clean Water State Revolving fund, the town will request reimbursement for the expense. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented a nomination for the Boscawen Post Cane. The nomination was for the same individual, Ms. Lottie Hanks, a resident on Corn Hill Road. Selectwoman Carey requested more information about the individual. TA Phelps asked when they planned on awarding the Boscawen Post Cane. She noted she could research information prior to the award. Discussion ensued. The formal request posted on the town website has only been up for 2 weeks. Selectwoman Carey suggested advertising the nomination forms for a month. The Select Board agreed on a deadline of December 14th. TA Phelps will update the posting.

Tax Collector Hoyt noted in July, the Board approved a payment plan for landowner P with a potential to waive interest if the plan was adhered to. The resident paid the Land Use Tax Assessment bill off early and in full. Tax Collector Hoyt asked the Board for approval to waive the \$354.52 of interest on landowner P's Land Use Tax Assessment bill.

Chairman Burdick motioned to abate accrued interest in the amount of \$354.52 for a Land Use Change Assessment on Map 45, Lot 47. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Overseer of Welfare Hoyt followed up on the State Standard of Need for Boscawen. She handed out copies of the statistics over the past two years. Hoyt noted they started taking in applications for the food voucher program for holiday baskets in December. There were 20 people signed up. Hoyt estimated around 60 participants last year but will verify the final number. TA Phelps recognized how hard Nicole Hoyt has been working to learn and revamp the welfare department and thanked her for her efforts.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve the Standard of Need for the Municipality of Boscawen, New Hampshire for 2023 and 2024. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill gave an update on the tax rate setting. The Department of Revenue Administration reached out to finalize the town's revenues. Once the school completes their portion, the Department of Education expects a 2-week turn around. Selectman Burdick pointed out that the school was supposed to complete their portion by the end of last week. FD Merrill noted the school stated that the Town could defer their November school payment. She noted they may need to delay both the November and December payment.

Fire Chief Kenney mentioned that he went through the Fire Station and the old Police Station with Facilities Director Moore. They are meeting with a general contractor on Tuesday at noon to review the different plans for shower installations. FD Moore said the general contractor

would be Shane Belanger. He noted they tend to favor refurbishing the old Police Station. It has water and septic, and they could complete the demo themselves. FD Moore suggested they could make Chief Kenney an office and put a meeting room in the building. Selectwoman Carey mentioned the flooring was rotted in the old Police Station. Chief Kenney clarified that there was no sign of water damage in the building. The floors were not rotted. There was discoloration of the insulation in the ceiling that they intended to look into further. TA Phelps mentioned that the Old Police Station would need a new roof. Chief Kenney agreed and stated the shingles were not good, but the plywood was not damaged. Fire Chief Kenney said they will present costs once they get a quote.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 7:18 PM.

Mr. Josh Crawford commented on the proposed Select Board meeting schedule change. As a member of the public that attends the meetings, he did not have an issue with the change, but requested the meetings start no earlier than 5:30PM. Mr. Crawford suggested the idea of biweekly meetings and once business gets busy, to go back to weekly meetings.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 7:19 PM.

Non-Public Sessions:

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:26 PM under RSA 91-A:3 II(c). Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to exit the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) at 7:42PM. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to seal the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) as it would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:42PM under RSA 91-A:3 II(l). Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to exit the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(l) at 7:44PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to seal the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(l) as it would render the proposed action ineffective. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:47PM under RSA 91-A:3 II(c). Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to exit the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) at 7:50PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to seal the non-public minutes under RSA 91-A:3 II(c) as it would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter a nonpublic session at 7:51PM under RSA 91-A:3 II(I). Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to exit the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(I) at 8:04PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to seal the nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II(I) as it would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey inquired if there was further feedback received on the Technology Services proposals. TA Phelps said Primex made suggestions. Additionally, TA Phelps noted that follow-up questions have been asked of the three bidders to gain clarification. The department heads meet next Tuesday, November 14th, to discuss and decide on a recommendation to bring to the Board. Selectwoman Carey asked how much of it was fixed beyond their costs such as the licenses and the fees. In addition, how much was it to add to what the technology services were charging monthly. TA Phelps questioned how to budget for the additional hourly expenses for the year outside of normal business hours because that is an unknown. No further discussion.

Selectman Bevans mentioned the Penacook Rescue Squad held their meeting to discuss Torrent Station and he suggested selling it.

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

Chairman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 8:09PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner