

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kate Merrill, Kellee Easler, Jason Killary, Dean Hollins, Tim Kenney, & Gary Moore

Guests: Charlie Niebling, Matt Taylor—CNHRPC, Alan Hardy, Elizabeth McNaughten, Aurel Mihai, Jeff Abbe & 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
- Public Minutes for Approval—12/14/23
- Intent to Cut 23.049.11T Map 47 Lot 6
- Solar Exemption—Map 183D Lot 23—\$4,000
- Solar Exemption—Map 47 Lot 19—\$9,200
- Veteran’s Credit—Landowner C—\$500
- 2024 COBRA/Retiree Plan Design
- 2024 Health and Medical Transmittal
- Final Warrant 151 North Main 83 8 2
- Revised Payment Plan—Resident H
- Abatement Map 45 Lot 39
- Tax Supplement Map 45 Lot 39
- A-10 Approval Map 47 Lot 10 & 14
- Letter of Agreement CNHRPC PB&EDC Contract 2024
- Letter of Agreement CNHRPC Master Plan Contract 2024
- Employee Vacation Rollover Request—Killary
- Barn Easement for Signature Map 81A Lot 19

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey noted grammatical changes to the 12.14.23 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: *Community Power:* Vice Chair of the Energy Committee, Mr. Charlie Niebling, presented the following recommendation on behalf of the Energy Committee: They recommend approving the Electric Aggregation Plan and to further recommend that the Select Board support placing an article on the 2024 town meeting warrant, seeking approval

from the legislative body for Boscawen Community Power. There were no substantial modifications to the draft plan. The committee added the following information: meter information from Unitil, the usage amount, the current default rate from Unitil, and details on two public hearings. Discussion ensued.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to accept the Boscawen Community Power Electric Aggregation Plan. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve putting the Boscawen Community Power article on the 2024 Town Warrant pending review from legal. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TIF District Warrant Article—Mr. Matt Taylor from Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) recommended adding a warrant article to the 2024 Town Warrant to adopt the provisions of RSA 162-K, authorizing the creation of TIF districts. There had been previous discussion about putting a TIF District on Commercial Street for the former tannery site. The goal would be to develop a TIF district plan over the course of the year and to determine potential costs. Mr. Taylor noted they would provide an educational presentation to the legislative body about TIF districts at Town Meeting. Selectwoman Carey suggested that the educational presentation identify examples that residents would be familiar with.

Selectman Bevans motioned to approve adding a warrant article for the adoption of RSA 162-K on the 2024 Town Warrant. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Department Head Updates: Chairman Burdick spoke with Principal Jeff Drouin from Boscawen Elementary School about holding the January primary election at the school. Mr. Drouin told Chairman Burdick that he would speak with Superintendent Wormald about conducting a poll with the parents to get their thoughts on remote lessons for the day of the primary. The Board would not receive a decision until after the holiday. Town Administrator Katie Phelps spoke with Bonny John, the Director of the Public Library, about holding the election at the library.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Boscawen Public Library for the location of the 2024 Primary Election on January 23, 2024. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Finance Director Kate Merrill presented a Trustee of the Trust Fund transfer for approval.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Trustees of the Trust Fund to transfer \$5,740 from the Municipal IT Capital Reserves Fund to the General Fund to reimburse for the following expenditures: Cybertron; Invoice #20230502. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented four fund transfers for approval.

Chairman Burdick motioned to make the following funds transfer under the authority granted by RSA 32:10 (e): To transfer \$4,445.63 from account #4194500 Tax Deeded Properties to account #4711 Principal Bonds and Notes to pay off the outstanding balance as of 12/31/2023 for the insulation loan. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to make the following funds transfer under the authority granted by RSA 32:10 (e): To transfer \$16,000 from account #4194448 Building Utilities 116 North Main to account #4711 Principal Bonds and Notes to pay off the outstanding balance as of 12/31/2023 for the insulation loan. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to make the following funds transfer under the authority granted by RSA 32:10 (e): To transfer \$6,724.74 from account #4210111 Police Lieutenant to account #4153321: Special Litigation Services due to utilization in excess of the budget for 2023. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans motioned to make the following funds transfer under the authority granted by RSA 32:10 (e): To transfer \$6,657.27 from account #4210111 Police Lieutenant to account #4153320: Town Counsel due to utilization in excess of the budget for 2023. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Finance Director Kate Merrill gave an update on the Benjamin Morrill clock. She spoke with Primex last week about the possibility of donating the clock to the Boscawen Historical Society and allowing them to keep it at the Municipal Building for the public to observe. If the clock was kept at the Municipal Building, it would be the town's liability to insure it. FD Merrill noted if they don't get it appraised, Primex would cover up to \$10,000. Discussion ensued.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve utilizing Primex Insurance at a standard rate on the Benjamin Morrill clock without an appraisal. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Weir Timber Cut—The Conservation Commission gave an update on the final numbers for the Barnard Lot timber cut. Mr. Niebling, the Town Forester, noted the timber cut focused on the western part of the Weir Road Town Forest. The Barnard Lot was a 215-acre parcel that abutted the Webster town line and was only accessible through land of an abutter. The town had a temporary access right away agreement with the abutter (Horizon Holdings) to access about 20-acres of the Barnard lot. Town Forester Niebling noted that the Barnard lot was an old and declining stand of very densely stocked wood pine. The Conservation Commission decided to proceed with the sale this year due to the record cone crop and opportunity with abundant white pine seed in the stand to generate white pine. White Pine can be difficult to generate but this

year, they met the criteria of being able to harvest on open ground conditions, having enough sunlight, and having a seed source. The other reason the Commission proceeded with the sale was because there are high stumpage prices for white pine due to the intense real estate development pressure. The pine was sold to two mills in NH, including Colby Lumber. The result of the sale was just under 300,000 board feet and the net revenue to the town was \$64,262. Discussion ensued. Chair Hardy noted that there were different procedures for the Weir Road town forest regarding the approval of funds allocated to the Town Forest fund for maintenance of the forest. The Weir Road town forest involved the Select Board more heavily. Selectwoman Carey mentioned that the Board moved forward with proposing Walker Pond as a town forest on the 2024 Town Warrant. She suggested in order to have adequate funding to do the substantial work on Walker Pond, they should keep the funds with the Conservation Commission, so they have available funding without raising taxes. Chair Hardy noted the Conservation Commission's recommendation was to leave the funds in the forestry account until after Town Meeting. By town meeting, they could investigate what work will need to be done. Chair Hardy noted they cannot move forward with work at Walker Pond until it becomes a town forest. Discussion ensued.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve keeping the timber sale proceeds from the Barnard Lot in the Town Forest fund to be utilized for the Walker Pond project if it is approved as a town forest. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps requested authorization to sign Timber Warrant Operation #23-049-09-T for the Barnard Lot.

Chairman Burdick motioned to authorize Town Administrator Phelps to sign Timber Warrant Operation #23-049-09-T on behalf of the town. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Finance Director Merrill presented the updated Fire Chief contract for Fire Chief Tim Kenney. She made a revision on page 5, to include the command vehicle as part of the contract. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans suggested including this year's raises in the Fire Chief's compensation. FD Merrill noted raises occur after town meeting, but she suggested adding in wording such as '*as approved at town meeting*'. FD Merrill will make changes and present a final version of the contract next week for approval.

Public Works Director Dean Hollins presented the 2024 preliminary revised Public Works budget. The salary increases were due to 3% COLA, the 2.9% wage schedule step, some CDL driver market rate adjustments in 2023, and some longevity increases. The overtime line was reduced by 14% based on the last 3 years. The highway equipment line (4312700) was eliminated. PWD Hollins noted they have been using line 4312613: General Supplies to purchase equipment such as hand tools, shovels, and rakes. Line 4316: Street Lightening was reduced by \$11,000 based on actuals. Under Sanitation, line 4324431: Tipping Fees was reduced by \$1,000 based on tonnage sent for 2023 at \$90/ton and 2023 actuals. Line 4324436: Equipment

Maintenance reduced by \$1,500 because they utilize their recycling income to help with repairs. Line 4325440: Groundwater Sampling increased \$3,250 based on actuals and the increase in lab services. Line 4325441: Landfilling Covering and Maintenance was eliminated for 2024 because they have not used it and can use the Construction Debris income if needed. Line 4329442: Sewer Agreement increased by \$2,578 based on the proposal from Underwood Engineers and the Select Board approved the amount for 2024. The money goes to the City of Concord to pay for the sewer bill. Overall, the total budget for the Public Works Department estimated a 3% increase. FD Merrill clarified that the salary lines were higher due to the Board approving a market rate adjustment for CDL drivers' mid-year in 2023 to stay competitive.

Chairman Burdick motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Public Works budget. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill presented the Boscawen Historical Society (BHS) contribution request for approval to put on the 2024 Town Warrant. The recommendation was to see if the Town would vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$7,500 to contribute to the operating costs of the Boscawen Historical Society. Discussion ensued about what the extra money was for.

FD Merrill followed up on the Capital Reserve Contributions for the 2024 Town Warrant. The Board received information requested with regard to the Capital Reserve contributions that were approved by the Planning Board. Chairman Burdick asked if some of the money reserved in line H: Municipal Building, could be allocated towards the repair or replacement of the Public Works building. Discussion ensued. FD Merrill noted that last year the Municipal Building Capital Reserve fund was repurposed for the maintenance and upkeep of town owned buildings and grounds. It noted the Public Works Building CRF was for replacement of the building. It would cover repairs for the building. Discussion ensued. Public Works Director Hollins will research and come up with a plan for building a new Public Works building and purchasing new equipment to present at the 2025 town meeting.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve adding the contributions to Capital Reserves previously established, as recommended by the Planning Board, on to the 2024 Town Warrant. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Selectman Bevans was opposed. Roll Call Vote. Two in favor. One opposed. Motion Passed.

TA Phelps referred back to the BHS warrant article request. It did not note what the \$1,000 increase was for in their letter. The letter stated that it was to assist with the maintenance and day-to-day operations of the society which housed and maintained the extensive collection of local artifacts and extensive written record of Boscawen's past. Selectman Bevans noted the cupola needed repair.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve adding the Boscawen Historical Society warrant article request in the amount of \$7,500 to the 2024 Town Warrant. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler provided a staffing update for the PCD Department. She presented a resignation letter from Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien effective December 29, 2023. PCD Director Easler noted Mr. Roger Sanborn also gave his resignation from the Agricultural Commission, effective immediately. Selectwoman Carey observed that the town was losing many town staff individuals due to the cost of childcare and the ability to pay for it on the town salary. FD Merrill noted Deputy PCD Director O'Brien will have an exit interview with the Board next week. PCD Director Easler said she updated the PCD Coordinator job description with the help of TA Phelps and FD Merrill. They proposed restructuring the position. The proposal included reverting back to a stipend position for the Parks and Recreation program. Additionally, TA Phelps was comfortable with eliminating the Assistant to the Town Administrator role. The proposed breakdown would be: planning 40%, assessing 40%, Deputy Health Officer 10% and 10% for building inspections, which would be reimbursed by the Building Inspection Fund. The new job description proposed a title change from Deputy PCD Director to PCD Coordinator. The position would also be changed from salary to hourly. Discussion ensued. FD Merrill asked for the Select Board's permission to post the position internally for a week with the updated revisions.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the PCD Coordinator job description as amended and to post the position internally for a week. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented the Utilization of Town Counsel policy for approval.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve the Utilization of Town Counsel policy. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented Mr. Joshua Crawford's Appointment letter for the Advisory Budget Committee. Chairman Burdick read the appointment letter into record.

TA Phelps asked for clarification on the Town Flag and whether this should be a warrant article. Selectwoman Carey clarified the Town Flag proposal will not go on the 2024 Town Warrant, but it will go under 'other business' at the end town meeting.

TA Phelps met with Boston Post Cane nominee Ms. Lottie Hanks and her son, Kevin. She would like to schedule the presentation of the cane. The Board agreed on January 5, 2024, at 12:00 PM. Selectwoman Carey and Selectman Bevans will be present to award the nomination.

Selectwoman Carey asked Fire Chief Kenney about a tree at Junction 3 and 4. Fire Chief Kenney clarified that the Fire Department used to take care of it in the past, but they have since opted out. Residents can bring back the Christmas tree through a different source.

FD Merrill presented five donations for approval.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve a donation from Elektrisola for the Backpack Program in the amount of \$500. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve a donation from Bonny and Vernon John for the Backpack Program in the amount of \$100. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve a donation from an anonymous donor (Check #1170) for the Backpack Program in the amount of \$100. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve a donation from Donna Raymond for the Backpack Program in the amount of \$100. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve a donation from Colby Lumber for the Backpack Program in the amount of \$100. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

PCD Director Easler noted the public hearing for the Planning Board Zoning Ordinance was sent out today with the updates to the zoning ordinance. It will be held on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, after 6:30PM.

TA Phelps presented the revised 2024 General Government Budget. Line 117: Assistant to Town Administrator was removed and decreased \$2,373. Dues and Subscriptions increased minimally due to an Amazon subscription not previously accounted for. The overall budget for General Government will increase \$570 for 2024.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve the 2024 General Government Budget. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 7:54 PM.

Mr. Tim Kenney noted the project at the barn located at 174 King Street was underway. Mr. Tim Andrews has been working on the project. Once the project has been completed, they would like to post pictures of the final product.

Mr. Joshua Crawford asked if the Board would like a presentation for the Town Flag for town meeting. Selectwoman Carey suggested no more than a 3-minute presentation. Discussion ensued. Mr. Crawford will present designs next week for the Board to narrow down for the presentation.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 8:57PM.

Non-Public Sessions:

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at 7:57PM. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to exit non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at 8:10PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve an employee related request made by Chief Killary. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting: Thursday, December 28, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 8:11PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner