

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, March 14, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kellee Easler, Nicole Hoyt, and Tim Kenney

Guests: Charlie Niebling, Loren Martin, and 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—03/07/24
- February Treasurer's Reports
- Appointment—Karyn Chagnon—Deputy Town Clerk
- Appointment—William Lambert—Asst to the Moderator

Selectman Bill Bevans motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt swore in Mr. Matt Burdick as member of the Select Board.

Chairman Burdick swore in Ms. Loren Martin as a member of the Planning Board.

Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt swore in Mr. Timothy Kenney as a member of the Trustee of the Trust Funds.

Affinity LED Proposal: Mr. Charlie Niebling, Vice Chair of the Energy Committee, presented a proposal from Affinity LED lighting. He noted that LED lighting uses less electricity and lasts longer which would save the town money. The Energy Committee had been evaluating other opportunities for street lighting to eliminate the \$20,000 per year in energy costs that taxpayers pay. The Energy Committee approached Affinity, being the best known for LEDs and having done the most work with municipalities. Mr. Niebling and Mr. Ed Cherian met with Affinity on February 26th, after getting the detailed inventory from Unitil. Mr. Niebling stressed that the Affinity proposal was based on the inventory details provided by Unitil. Affinity would conduct an in-depth audit of street lighting for the town if the project moved forward. Mr. Niebling noted there could be minor changes in the proposal based on their findings. The structure of the deal was that the town would put out the initial capital outlay of \$38,268 and Affinity would proceed with the project. A rebate has already been pre-approved by Mr. Gary Miller at Unitil based on the town's inventory. The rebate would cover more than 60% of the capital outlay, or \$24,572.

The town would finance the remaining balance of \$13,516, which would be the difference between the total project costs and the rebate, plus the \$17,776 net book value owed to Unitil on the pre-existing fixtures. The town would owe a total of \$31,092, which would include the difference between the capital outlay of \$38,268 to convert all 68 street lighting fixtures and the pre-approved rebate of \$24,572 from Unitil. Affinity would offer on bill financing for 60 months at 0% interest. At the end of the 60 months, the town will have paid off the investment and saved approximately \$6,258, which equates to 80% of the electricity cost on the bill. For taxpayers, the savings would be in the electricity consumption, which would be a little over 3,150/kilowatt-hours per year. The fixtures are anticipated to last 20 years and have a 10-year full replacement warranty. Mr. Niebling questioned where the town would get the initial \$38,268 from and noted it would be fully reimbursed within the same fiscal year. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans asked how long it would take Affinity to replace all the lights. Mr. Niebling noted they would want to start as soon as possible with the audit. Selectman Bevans asked when the \$38,268 would be due. Discussion ensued. Mr. Niebling will confirm when the payment would be due and how long the project will take. Selectwoman Carey asked if Affinity would turn on the streetlights that were currently off. Mr. Niebling said it would provide the town with the opportunity to assess the 68 lights they have and determine how many are needed and how many have not been functioning. Discussion ensued. Mr. Niebling will confirm when the payment would be due and how long the project will take. The Energy Committee will meet on Tuesday, March 19th and make a recommendation for the Board. The Board will think about where the funds could come from.

Department Head Updates: Town Administrator Katie Phelps presented the Boscawen Community Power Cost Sharing Agreement and Member Services Agreement for approval. Boscawen Community Power was approved at the Town Meeting, this is the next step in that process.

Chairman Burdick motioned that the Boscawen Select Board hereby authorizes Town Administrator Katherine Phelps to enter into the Cost Sharing Agreement and Member Services Contract for the Complete Service Bundle with the Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH) with Katherine Phelps as the Authorized Officer and with elections in Exhibit C, Article VIII Section II of the Agreement being a) “Yes”, b) “Yes”, and c) “Yes”; and be it further moved that the Boscawen Select Board hereby approves CPCNH’s Data Security and Privacy, Energy Portfolio Risk Management, Rates, and Financial Reserves policies. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Niebling provided feedback on the election and Town Meeting turnout. He thanked all the elected officials and volunteers for their help. He recommended that for next year, to have polling hours from 11 AM to 7 PM. TA Phelps noted she sent an email thanking the school district for allowing the town to host the elections at the school. Discussion ensued. Mr. Niebling noted the town needs to think about ways to raise awareness in the community about voting and Town Meeting for every election. Town Clerk Hoyt suggested creating a Town of Boscawen app. No further discussion.

Chairman Burdick started the discussion on the nomination of Chair. Traditionally, the individual on the Select Board that was a 3rd year member, would be in the Chair. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Burdick nominated Selectwoman Lorrie Carey as the new Chairperson for the Select Board. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll call vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans and Selectman Burdick previously reviewed the Ex-Officio designations and had no changes. Chairwoman Carey suggested designating a primary and secondary Select Board member to attend the Emergency Management Hazard Mitigation meetings. Chairwoman Carey volunteered to be the primary attendee of Emergency Management meetings. Selectman Burdick will be the Ex-Officio for the Conservation Commission, Energy Committee, and the Old Home Day Committee. Chairwoman Carey will be the Ex-Officio for the Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, Hazard Mitigation, and Brownsfield Advisory Committee. Selectman Bevans will be the Ex-Officio for the Agricultural Committee and the Beautification Committee. He will be an alternate Ex-Officio for the Planning Board and an advisor to the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Chairwoman Carey started the discussion on changing the Select Board meeting schedule. The Board previously discussed moving the meetings to a Wednesday. Discussion ensued. The Board decided to move their meetings from Thursdays to Wednesdays beginning in June. The time of the meetings will remain at 6 PM. During the summertime, most meetings will be held every other week until September. Chairwoman Carey noted all the tasks that the Select Board needed to complete before the budget season. TA Phelps will update the Select Board's schedule and then they will plan when to accomplish each task.

TA Phelps noted the town was approached to negotiate a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreement with Avaloch Farm Music Institute (AFMI). She asked the Board if they would be willing to nominate a Board member to meet with a member of AFMI, Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler, and TA Phelps to negotiate PILOT. TA Phelps suggested putting a draft together for the Select Board to review. Selectman Burdick volunteered to be the Board contact for the negotiation.

TA Phelps noted that Police Chief Jason Killary will be receiving a Patrol Grant from the NH Department of Safety to reimburse the town for overtime paid out in shifts. Police Chief Killary requested the Board to allow him to do some of the overtime shifts. The expenses related to overtime will be reimbursed in full by the grant.

Selectman Burdick motioned to grant Police Chief Jason Killary permission to complete overtime shifts related to the New Hampshire Department of Safety Patrol Grant. The overtime paid out for the Police Chief will be reimbursed by the Department of Safety in full. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Phelps presented the MS-232 for signatures. It is the report of appropriations actually voted at Town Meeting. The Board reviewed and signed the MS-232.

Planning and Community Development Director Easler noted there was an opening for Code Enforcement Officer. She spoke with TA Phelps and Finance Director Kate Merrill, and after consideration, they suggested that the staff would need assistance from the Select Board to fill in until they can find someone to fill the position. The position is per diem, paid at \$60 per unit. PCD Director Easler explained that when an issue arises, the Code Enforcement Officer takes on the responsibility of sending out the letter, researching and making a recommendation with a determination letter. PCD Director Easler presented templates for the Board to follow. PCD Director Easler will also provide the Board with a few examples and help with any applications that come in. The town has Intermunicipal Agreements with Franklin and Canterbury for backup, if needed. No further discussion.

PCD Director Easler noted there will be a submission for a hardship abatement for Select Board approval shortly. She is unaware if there are any RSAs for it and after asking Assessor Kerry Connor, he said he will research further and provide a recommendation to the Select Board if needed. Chairwoman Carey noted the Board usually based their recommendation off of Avitar's recommendation. No further discussion.

PCD Director Easler spoke with Town Attorney Tim Sullivan about conducting Impact Fee training. Attorney Sullivan can lead the training on Tuesday, April 2nd. It would be an hour-long training. PCD Director Easler said the training could be held in the Finance Office in the Municipal Office so the Economic Development Committee could have their regular meeting from 5:30 PM to 6:30PM. Chairwoman Carey suggested having a joint meeting to get both staff and volunteers trained. PCD Director Easler will invite staff and the Land Use Boards involved with impact fees. No further discussion.

PCD Director Easler clarified that if she receives an application that requires Code Enforcement, she will vet it, send it to the Select Board, and the Board can make the determination at the following Select Board meeting. PCD Director Easler will include her recommendation with the materials.

Selectman Bevans started a discussion about the old Police Station. He noted a new roof will be needed. Selectman Bevans asked if Fire Chief Tim Kenney was interested in the building. Fire Chief Kenney was not interested due to the extra heating costs. Selectman Bevans noted there was room in the construction debris landfill for the debris. Public Works Director Dean Hollins could rent a machine for \$5,000 for the week to get rid of it. Selectman Bevans said if they continue to delay it, they will have to haul the construction debris somewhere else. Selectman Burdick asked what would be needed to make it a secure cold storage facility for the town. Fire Chief Kenney said it would need to have doors replaced, floors on the first floor and a new roof. Selectman Burdick noted there was material stored in the Torrent Station that is owned by the towns and town committees. They will need to find storage space for the materials. Selectman Bevans estimated it would cost around \$20,000 to make it a functional storage facility.

Selectman Bevans motioned to approve demolishing the old Police Station or selling parts for scraps. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Burdick opened public comment at 7:08 PM.

Ms. Loren Martin asked what Board or Committee was receiving the Impact Fee training. Chairwoman Carey clarified the training will be combined for the Economic Development Committee and the Planning Board. Ms. Martin was not in favor of the training in place of the Planning Board meeting on April 2nd. She asked why Planning Board would need the training. Chairwoman Carey noted Attorney Sullivan will provide the presentation. Ms. Martin will not be able to attend the training and would like to be involved. Chairwoman Carey said they delayed the meeting until after Town Meeting. Discussion ensued. Ms. Martin noted the Planning Board knows what the ordinances are and what they need to do. She questioned whether the Select Board needed training on how to spend impact fees. Chairwoman Carey noted the goal was to ensure everyone was on the same page as to how impact fees work. Ms. Martin preferred to hold the training on the May 7th meeting date. PCD Director Easler noted all the department heads will be attending the meeting to discuss the changes that Planning Board wanted to make. Ms. Martin noted they were hoping to change the impact fees at their April 2nd meeting and go to a public hearing in May. PCD Director Easler stressed the importance of providing the training before decisions are made. Discussion ensued. Chairwoman Carey said in this case because it was a potentially legal situation, the recommendation for the training, was presented by the Select Board. It was to advise staff and volunteers that they must take the training. The Board will take Ms. Martin's concern into consideration.

Ms. Martin noted in terms of the hardship abatement, Kerry Connors will bring back a recommendation. She noted abatements are typically value driven. When a taxpayer has a hardship concern and cannot pay taxes, they have the right to file for abatement, but Avitar does not make recommendations on hardships. Ms. Martin noted it would go back to the Select Board and Avitar would recommend going through the Welfare Department.

Ms. Martin asked about the Avaloch PILOT agreement. She noted they applied for a charitable exemption which Avitar has been in the process of reviewing. Ms. Martin sent back a list of questions because she was concerned whether or not they qualified for the exemption. She noted there were a few properties that did not qualify at all. The larger question was if Avitar came back with a recommendation that Avaloch does not qualify for an exemption, there would be no authority to enter into a pilot. Selectman Burdick clarified that the Board's standard would be to follow Avitar's recommendation. Ms. Martin stressed the importance of waiting on making a decision until the town receives a recommendation back from Avitar.

Mr. Josh Crawford voiced in favor of a streetlight audit to determine which lights work and which they don't need. He noted from the flyer that it stated the town could pick the light temperature. He noted there have been studies that bluer lights are safer, better for vision, and help lessen crime.

Selectman Burdick closed public comment at 7:19 PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 21, 2024, at 6:00PM.

Selectman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 7:20PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner