

Town of Boscawen
 Budget Committee Public Meeting
 Boscawen Municipal Complex
 January 23, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Present: Barbara Randall, Chair, Alan Hardy, Mark Varney, Roger Sanborn, Edward Cherian Jr., Katie Phelps, Kevin Wyman, Dean Hollins, Nicole Hoyt, Sherlene (Doddy) Fisher, Bruce Crawford, Brian Fleury, Rhoda Hardy, Kellee Easler, and Sarah Gerlack, Sue Croft, Lorrie Carey, Paul Dickey, Lawre Murphy, Shawn Brechtel.

A **motion** to accept the consent agenda as presented was made by Sanborn, seconded by Carey and passed by a unanimous vote.

Non-public minutes will be moved to next Thursday. The Budget Hearing will be on 2.6.20.

Select Board Chair Ed Cherian turned the meeting over to Budget Committee Member Barbara Randall at this time.

Meeting began at 6:00 pm. Roll call completed. A **motion** to nominate Barbara Randall for Chair was made by Rhoda Hardy, seconded by Doddy Fisher and passed by a unanimous vote.

Review and Approval of the February 27, 2019 Minutes – Amendments are as follows: Page 1 in the graph under 4151 Tax Collector, the amount needs to read “\$40,904”. Page 2, paragraph 4, line 1 should read “Lawre Murphy had a question...” Paragraph 4, line 4 should have a “?” after the first and second sentences. Line 5 should read “The town employees”, remove the word “But”. Page 2, paragraph 5, third line from the bottom should read “to the IT account.” Last line same paragraph should read “DRA now says they need to clean this up.” Eliminate the last word “now”. Page 3, second paragraph third to the last line, change “Administrator’s” to “Administrators”. Same page paragraph 4, capital the “t” in “town Manager”. Page 4, paragraph 1 last line change the word “to” to the word “for”. Paragraph 3, should read “...they publish the Selectmen’s agenda in advance.” A **motion** to approve the Minutes as amended was made by Crawford, seconded by Fleury and passed by a unanimous vote.

Cherian explained that the Board chose to provisionally approve each department’s budget prior to this meeting as the Select Board accepted them. The budget before the budget committee is one that is recommended by the Select Board. They are trying hard to keep the increases low.

Cherian presented the operating budget to the Budget Committee.

	2020	2020 Increase/ Decrease	Explanations
Line 4130 Executive Budget	\$177,738	-2%	Increase hours for minute takers at Select Board meetings. Converting 2

			people from hourly with overtime to salary, (no overtime).
Line 4140 Town Clerk/Elections	67,886	-13%	Nicole's time reallocated between Town Clerk & Tax Collector role.
4150 Financial Admin.	\$68,182	+2%	
4151 Tax Collector	56,548	+38%	Nicole's time reallocated between Town Clerk & Tax Collector role.
4152 Assessing	\$63,809	+6%	
4153 Legal Expenses	\$50,000	+11%	A decrease was made last year and it was almost overspent, therefore increase is recommended.
4155 Personnel Administration	\$738,425	+8%	Increase due to health insurance policy cost increases.
4191 Planning/Community Development	\$117,932	-4%	
4193 AgCom	\$2,000	0%	
4194 Town Buildings	\$102,042	+47%	Proposed adding a part-time facilities director starting in July. Torrent station stabilization also added.
4195 Cemeteries	\$3,000	-14%	
4196 Insurance	\$41,868	+5%	
4210 Police	\$608,513	+2%	
4215 Ambulance	\$214,200	100%	Penacook Rescue is now under contract with Boscawen, Canterbury and Salisbury. In return, they are now included in the Fire Department budget.
4220 Fire	\$197,702	0%	
4240 Life Safety Officer	\$8,252	+5%	
4290 Emergency Management	\$8,601	+22%	New vehicle maintenance line
4312 Highway Streets	\$569,033	+4%	
4316 Street Lighting	\$21,000	0%	
4319 Other Highways and Streets	\$5,800	0%	
4324 Solid Waste	\$217,255	+1%	
4325 Solid Waste Clean-up	\$22,500	-25%	
4329 Other Sanitation	\$60,000	-17%	
4410 Health Dept.	\$10,113	-1%	

4441 Welfare Admin.	\$74,659	-1%	
4520 Parks and Rec.	\$36,500	+7%	
4550 Boscawen Public Library	\$104,907	0%	
4583831 Old Home Day	\$5,000	0%	
453803 Town Beautification	\$750	-40%	
4611 Conservation Commission	\$2,200	+100%	Increase as they voted to forgo their budget last year.
4651 Economic Development	\$5,000	+100%	Incentive for businesses to come to Boscawen
4700 Debt Service	\$162,730	-4%	

A copy of the draft budget is available on the town website and print copies are available in the Finance Office.

\$5,000 was added to Economic Development to be used to assist in encouraging new businesses. Municipal Sewer increase 3%.

Proposed Warrant Articles.

Police department vehicle increased \$30,000. Information Technology was increased \$5,000. A new Capital Reserve account for Municipal Buildings is being created with a recommended \$30,000 starting balance in it. This new account is recommended by DRA for use on any town-owned building as the need arises. The Select Board would determine which projects would be done on an annual basis.

The warrant has 2 items not voted on by Selectmen yet. They will be discussed next Thursday.

Doddy Fisher asked if the DRA would allow for the Penacook Rescue to become a budget item as they are an outside entity. Cherian noted that they would as it is an essential service, therefore it is allowed. Penacook Rescue will be required to give the town a quarterly report on their runs; i.e. how many calls to Canterbury, Salisbury, or to county facilities. It is a 1-year contract and is renewable. The town has the option to not renew at any time. In return Penacook Rescue has asked the town to include them in the town's budget. They have made the same request of Canterbury and Salisbury. The DRA has approved that.

Cherian encouraged people to ask the Selectmen questions regarding the budget.

Questions regarding the increase in the recreation budget. The backpack program is one that they need to continue. They buy their own back packs and supply their own funds. If the money that is funding the program fails, they are still liable to supply the backpacks to children in Boscawen. The Select board asked them to give the board a number that would help keep it going if the moneys that are donated fail. Randall asked if it would be carried through the summer. Last year the Penacook Elementary School held the summer program, but Recreation still offered the backpacks for the Boscawen children.

Cherian suggested going through Warrant articles that the Board voted on. His list was dated 1.16.20, which is still a work in progress.

Article II – Operating Budget.

Article III - Capital Reserve Funds

Article IV is to establish a new Municipal Building Capital Reserve Fund – the Select Board recommends \$30,000 as a starting balance.

Article V – is for a contingency fund for unanticipated expenses. i.e. lightning strike, etc.

Article VI – CAP request for the town to raise \$7,600 – recommended by the Select Board.

Article VII – Raise \$500 operating funds for CASA – recommended by the Select Board. CASA requested \$1,000 this year, but the Board said no. They are only recommending \$500.

Article VIII - \$5,700 for Penacook Community Center – recommended by the Select Board.

Article IX – raise \$6,000 operating cost of Boscawen Historical Society –recommended by the Select Board.

Article XI – emergency power for municipal office building. This is new - \$62,500 for a 600 amp transfer switch and rewire the system to allow the Municipal Office Building to run on the generator when necessary. They need to modify the existing generator so the municipal office can have power. The alternative was to buy a new generator but that was too costly. This would allow the building to be the emergency operations center – contingent on 50% matching funds. If grant is not received, the money will not be spent. Recommended by Select Board.

Articles XII and XIII – the Select Board will be working on these next week. The DRA has 2 sets of languages that they are reviewing. This is for a \$500,000 EPA grant to demolish and cleanup the Commercial Street town-owned buildings. The revision will be brought forward when they make a decision on the language.

Article XIV – the Select Board has not taken a position on this one yet as the estimate is unknown.

Article XV – petition Warrant Article to raise \$1,500 to assist Boscawen Congregational Church – no position has been taken by the Select Board. They will consider it next week and get a recommendation out. Even though this is a petitioned article DRA is asking the Board to take a position given it is a monetary article.

Article XVI – there is no fiscal impact. It is not before the Budget Committee but it is of interest. The Creaser Lot is to become a Town Forest. Conservation Funds and tax dollars purchased this lot years ago. Charlie Niebling, the Town Forester has more information. The Select Board is recommending this Article. Crawford remembers it was more than Conservation money that was used to buy the property. He'd like to know how much of the tax payers money went towards purchasing that property. Cherian noted that tax dollars were used to fill the gap. Because Conservation money bought the property, it needs to be managed by the Conservation Committee. \$375,000 of Conservation funds were used. The balance was tax dollars. The original discussion with the property owner at that time was that they had a high asking price. Fortunately the proposal time ran out and they ended up with a much smaller number. Hardy will look up the amount and send it out to the committee. Hardy explained that the Conservation funds that they have now is going to the Morrill easement on Water and Long Streets. The Morrill easement is almost complete. Crawford is suggesting that the tax payers be paid back for the money they used to help buy the Creaser property. Cherian explained that it is still town land but it is managed by the Conservation Committee. Carey explained that the return on the town's investment is \$488,000 in forestry products from logging, etc., which will be done over the next 10 or so years. That return makes up for the town's investment in the property. The tax payers use the land. Cherian noted that they have done 2 cuts and the funds go to the Conservation Commission by vote at town meeting. They can change that at town meeting but by the direction of the voters, those funds,

right now, go to the Conservation Commission. Hardy said the forest management plan is up on the town's website. Easler explained that the Commission is having a walk the weekend before the town meeting. Hardy explained that the formula used for timber cuts for the town forest is not applied to the Creaser lot just yet. Hardy explained that this Article will make the Creaser lot "a" town forest not part of 'the' town forest. Cherian asked if funds from cuts from the Creaser lot will go to the town. Hardy explained that the funds would go to the Conservation Commission. Cherian said they could amend how the revenue is addressed at town meeting. Carey explained that the decision was made years ago because it would allow money to be available to do easements like the Morrill easement or they would have no savings to take advantage of that opportunity.

Article XIV – Barbara Randall asked how much other towns offer veterans for tax relief. Cherian explained that it varies as low as \$50 to \$500. They have a print out of every town and their exemptions from DRA. They can make this printout available to the Budget Committee. Cherian explained that it applies only to a veteran that owns property. Easler explained that they have to live in the home and be a resident, not necessarily just be a homeowner.

Article XV – Barbara Randall questioned this article. Hardy explained that the original research was conducted over a brochure that was put together for Old Home Day and the Boscawen Congregational Church. Until there is a local court challenge there isn't anything in NH that they are aware of that challenges towns using tax dollars for church purposes. Randall asked if it would stay as a warrant. Cherian explained that it had adequate signatures, (verified), so it will be on the warrant. The Select Board will provide a recommendation next week. Crawford said that everyone uses that park except the church. He thinks it will do well to have this Warrant Article.

Article VIII – Dickey asked if Riverbend is exempt from paying taxes. Cherian explained that the Select Board did not recommend this Article. This is the first year that Riverbend is contributing to a PILOT (Payment in lieu of taxes) agreement with the town. This was not recommended by Select Board.

Carey asked if Phelps had projected revenues. Katie said she did and it was listed in their packets after the Warrants in their binders.

Cherian explained that they do have payments from Briar Hydro. State revenues are hard to predict. They received a one-time revenue of \$65,000 last year from the state. The other \$65,000 should come in 2020. Motor Vehicle revenue – Ross Express use to register their trucks in Boscawen but now register them in Indiana. The town now offers ATV, snowmobiles, and fishing licenses which has helped to make up for the loss of the truck registration from Ross Express.

Commercial Street grant was highlighted. Unless the EPA grant of \$500,000 comes through it will not trigger our commitment to that project. Hardy noted that EPA grants are extremely competitive. Randall asked when they will be notified if they get the grant? Hardy said May.

Cherian explained that the Board's recommendation on the 2 remaining Warrant Articles will be shared with the Budget Committee after the January 30th meeting.

Doddy Fisher asked if there are any town owned properties that will be sold for tax liens. Hardy said there may be one manufactured home sold this year, (2020). Fisher asked what was sold last year. There was a deeded property on Dove Street sold in 2019.

The 3% operating budget increase was questioned. Cherian explained that it was the total taxes raised which is the budget plus capital reserve plus warrant articles.

A **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 pm was made by Carey, seconded by Sanborn and passed by a unanimous vote.

Next meeting of the Budget Committee will be February 6, 2020 at 6:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Rose Fife