

Town of Boscawen
Select Board
Final Minutes
Thursday, January 21, 2021 at 6:00pm

In attendance: Ed Cherian, Lorrie Carey, Paul Dickey, Kellee Easler, Tama Tillman, Gary Tillman, Dean Hollins, Tim Kenney, Kevin Wyman, Kearsten O'Brien, Barbara Randall, Mark Varney, Kate Merrill, Nicole Hoyt, Sarah Gerlack, Charlie Niebling, and Bruce Crawford.

Excused: Katie Phelps

This meeting is being held under a Declaration of Emergency by the Governor and by the Board. Under RSA 91-A: 2, III (b) the requirement of a physical quorum is waived and this meeting is being held entirely remotely, and is being recorded.

Chairman Cherian motioned to approve the consent agenda. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian moved to approve the September 10th, 2020 meeting minutes as amended. Seconded by Selectman Dickey.

Chairman Cherian moved to approve the January 7th, 2021 minutes as amended regarding the CBDG grant. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian moved to approve the four set of nonpublic minutes from December 8th, 2020. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian moved to approve the separate nonpublic minutes from December 8th, 2020. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the nonpublic minutes from December 10th, 2020. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian moved to approve the four sets of nonpublic minutes from December 15th, 2020. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey.

Old Business:

Town Administrator Alan Hardy brought forth a revision idea for the warrant. He said the unassigned fund balance has nearly as much money in it today as it did before we started the rate setting process in October of last year. We would like the Select Board to consider the following: we believe that we can sustain an additional contribution from the Unassigned Fund Balance and have the funding for the Capital Reserves paid for from the unassigned fund balance, as opposed to the Capital Reserve contributions being paid for by taxation. Simply put, this would mean the \$253,200 would come from the unassigned fund balance and no tax dollars would be used. Town Administrator Hardy stated that the Warrant Article Six would then have this phrase added, "Said funds to come from the December 31, 2020 fund balance available on January 1, 2020 and no amount will be raised by general taxation". Chairman Cherian said he liked the idea. Also, Town

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Administrator Hardy asked the Select Board if they would like a tax impact statements to go along with the warrant articles as they are presented on the warrant. Chairman Cherian said they only thing is that revenues are always uncertain, therefore they will list the tax impacts but they may not be the actual impacts. He said his guess would be that it is over stated. Town Administrator Hardy said that is one of the concerns and unfortunately we cannot comment other than to say the tax impact is this. It does not allow for further comment than that. He also wanted to make the Select Board aware of is that the statute that allows the tax impact statement to be placed on the warrant has never been adopted by Boscawen. This should be considered for adoption at the next town meeting. Selectman Dickey asked why we can't adopt the provision this year. Town Administrator Hardy said it is the timing and getting DRA approval. Chairman Cherian asked if they would need to adjust the MS- 636 if they were to change the Capital Reserve contributions to come from the unassigned fund balance. Town Administrator Hardy said yes. Chairman Cherian asked his fellow Select Board members if they had any objections or if they would like to go forward with the amendment and have a final vote next week on the warrant. Selectman Dickey and Selectwoman Carey said they would like to move forward with the amendment and have a final vote at the next meeting.

New Business:

Town Moderator Charlie Niebling spoke about how and when to conduct Town Meeting. He said the intent is to have the Select Board listen to the various options and then in two weeks have the Select Board endorse a plan for Town meeting. He said in two weeks they should know the outcome of the legislative deliberations over Senate Bill 2 which, is the bill working its way through the house to grant municipalities and cities additional authority to deal with complexities of holding public gatherings during a pandemic. They are recommending holding the meeting on the second Tuesday in March with strict COVID protocols such as sanitation, six foot spacing, and mandatory masks with no exceptions. Niebling said traditionally there are only about 50 to 100 people that attend. He said they felt it would be a good idea to live stream the meeting for those who did not want to attend. They could at least observe and listen through live stream. Niebling said they felt as though if they delay Town Meeting until May or June it become problematic based on the mechanics of running the Town. Chairman Cherian said if delayed it can cause budget risk and also could create an issue with the EPA grant if awarded before Town Meeting.

Town Administrator Hardy presented the Select Board with an appointment letter request from Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt. The appointment is for the Director of Motor Vehicles appointing Town Clerk Hoyt as a municipal registration agent for the State of New Hampshire.

Chairman Cherian motioned to approve the appointment of Town Clerk Hoyt as a municipal registration agent for the State of New Hampshire and allow Town Administrator Hardy to use the signature stamp on behalf of the Select Board. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor.

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Employee Manual Discussion:

Selectwoman Carey said she had two suggestions for changes within the employee manual. The first suggestion is on page four and should note written and electronic graphic materials. This suggestion is for consistency purposes because later in the manual it does specify electronic materials.

The second suggestion is to reduce the call in to two hours instead of the four. Selectwoman Carey said that it currently exceeds the RSA for call in by 100%. Chairman Cherian agreed with Selectwoman Carey that it should be reduced to the two hours. Public Works Director Dean Hollins said the reason it was brought up to four hours was to encourage employees to come in to work if they were called in. Selectman Dickey agreed with Public Works Director Hollins that it does give employees more of an incentive to come in on their day off if needed.

Chairman Cherian stated he would not like to see a two tier system for vacation time. Selectman Dickey said he feels it would be better if they left the four weeks for employees who are already receiving it and leave it to the department heads to adjust the vacation time for employees. The tier should be left for the new hires starting after a certain date. Town Administrator Hardy said his concern as Administrator is that he was told they could not have a budget for overtime in the administrative office which, is an issue that had been discussed over numerous years. That is why there was a change to have the administrative office staff converted to salary to grant them the four weeks' vacation time to compensate for the decrease in overtime pay. The change that they are currently purposing may have an effect later on but such is life and, if anyone of us is lucky to have stayed with an organization over time there will be changes. We cannot guarantee that everyone will be treated uniformly over time. He said I do think we make a reasonable effort to make things better for the future. It is our employees that make things work and happen at the end of the day. Chairman Cherian said he does not feel the employee manual is ready for approval yet. He would like a word copy sent to the Select Board so they can add their thoughts and give feedback to Human Resource Director Phelps. Selectwoman Carey agreed with Chairman Cherian and would like to re-discuss the employee manual at the next Select Board meeting.

Department Head Updates:

Emergency Management Director Mark Varney updated the Select Board on COVID- 19. He said the numbers have been going in an up and down motion. Johnson and Johnson should be coming out with their version of the vaccine and it will hopefully be on the market sometime next week.

Planning and Community Development Director Easler informed the Select Board that the Conservation Commissioners would like to get volunteers to do trail work. After some research it would be up to the Select Board to approve the use of volunteers for Conservation Commission because the positions would not be appointed. Selectwoman Carey said she had a question on the age requirement of eighteen and she knows there were some high school aged students who have

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helped with cleanup projects in the past and, is wondering if this would exclude them from any community service projects. Planning and Community Development Director Easler said she will check with Primex and Human Resource Director Phelps. Selectman Dickey asked if they would need to get a background check. Planning and Community Development Director Easler said it is a recommendation from Primex. Selectwoman Carey said she isn't sure that it is necessary for one since they are working with limited people and not large groups. Chairman Cherian agreed with Selectwoman Carey regarding volunteers needing background checks and felt it was a little excessive. Planning and Community Development Director Easler said she check with Primex about the age requirement and get the answer back to the Select Board.

Planning and Community Development Director Easler updated the Select Board that Planning and Community Development Assistant Kearsten O'Brien sent out letters regarding the expired Solar Exemption. The letter was sent to current townspeople who are receiving the exemption. The letter also urges the townspeople to come to Town Meeting and vote to reinstate the Solar Exemption. Planning and Community Development Director Easler had a meeting with Fire Chief Kenney and Charles Bodien the Building Inspector about adding fire standards into the Land Development Regulations.

Fire Chief Tim Kenney had added on to Planning and Community Development Director Easler's comment about fire standards, that he would also like a time to discuss the water department and the issues that it will create for the Town for future development. He said the Fire Department has been doing a lot of training with the fire fighters.

Police Chief Kevin Wyman said they have had a busy week. There were multiple accidents and they also had a fatal overdose.

Other Business:

Barbara Randall, Chair of the Advisory Budget Committee, asked Planning and Community Development Assistant O'Brien if all the committee members had access to the meeting for next week. Planning and Community Development Assistant O'Brien said yes if they are able to call in by phone or laptop they have access. She said if a member is having issues with downloading the app to a phone, tablet, or laptop she would be more than happy to assist them with downloading it correctly.

Chairman Cherian made a motion to go into nonpublic RSA 91-A:3, II(c). Selectwoman Carey seconded. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian made a motion to come out of nonpublic RSA 91-A:3, II(c). Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian motioned to seal the nonpublic minutes. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor

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Motion made by Selectman Dickey to adjourn. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Kearsten O'Brien