

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, January 25, 2024, at 6:00 PM**

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

Guests: Tom Laliberte, Joshua Crawford, Dale Randall, and Gary Tillman.

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Chairman Matt Burdick called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Consent Agenda Items:

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Public Minutes for Approval—01/18/24
- Town of Boscawen Formal Complaint Procedure
- Concord Area Transit Rider Guide
- Invoice Cloud Donation Option
- Merrimack County Community Power Invitation
- Underwood Engineers Notes 1/4/24 & 1/18/24
- 2024 Primary Election Results

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

Department Head Updates: Finance Director Kate Merrill presented an ARPA transfer request for approval.

Chairman Burdick motioned to transfer \$327.33 from the ARPA Fund to the General Operating Account to reimburse expenditures previously approved to support Human Services (Backpack Program). Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Police Chief Jason Killary reduced the Police Cruiser Capital Reserve Fund (CRF) request for 2024 from \$65,000 to \$50,000. He mentioned there was left over money in the Police Cruiser CRF as well as in the special detail account. No further discussion.

Finance Director Merrill spoke with Mrs. Kim Kenney and Lori Cronan regarding the Parks and Recreation program. They would like to move forward with a proposal for restructuring the program. Ms. Lori Cronan, Parks and Rec Director, would organize and run the summer park program and Mrs. Kenney would help with civic support. The Board was in agreement to move forward with that plan. FD Merrill will work with them on a proposal.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recess the Select Board meeting at 5:35 PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor. None opposed.

There was brief discussion that the Advisory Budget Committee meeting could not begin until 6:00pm per the public notice and agenda.

Chairwoman Carey made a motion to reconvene the Select Board meeting at 5:35 PM. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. All in favor. Non opposed.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to enter nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II (I) at 5:36 PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to exit nonpublic session under RSA 91-A:3 II (I) at 5:57 PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectwoman Carey made a motion 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.

Chairman Burdick motioned to recess the Select Board meeting at 5:58 PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick motioned to reconvene the Select Board meeting at 6:57 PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

The Board discussed the recommendations from the Advisory Budget Committee meeting about the budget and warrant articles. Selectwoman Carey was interested in Mr. Tom Laliberte's idea regarding bonding. There has been a long practice in Boscawen of not bonding anything and paying for things as they could afford to pay for them. Selectwoman Carey noted that just because it had been past practice, doesn't mean the Board shouldn't ask the public if they would consider it. She suggested bringing it up to the public and allowing Mr. Laliberte to present the research he found about the actual cost to homeowners to bond versus put into a CRF. All concurred. Selectman Bevans felt it should be bonded because the Public Safety Building needed to be done. He suggested reorganizing the priorities of projects. He recommended that the Public Works Building should be completed in the next two years. Selectman Bevans said they could move \$25,000 from the proposed contribution to the Municipal Buildings and Fire Station CRFs, the \$15,000 reduction in the Police Cruiser CRF and put it into the Public Works Building CRF. It would give Public Works \$100,000 towards a new building. He noted the Fire Station CRF and the Municipal Buildings CRF would still have funding for repairs needed. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans suggested building the Public Works building first, then once the bond has been paid off, start building the Fire Station. Police Chief Killary suggested a shared facility for public safety. It could have potential savings because there would be one heating system, one cooling system, etc. Chairman Burdick said there was a previous recommendation to

build a \$9.6 million safety complex. Selectwoman Carey noted there was an engineering study done, but it did not include Public Works. Selectwoman Carey mentioned it could save the town money to take one bond out for all. She stated the current interest rate on bonds was 4%. The Board agreed more research was required to decide whether it was better to take out one bond for all or do one project at a time over 10 to 15 years, with a potential for higher interest rates over time.

Chairman Burdick noted the Parks and Recreation building CRF was set up last year, but with the amount allotted each year, it will not be enough to build in future years. He suggested reducing the Public Works, Fire Station, and Municipal Building CRF's to \$75,000 so the Parks and Rec CRF could have \$20,000 for expansion and upkeep to make the program more useable for the kids. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey listed the CRF accounts and the recommended amount to allot. Town Wide Safety CRF: \$15,000, Police Cruiser: \$50,000, Municipal Building: \$75,000, Public Works Building: \$100,000, Highway Heavy Equipment: \$100,000, Fire Truck: \$80,000, Fire Station: \$75,000, Fire Safety Equipment: \$15,000, Municipal IT: \$30,000, C&D Landfill: \$40,000, and Parks and Rec: \$5,000.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to recommend the Capital Reserve Fund requests as amended. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick was concerned that the Parks and Recreation CRF should get a little more. Selectman Bevans suggested reducing the Town-Wide Safety to \$10,000 and increasing Parks and Rec to \$10,000.

Selectwoman Carey withdrew her previous motion to recommend the Capital Reserve Fund requests as amended.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve recommending the Capital Reserve Fund requests as amended: Town Wide Safety CRF: \$10,000, Police Cruiser: \$50,000, Municipal Building: \$75,000, Public Works Building: \$100,000, Highway Heavy Equipment: \$100,000, Fire Truck: \$80,000, Fire Station: \$75,000, Fire Safety Equipment: \$15,000, Municipal IT: \$30,000, C&D Landfill: \$40,000, and Parks and Rec: \$10,000. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Fire Chief Tim Kenney requested to remove the warrant article to establish a command vehicle capital reserve fund.

Town Administrator Phelps started the discussion about the Operating budget. She mentioned that in the Advisory Budget Committee meeting Mr. Laliberte made recommendations regarding the extra insurance plans budgeted for mid-year changes. Selectwoman Carey was nervous about the amount of movement within positions and the additional unfilled positions because there was no way of knowing whether a new person would select a single or family plan. Finance Director Merrill budgeted for family plans for the open positions and prorated the first few months based on coverage eligibility. FD Merrill referred to the 2024 versus 2023 breakdown of retirees and

additional budgeted plans. It showed \$61,115.52 for retirees, plus the pricing for single and family plans. FD Merrill stated the Board could vote to eliminate the budgeting for additional plans, keep it the same, or eliminate one and not the other. Discussion ensued.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve removing the extra single plan in the amount of \$10,502.68. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Bevans asked to reduce the Backpack Program line by the \$5,500 they received in donations. FD Merrill noted \$2,844.21 was spent as of December 31, 2023. The remaining donations that have not been used was \$3,650.79. Selectman Bevans suggested taking \$3,600 out of the budget. FD Merrill stated the current budget was \$9,400, but after deducting the remaining donation amount, it would be \$5,800. The Board concurred with the reduction.

Selectman Bevans suggested reducing the Radio Maintenance line to \$1 under the Facilities Budget, so that it stays open in case they need to fund it in the future for repairs. He noted he researched the past 5 years of what the town spent, and he did not feel they needed to raise the budget line. Discussion ensued.

Selectman Bevans was not in favor of the \$600 for Invoice Cloud which would allow the town to accept donations through the town website. TA Phelps clarified that townspeople have the ability to donate to a town committee if they chose to while paying their bills online. Selectman Bevans did not agree with expending taxpayer money to try to get donations from taxpayers. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans recommended a separate line for the \$600 Invoice Cloud donations. Selectwoman Carey suggested splitting the cloud expense between the different categories such as Parks and Rec and the Backpack program, because they would be the beneficiaries of that function. No action taken.

Finance Director Merrill mentioned that Mr. Joshua Crawford suggested considering what happens if the town and Penacook Rescue can't come to an agreement regarding the Torrent Station. He questioned whether that would mean the \$22,000 increase they proposed for Torrent Station upgrades, would go down. Chairman Burdick inquired about building in a clause to the agreement. The Board suggested asking Penacook Rescue for clarification on what the \$22,000 increase was proposed for.

TA Phelps noted that the total budget was \$4,917,665 with the deductions discussed. Selectwoman Carey mentioned the deductions were roughly \$16,000. Chairman Burdick stated the budget went from a 1.4% increase to a 1.1% increase for 2024.

TA Phelps noted the public hearing on the budget is scheduled for Thursday, February 1st after 6:00 PM.

Selectwoman Carey gave a shoutout to all department heads for working hard and being innovative on ways to make the budget affordable for taxpayers. The Board appreciated all the

work they put into reducing their budgets. Selectwoman Carey also thanked staff for their participation and hard work with the primary election.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 7:45 PM.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 7:46 PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 7:47 PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner