

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 14th, 2021, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Paul Dickey, Matthew Burdick, Kate Merrill, Dean Hollins, Katie Phelps, Kellee Easler, Chief Tim Kenney, Kearsten O'Brien & Chief Kevin Wyman

Chairwoman Lorrie Carey opened the public meeting at 6:00 P.M.

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Selectman Paul Dickey motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. Seconded by Selectman Matthew Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairwoman Carey sent requests of grammatical changes on lines 164, 208, 221, 227 & 269 for the Select Board 10.07.21 DM to Finance Director Katie Phelps.

Planning and Community Development Assistant Kearsten O'Brien asked that the appointment application for Tracy Jo Bartlett be resigned because the applicants name was misspelled on the last form.

New Business: Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler presented the 2022 Voting Form for the NH Assessor's Association for voting and signature from the Select Board. Normally the Select Board doesn't vote but Mrs. Loren Martin is on the ballot. Mrs. Martin is running for Director of the Assessor's Association. Chairwoman Carey signed on behalf of the Select Board.

PCD Director Easler discussed the utilities option for Avitar Associates of NE. In 2018 they committed to a 5-year contract with reevaluation but no utilities. PCD Director Easler asked the Select Board to accept the recommendation as required by the House Bill 700. They would need to add on \$7,500 for utilities. PCD Director Easler suggested two options, adding the full amount in one year or splitting the amount over 2022-23.

Selectman Burdick motioned to split the utility cost of \$7,500 between two tax years, 2022 and 2023. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented the Subrecipient CDBG Agreement for Riverbend to the Select Board. The Select Board needs to vote for the Chair to sign on their behalf. Chairwoman Carey asked if they get administrative fees for being a pass-through agency for the grant. Finance Director Katie Phelps will ask Town Administrator Hardy.

Selectman Burdick motioned to allow the Chair to sign the Subrecipient CDBG Agreement for Riverbend on behalf of the Town of Boscawen. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Department Head Updates: PCD Director Easler said the Energy Committee and Beautification Committee will meet on November 8th. The Energy Committee will meet at 6 P.M. and the Beautification Committee will follow at 7 P.M. The Beautification Committee is just renewing appointments with the exception of Ms. Nancy Towle, if she decides to apply. PCD Director Easler states she doesn't think she will have to go to court regarding Kenney's Garage. They asked to extend until January because Mr. Kenney applied for a site plan review and will be heard in November by the Planning Board.

Chief Tim Kenney reported the Fire Department has reached 200 calls which was the maximum number of calls they had last year. They still have two months to go so they will be exceeding last year's record. Penacook Rescue has scheduled a CPR training date for October 19th from 9am to 12pm, at the Town Office. Mr. Shawn Brechtel will offer night a class if people can't make it. Those who complete the training will receive a certificate card. FD Phelps said the employees downstairs asked if they will be closed to the public during this training because it is mandatory. Some of them can't come in for the night training without having to pay them overtime. Selectman Burdick suggested having them make up the lost hours on Friday so the public can come in. FD Phelps will suggest it to the downstairs employees. Chief Kenney said the firefighters might attend the night class because of their schedules. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said volunteers on committees want to attend the training. The Select Board made the training mandatory through the Joint Loss per recommendation from Primex. FD Phelps said there is no set date for the evening training yet. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said employees must do the training during their normal work hours if the Town doesn't want to pay them overtime. Chairwoman Carey asked to write a notice to the public immediately stating the office will be closed for CPR training on October 19th from 9am to 12pm.

PWD Dean Hollins said every year they put monitor wells in both landfills on King St and Corn Hill Rd. The PFAS levels are an issue right now and climbing in two wells. Their engineer that did the water samples requested to not put extra wells in last year and wait for the samples to come back. The samples came back and are still high. DES sent the engineer and PWD Hollins a letter requesting to put 3 more wells in for 2022. The engineer that did the samples is getting pricing right now and locating where the wells will be placed. PWD Hollins talked to a company about pricing for the fence. The company said they won't hold a quote for a week. They are out until mid-summer. PWD Hollins said they wanted a quote for the springtime.

FD Phelps looked at the total cost for a new public works employee, assuming a \$36,000 salary for the first year it would be approximately \$72,550 total including benefits. This assumes a family plan for medical. Public Works is looking for a new employee with a CDL license for primarily the transfer station but also whatever else is needed for help. It would be covered under ARPA lost revenue because premium pay is not applicable for a new employee. FD Phelps said they have a remaining balance of \$32,799 left in the ARPA fund until June of 2022. In June of 2022 they will receive another \$200,000 in ARPA funds. FD Phelps suggested spending the money and then reimbursing later in June when they receive the second half. FD Phelps also suggested paying the salary with the ARPA funds and the rest with taxation for benefits. PWD Hollins said they are competing with local municipalities offering higher salaries. They also are planning to hire someone to fill the part-time position at the transfer station. PWD Hollins doesn't think they will find a full-time employee until the spring. FD Phelps said they can come

up with a more accurate figure towards the beginning of the year when they have more information. Selectman Dickey would like public works to start advertising. The Police Department is also requesting funds for a new employee. Assuming a salary of \$50,000 for the first year the total plus benefits would be approximately \$96,540. This total also assumes a family plan for medical. Chairwoman Carey suggested using the rest of the ARPA funds to fund each department half of what they asked. Public Works Department would receive \$12,799 and the Police Department would receive \$25,000. Chairwoman Carey said when they receive the second amount of funds, they need to figure out both benefits and salary together.

Selectman Burdick said in his opinion Boscawen already has enough police officers.

Chairwoman Carey asked if there are grants to help fund a new officer. Chief Kevin Wyman said they used to have a cops grant but they aren't sure if they still fund it. Chief Wyman will look for a grant that may help.

Selectman Dickey motioned to accept \$25,000 for the Police Department for a new officer to be paid with ARPA funding. Seconded by Chairwoman Carey. Matthew Burdick was opposed. Two members in favor. The motion passed.

Selectman Burdick motioned to accept \$12,799 for the Public Works Department for a new employee to be paid with ARPA funding. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Chief Wyman said the new police equipment will be ready to go on Monday or Tuesday. They may have an officer interested in an open position. Looking to 2022, there will be an increase for the county that they have no control over. Dispatch went up about \$2,000 a year and there was a rumor that the County Attorney is doing a 15% jump on theirs. Chairwoman Carey said they need to investigate the county increases.

FD Phelps said the 2022 COLA Press Release was officially released at 5.9%. It was previously at estimate and approved by the Board at 6.0%, with the option to revisit when the official figure was release by Social Security.

Selectman Burdick motioned to amend the 2022 COLA approval from 6% to 5.9%. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Phelps asked the Select Board if they wanted to apply the 5.9% COLA to the Select Board salaries for 2022.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the addition of the 5.9% COLA to the 2022 Select Board salaries. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Chairwoman Carey opposed. Two members in favor. The motion passed.

FD Phelps began a discussion of the 2022 Health Insurance rates. The health insurance rates for 2022 will be decreasing by 8.1%. FD Phelps showed a chart that indicated green was current coverage of 95% and the cost to the Town by plan type. The blue indicated the new rates at the

current coverage amount of 95%. She also provided 4 additional options 92%, 90%, 88% and 85%. Chairwoman Carey clarified that the coverage was accepted by Town employees last year who felt it was appropriate. PCD Director Easler said benefits are a huge factor for her department. Chairwoman Carey heard benefits can be more important than the salary to some candidates. Selectman Burdick thinks the employees can cover more of their health insurance. FD Phelps said prior to this year single plans weren't contributing to their premiums and were paid in full by the Town. In looking to make it more equitable it was decided to have all plans contribute towards the coverage. Selectman Burdick said if they went to Town coverage of 85% in benefits and kept the buyout, they could fund one of those new positions including benefits. Selectman Dickey believes they should do 90% or 88%. Finance Assistant Kate Merrill said as she was looking for jobs she found that private sectors don't offer a lot in benefits, but they pay more in salary. At the State level, they can pay more and have great benefits at \$40 biweekly for a family. All positions are easily transferrable if they are compared to municipalities. Selectman Dickey feels the Town gets paid well unlike the State. If they choose to go to 85% that is going to triple the weekly amount of a single plan. Chairwoman Carey would rather find somewhere else to save in the budget than take employees benefits. Selectman Dickey stated he would like to go with the 90% Town coverage. Selectman Burdick agrees with the 90% because they would still save almost \$55,000. Chairwoman Carey said employees will take a hit by their cost-of-living increase and higher cost of goods. It is a net loss to the employees. Employees will lose \$204 a month by decreasing to 90%. PCD Director Easler reminded the Select Board that they asked the employees for their opinions the last time they made a change.

Selectman Dickey motioned to decrease the Town portion of health insurance coverage from 95% to 90%. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. Chairwoman Lorrie Carey was opposed. Two members in favor. The motion passed.

Old Business: FD Phelps said TA Hardy asked to have the Town Pound discussion next week. Also, the Hours of Operation discussion is scheduled for next week because Town Clerk Hoyt is at the Tax Collector's Conference.

FD Phelps asked about the status of the flags on King Street. Selectman Dickey talked to someone who will take on the responsibility to put the King St. flags up and maintain them. He asked that TA Hardy contact the American Legion for pricing on flags and poles and to see if they will donate. Selectman Dickey would like them to fund it fully or at least half. Selectman Dickey would fund the other half. PWD Hollins would like them to keep in mind that they used to get phone calls about the flags disappearing or getting tangled. Selectman Dickey said there is no guarantee they will all be up by Veteran's Day. Chairwoman Carey asked if they could put out a Facebook post for residents on King St. to put out American flags for Veteran's Day.

FD Phelps asked about a plan for the meeting scheduled on Thanksgiving. Selectman Dickey suggested cancelling or postponing the meeting. The Board was in favor of cancelling the Thanksgiving Day meeting.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, October 21st @ 6PM.

Selectman Dickey motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner