

Town of Boscawen
Select Board
Final Minutes
Thursday October 22, 2020 at 6:00pm

In attendance: Ed Cherian, Lorrie Carey, Paul Dickey, Alan Hardy, Katie Phelps, Kellee Easler, Tama Tillman, Gary Tillman, Dean Hollins, Kevin Wyman, Tim Kenney, Barbara Randall, Susan Croft, Mark Varney, and Haley Dilts-Brown.

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.

Selectwoman Carey made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Selectman Dickey seconded. All in favor.

6:02 PM Chairman Cherian opened the Public Hearing for a receipt of unanticipated revenue for the GOFFER Grant in the amount of \$95,698.00.

Chairman Cherian stated normally his recommendation would be to designate the money to the general fund but understands there are recommendations to be put elsewhere. Selectman Dickey stated he is in favor of adding the money from the GOFFER Grant into the General Fund. Town Administrator Hardy said if not assigned to anything it will go to the general fund as unassigned revenue and ultimately what would happen is it would become a part of funding that is available to make the decision when the tax rate is set. Unfortunately, we refer to it as a reimbursement because it reimburses us for expenses that were submitted. The reality is with Municipal accounting, we do not get to refill an account and spend it again. Barbara Randall asked if it could go towards the CIP. Administrator Hardy said it could go toward Capital Projects, but when we go to the warrant it would not be on the warrant because it will already be added into the CIP. Chairman Cherian said a Capital Reserve recommendation should be presented to the voters. Tama Tillman suggested that if the money were transferred to the Capital Reserves it could help create the budgets. As a resident she leans towards putting it in the Capital Reserves. Chairman Cherian said there is no question there are a lot of Capital Reserve needs, it's a challenge every year. Selectwoman Carey asked if there were Capital Reserves that did not receive funds in 2020 because of budget cuts. Chairman Cherian said they would need to go back and look. Selectwoman Carey said this could be an opportunity to catch up on the funds that were underfunded last year. Chairman Cherian said there is an opportunity but would like to have the voters decide on money going into the CIP.

Selectwoman Carey asked if the amount could be broken up into different accounts. Town Administrator Hardy said it is feasible. Selectwoman Carey would like additional time to think about what to do with the unanticipated revenue.

Chairman Cherian motioned to continue the Public Hearing to a date certain of October 29, 2020 after 6 PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. All in favor.

Police Chief Kevin Wyman updated the Select Board about Gate Night. The plan is to walk around the neighborhoods near the Police Department and pass out candy. The Police Department is also

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moving forward with the Christmas for Kids. Chairman Cherian asked Chief Wyman if the new officer started. Chief Wyman said yes he started Monday, October 19th. He will be doing eight to twelve weeks of training and then can be on his own.

Fire Chief Tim Kenney said the Fire Department is doing fire prevention week at the school. They are also helping with storing the food for the Thanksgiving Baskets. The Boscawen Congregational Church volunteers will use the food pantry to fill the baskets.

Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler updated the board on the upcoming Joint Loss Mitigation meeting and suggested that the Department Heads send at least one of their employees to attend the meeting. Chairman Cherian asked if the meeting would be virtual through Go to Meeting. Easler said yes. Director Easler brought forth a question from the Circle Committee regarding taking signs out of the circle. Public Works Director Dean Hollins said it is State Property and there are RSA's about removing signs. DOT is good about taking care of and cleaning up the signs. Signs should be removed by DOT only because it is State Property.

Emergency Management Director Mark Varney gave an update on COVID-19 related facts and issues. Currently from October 15th to the 21st there were 576 positive cases in New Hampshire and three red zones. Merrimack County is one of the red zones due to long term care facilities. Forty four percent of the states long term care facilities have at least one positive COVID case. Currently the total number of positive cases New Hampshire is 832 and 18 hospitalizations. Merrimack County has had 154 cases, 49 total hospitalizations, and 26 deaths. Boscawen has had 15 total COVID cases and remains in the 1-4 category. There has been a modification in the CDC guidelines. To be considered in close contact a person needs to be within six-feet of an individual with COVID over a 24 hour period a total of 15 minutes. Varney asked that the Town's guidelines be updated.

A recommendation for a new Budget Committee member Gary Tillman was brought to the Select Board by Barbara Randall and Susan Croft.

Chairman Cherian made a motion to appoint Gary Tillman as a Budget Committee member. Seconded by Paul Dickey. All in favor.

Town Administrator Hardy discussed the recommendation for a part time Administrative Assistant. The hours would consist of 24 to 32 hours a week. The recommendation would be to take \$5,550.26 from the facilities director budget line to cover the expense until the end of the budgeted year. Chairman Cherian stated that this position should be built into the budget for 2021. Selectwoman Carey said she noted in the job description there must be a need for answering phones because it was in the description twice. She suggested an alternative option of a temporary position for the remainder of the year and then be budgeted into next year's budget as a new position. Selectman Dickey said he agrees with Cherian that the position should be budgeted for 2021. He noted that by the time the position is advertised and potential candidates are interviewed it will be closer to the end of the year. Selectwoman Carey stated what she heard from the employees is a

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true cry for help in that department. Emergency Management Director Varney stated that the employees in the Town Clerk's office need the help and believes the idea of temporary help shows support for the staff. Chairman Cherian said he cannot imagine someone wanting to take on a part-time temporary position, an option would be to look into a temp agency for a potential hire.

Town Administrator Hardy agreed with Emergency Management Director Varney. The employees in the Town Clerk's office are getting burnt out. Hardy stated he wanted to be on record of saying in his opinion, we are burning them out. If we are going to go system wide in saying a part-time hire is going to need approval from the Budget Committee and Town Meeting that is fine but going forward he would expect the same process of any new hire. To put that standard on one department does not look good. It gives the impression that one department is being treated differently than other departments. Selectwoman Carey has the right idea of a temporary solution. Chairman Cherian said he does not feel that is the case it is late in the year for a new hire. By rules we have to advertise the job, there are up and coming holiday weekends and wonders how quickly they could get someone to fill the position being part-time and temporary. Town Administrator Hardy stated they do have applications from people who they would consider calling and seeing if there is an interest in the position. Selectwoman Carey asked Selectman Dickey if staff were able to advertise and get people to apply within a week would he be open to the temporary part-time position being hired for. Selectman Dickey stated he feels it needs to be advertised for at least two weeks. Selectwoman Carey asked that they would consider separating this into two issues and accept the temporary part-time position and have a separate discussion about adding the position permanently into the budget for next year. Chairman Cherian said he is okay with a temporary part-time position for now to meet the needs of employees, but believes the decision to create a new position needs to go through the budget process. He understands they are over worked and need help, he does not want to add more of a burden to them. Selectman Dickey asked if the two new employees from Planning or Finance could help out the Town Clerk's office. Planning and Community Development Director Easler said currently at this time our department cannot help. Finance Director Katie Phelps said her department cannot help either because they cannot take in funds, it is a conflict. There is also specific training involved with the Town Clerk's office.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to allow Town Administrator Hardy to hire a temporary part-time assistant float until the end of the year. Seconded by Chairman Cherian. All in favor.

This position will report to Town Administrator Hardy.

Chairman Cherian spoke about last year's Warrant Article that would allow the Town to take over the Penacook Boscawen Water Precinct. The Water Commissioners changed their minds and withdrew the Warrant Article. The Select Board agreed to meet up with the Water Commissioners and discuss their thoughts moving forward. Cherian asked if they are willing and able to meet. Town Administrator Hardy said currently the indication he has is that the Commissioners are preparing a response.

Selectwoman Carey read into record a letter from Caroletta Alicea. Ms. Alicea wrote the letter to

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the Select Board as to why she is currently running for the Town of Boscawen Representative. Town Administrator Hardy spoke about the current Tax Deeded Properties that were up for bid. The Town received two bids, one for 20 Duston and the other for 2 Fessenden. Part of the process is to get the support of Fessenden Mobile Home Park to allow for the units to stay on the property. They informed Administrator Hardy that they would like the units removed from the property. One of the properties currently has residents residing in it and the other is abandoned. The original bidder pulled the offers after he was notified the units could not stay on the property. Currently the Town has no bids.

On November 5, 2020 bids for 170 North Main Street will be due and there are many interested parties. Chairman Cherian asked how we would get rid of the currently deeded that we do not have bids for if we cannot get the support from the trailer park. Would the Town have to re-bid the properties? Town Administrator Hardy said he is currently in negotiations to resolve the issue but does not have an answer currently.

Town Administrator Hardy updated the Select Board on the new phone systems the Municipal Office would like to install. The system would be Voice Over IP (VOIP) and the equipment would be purchased and owned by the Town. Selectman Dickey asked if the purchase of new phones needed a motion from the Select Board. Chairman Cherian said no.

Finance Director Phelps asked the Select Board when they would like to begin the Department Head reviews. Chairman Cherian said once they receive all the reviews they can follow up by email to pick a meeting date. Finance Director Phelps would like a decision from the Select Board as to if they would like to stick with a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) or move to a Merit system for employee pay increases. Chairman Cherian asked how they would budget for a Merit increase. Would a budget line need to be created to allocate money for merit raises or would it be built into the following years budget. Finance Director Phelps said it would be built into the following year's budget. Chairman Cherian said he likes the idea of a Merit because it allows the Department Heads and the Board to focus on the employees that are performing well. Selectman Dickey asked if they could do COLA and Merit. Finance Director Phelps said they could. Selectwoman Carey asked if they went to Merit that a standard be put into place to base the raises off of. Chairman Cherian would like to discuss at the next meeting.

Chairman Cherian moved the donation of outside groups to the next meeting.

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

Chairman Cherian made a motion to come out of nonpublic. Selectman Dickey seconded. All in favor.

Chairman Cherian moved to seal the nonpublic minutes. Selectman Dickey seconded. All in favor.

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

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Respectfully submitted by Kearsten O'Brien