

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, October 28th, 2021, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Matthew Burdick, Paul Dickey, Alan Hardy, Kate Merrill, Dean Hollins, Sarah Gerlack, Kellee Easler, Chief Tim Kenney, Kearsten O'Brien, David Collins, Brian Hotz, Charlie Niebling, Ed Cherian, Nate Preisendorfer, & Gary Tillman.

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

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

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

Chairwoman Carey sent a request for grammatical changes on the SB DM 10/21/21.

New Business: Planning and Community Development Director Kellee Easler introduced Mr. Brian Hotz, Vice President of the Society for the Protection of NH Forests. Mr. Hotz said the Society is closing on the Morrill Easement property, in junction with the Forest Society. The members of the Society are present to answer any questions the Select Board has. Mr. Rob Morrill, the property owner thanked the Town of Boscawen for putting the project together and being efficient. The Morrill's house was family owned since 1937, which was farmed up on Water St. There is 130 acres under the conservation easement now. Also, there is a 7 ½ acre parcel on the property that the Morrill's carved out and it is not under the easement. There is documentation so it can never be subdivided. The Conservation Commission worked on this project for four years. Mr. Hotz held a signing ceremony on the property today for all the different funders of the project. The Select Board signed the document on behalf of the Town funding the project.

PCD Director Easler introduced the Energy Committee appointments for Charlie Niebling, Ed Cherian, Nate Preisendorfer and Gary Tillman. Mr. Scott Maltzie will attend the Select Board meeting on November 4th. The group of residents agreed to become a part of the Energy Committee.

Mr. Charlie Niebling has been interested in energy his entire life. Mr. Niebling was the General Manager for New England Wood Pellet in Jaffrey. Mr. Niebling worked there for 8 years and continued to work for the larger company that took over New England Wood Pellet on a consulting basis. From working for the company, they became involved in NH energy as well as regional and national energy. Mr. Niebling was on the board of NH Sustainable Energy Association since 2014 and is now called Clean Energy NH. Mr. Niebling has been Board Chair for the last 2 years. This is the last year on the Clean Energy Board.

Mr. Ed Cherian worked with Mr. Niebling on the tech counsel at Clean Energy NH. Mr. Cherian currently works in the solar industry as a developer and builder of utility scale solar projects.

Prior to that, they worked at General Electric Solar doing smaller scale projects. Mr. Cherian spent time working for Avon Grid Utilities, building wind farms. Mr. Cherian is focused on solar and wind.

Mr. Gary Tillman doesn't have experience in energy but is interested in making sure what they are working with is beneficial to the Town and the people of the Town.

Mr. Nate Preisendorfer has been in the solar industry for 7 years now. Mr. Preisendorfer worked for a variety of other companies before starting his own company, 7th Generation Solar, with his co-partner, Eric Picard, last November.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the Energy Committee. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Select Board members signed all appointments and Chairwomen Carey, swore in all the Energy Committee members. Originals are going out to the members by mail.

PCD Director Easler asked the Select Board to authorize her to sign on behalf of the Underwood Engineer ESR 59.

Selectman Burdick motioned to accept PCD Director Easler to sign on behalf of the UE ESR 59. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy Tax Collector Sarah Gerlack stated PCD Director Easler completed the Tax Warrant for property bills under 2021-22. Selectman Burdick said the exact price is \$4,461,867.

Selectman Dickey motioned to accept the Tax Collectors Warrant for property taxes for the Town of Boscawen. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. David Collins from Penacook Rescue asked what the plans are for the Torrent Fire Station. The Penacook Rescue squad is attached to the building. All the electrical and plumbing go through the building. The water and sewer are attached to Penacook Rescue as well so if the building was sold it would be concerning to them. Mr. Collins heard a lot of rumors, so they wanted clarification. Chief Tim Kenney said the Select Board did talk about selling the Torrent Building in a previous meeting. Mr. Collins asked if they planned to do repairs to the building, specifically the roof. Chairwoman Carey said the Facility Director is getting quotes on the roof. Mr. Collins said the roof is a hazard because the shingles fall off and the Penacook Rescue Squad parks next to the building. Town Administrator Alan Hardy said the history of town meetings didn't show that the Town had granted the ability to sell town property by the Select Board other than deeded property. It will go to Town Meeting as a warrant article for the Select Board to sell town property.

Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien asked the Select Board for approval on an Elderly Exemption for Landowner F.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the Elderly Exemption for Landowner F. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Hardy may ask the Energy Committee to review the municipal supply contracts that are due in January. The renewal prices are not good, but they have options from the net metering bill that has been passed by the Legislature or from Community Power, (after Town Meeting). Mr. Cherian had an idea for the committee to work on and will come back to the Select Board with recommendations. TA Hardy will put together the package for the energy committee.

Department Head Updates: Finance Assistant Merrill reviewed the Finance budget by line. Lines 110, 111, 114 and 301 are to remain the same. Line 112 has a 90-day adjustment in COLA. Line 303, the payroll service has a 4% increase so there is an adjustment. Line 332 had a reduction based on actuals for the year. Line 571 was taken out of the budget last year when cuts were made, but they would like to put it back into the budget. Selectman Dickey asked what the adjustment was for line 112. There is a 5% change in line 112, mostly due to COLA. Selectman Burdick asked what the 2019 Traveling and Meetings budget was. There is a NH Government Finance Officials Association that may have contributed to the travel and meetings budget. FA Merrill confirmed that the \$500 budgeted for this year was the same amount as what was previously budgeted for.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to preliminarily approve the Financial Administration Budget. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

PCD Director Easler updated the Planning and Community Development Budget with two changes. For the Assessing 4152, there is no set amount yet, it is estimated. Based on Avitar, it was estimated between 1 to 3%, so they are budgeted at 3%. The exact amount won't come in for another month; it can be adjusted then if necessary. The rest are salaries to include Merit, COLA and 1 for Longevity. Line 4191111 is Merit and COLA increase. Line 112 is for the Recording Secretary and hasn't changed. PCD Director Easler attached the 10 Land Use Boards and Committees their office supports. They utilize 6 of the 10 meetings using PCD staff versus outside recorders. Four of the meetings use outside recorders. PCD Director Easler said line 4191113, includes the Merit and COLA and includes a transition to full time in 2021. Line 4191120 is overtime although they don't use it. They have one staff member that could utilize it in case of an emergency. The increase for line 4191550, printing and mapping, is based on actuals. Line 4191552 decreased by 1.3%. Line 4191555 had a discrepancy on the one sent out versus the updated one. The Economic Development Committee has a line for \$5,000. PCD Director Easler went over the information with Central NH Regional Planning, they discussed developing Planned Unit Development and Renewable Energy Ordinances for 2022. The Economic Development would be \$4,000 and the updates to the Ordinance would be \$3,500. Line 4191572 includes Imtek and Twin Rivers service contracts. Her department splits it with Admin for the maintenance of the printer, that contract is due in January, 2022. There is no increase because they took out a printer head. The Agricultural Committee has stayed the same. Chair John Keegan hasn't given the exact budget yet, but it should remain the same as previously. The Conservation Committee has approved their budget to stay the same. The Economic Development budget will remain at \$5,000 in case they have grants or the committee needs to do something with funds. The Health Officer budget is based on the increase in Merit

and COLA, but the rest of the items are the same. PCD Director Easler will have more information on changes to Avitar in reference to increases by the beginning of December. Selectman Dickey asked about the travel budget. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said the virtual meetings and trainings cost \$60-\$70 per person. The travel budget is also for their Committees and Boards. They dropped it to \$1,500 last year.

Selectman Burdick motioned to preliminarily approve the Planning and Community Development Budget. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Human Services Administrator Sarah Gerlack reviewed the Human Services budget increases. Line 1110 is an increase for a reclassified position and next November they will hit their longevity. HS Administrator Gerlack was charted. Line 1111 is COLA and Merit. The travel did go up because they are traveling to deliver the back packs for their program. The money is used for gas. The welfare assistance budget wasn't used much this year, so they changed it due to the ARPA funds. The Backpack Program will be funded through ARPA for the next 3 years and they do food drives throughout the year. They also receive free food from Capital Regional Food Program. CASA and Social Service will be decided at Town meeting.

Selectman Dickey motioned to preliminarily approve the Human Services Budget. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

PWD Hollins reported they received a quote for salt last week. They buy from two companies to make sure they can get shipments. The first company is up \$19 per ton. They received a quote for \$17,950 for the wells at the Cornhill Rd Landfill that the DES requested. It includes installation, materials and first round of testing required after installation. The target date to have them in is between April and May. The water sampling will happen after. The grapple bucket came in and will be used for demolition and construction. They hope to have everything up and running in the next 2 to 3 weeks.

Police Chief Kevin Wyman clarified that the Police Department doesn't make the decision for trick or treating. The residents in Town have been asking if the date will change due to rain. The Select Board said they aren't changing the date. Chief Wyman spoke with Finance Director Katie Phelps about the warrant articles. They don't need a cruiser in 2022, but they usually put money in it for a cruiser. TA Hardy said it is a matter of increasing the capital reserve contribution by \$25,000. Selectman Dickey thinks it should stay in the warrant articles. They will discuss more when they review the warrant articles. Chief Wyman said they are aiming to have the body cams ready in the next couple of weeks.

Fire Chief Kenney reported today was their last fire prevention training at the school with the classes. Tomorrow and Monday, they will give rides to kids that got picked out of the hat. Chief Kenney said the MRI report isn't back, which will have a hold on their budget. TDS is coming Wednesday to fix the internet because they are having issues. They received an email from the State of NH turning down the application for the new association. It can't read 'Boscawen Fire' without a letter of permission to use that name. They can give them a letter, or they must change the name and refile it back to the Federal Government. TA Hardy said they will write the letter if the Select Board approves it. Chief Kenney said the other part is they need to be more specific on

what they support. Chairwoman Carey asked if they have a copy of the application they submitted. Chief Kenney said Deb Petron submitted the online form with the State. The application is public record. Chief Kenney will ask them for a copy of it.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to accept a letter to be written to confirm the name of the organization in the Select Boards approval in the use of the name of the organization. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said they did a training for the health officer today. In January, they are implementing the 3-hour training with a test following. The Joint Loss and Hazard Mitigation committees met on Tuesday. Joint loss may be able to use the ARPA funds to get security cameras and security upgrades within the Municipal Building, Police Department, Dorval, and Public Works. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien needs more quotes and to check in with FA Merrill. Selectman Dickey thinks the current security camera quote is too high. They currently have three quotes for security cameras that came back around the same price, and they include key fobs for the Police Department. It would also fix the switch downstairs in between the town clerks lobby area and back-office area. They need to be careful with who they use with cameras because of certain federal requirements. It also includes panic buttons and fees for checking fire alarm systems. Joint loss has a CPR night training on November 3rd at 6pm. Hazard Mitigation went through their checklist and updated things. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien sent out a sheet of hazards in town to the committee to fill out. Chief Kenney said it was a dead file. Selectman Dickey said the document wouldn't allow them to fill out the sheet. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien will try to put it in a word format. They also need more people to complete the severe weather survey. Only 32 people have filled out the survey. They try to add it in budget amounts for them because FEMA likes to see dollar amounts of what it could cost them for legal to review the ordinances. Facility Director Gary Moore received a quote for \$21,250 for the lightning rods for 116 North Main Street. The proposal was put on the Hazard Mitigation list after the building was struck by lightning in 2017.

Chairwoman Carey brought up the problem with no showers at the Fire Station. Selectman Burdick suggested using the old unused Police building. Chief Kenney said it has come into conversation before. They talked about making the first floor Chief Kenney's office and have showers. It would take money to get the building up to code. TA Hardy asked the Select Board to tour the building and then discuss because it was intended to be demoed and has been used for firefighter training.

TA Hardy said they received a written complaint about Dunkin' Donuts alarm system going off. It has been very active recently. TA Hardy talked to the onsite manager and was told decisions were made at the corporate office. Chief Wyman will follow up with the corporate office to make them aware of the new structure for false alarm fees. The store has changed ownership to the corporate office in Methuen, MA.

TA Hardy said the Woody Hollow project is finishing up the work supposed to be done this year. They should get it done by next week. Next year, there project will be to put finish coat on the roadway. They will be getting a bid for an environmental contractor for Commercial St EPA project. Once they have a contractor, they can start the project.

Ex-Officio Committee Update: Chairwoman Carey reported the Planning Board met Monday to discuss the fee structure regarding when applicants come in. They clarified and updated accordingly. On Tuesday, Joint Loss and Hazard Mitigation committees met and Deputy PCD Director O'Brien explained what went on in previous discussions.

Old Business: The Hours of Operation discussion will be postponed to 11/4 meeting. Deputy Tax Collector Gerlack cannot speak on behalf of Town Clerk/ Tax Collector Hoyt. It does not involve the Human Services department.

FA Merrill stated that both she and FD Phelps won't be at the meeting on 11/4. They will be attending the NHGFOA Conference.

FA Merrill said the total amount due to the town for Health Surplus Return is \$33,919.86. Of the total, \$541.74 is for short term disability and the rest is for medical premiums. Selectman Dickey asked why all the money does not go back to the Town. FA Merrill said the employees paid a percentage of their medical premiums therefore are entitled to a portion of the return. The number also includes covered retired employees. TA Hardy said anyone paying in on a percentage basis, whether it's a town or individual, has something coming back. They will apply the surplus return to the January bill.

Chairwoman Carey asked for employees to speak on behalf of the Health Insurance rates. PWD Hollins said most of public work employees work for the benefits. The salaries aren't the same as other municipalities. The employees agree that they were hired back when there was no cost at all. They had no problem to have to stop paying as they felt it was fair everyone pays something. The biggest complaint amongst public work employees was insurance of the town went down but their contribution went up. The average wage for CDL drivers is \$17/hr. when towns around are \$18 to \$30/hr. Chief Wyman said the concerns they received are in terms of the timing. There are changes in reduction to COLA and other areas but then this brings employees back to where they started. It also brings frustration in trusting that this won't change again next year. There needs to be consistency. Chairwoman Carey pointed out that single plan employees are paying in more two years in a row now. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said it felt as though it was a punishment when the insurance went up in cost a decision made by the Select Board and employees were not putting in as many claims when and the insurance went down 8.1%. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien would like an explanation from Selectman Burdick and Selectman Dickey on why they decided to vote to increase the insurance. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien pointed out that last year Selectman Dickey motioned to increase the amount the town covers to 95%. Selectman Dickey said last year, two board members were against that plan. One member decided to vote for the plan after Selectman Dickey pushed for it. It was \$60,000 hit to the Town. Selectman Dickey asked where they would cut if the budget were up, and they added to staff. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said some department heads cut their budgets as much as they could last year leaving them to give up their COLAs. Selectman Dickey said they will probably ask the Department Heads to cut their budgets again and that no one asked them to cut out their COLA. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said for a new single family, it is hard to justify going from \$11/wk. to \$20/wk. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said even though you increase it, it still went down 8.1% and the Town is getting back most of the \$33,000 surplus. Deputy PCD

Director O'Brien asked if the Board would be looking at changing the insurance rate yearly. Selectman Dickey said no because it should have been set at 90% last year and it was a mistake the Select Board made. Selectman Burdick said from his understanding the town went from 65% to 95% which is a significant jump. Selectman Burdick believes it is a correction to an overcorrection to a reasonable of 90% versus 95%. Selectman Dickey said when they worked at the NH Food Bank for 6 years, there was no raises or COLAs. They couldn't petition the board to change insurance rates. Whatever they were paid and received for benefits is what they got. Chief Wyman said comparing another job is completely different because the factors involved are different. Selectman Burdick said for those that are single plans, it was a huge jump but for family plans for employees of more than two years, it is only a third of what it was in 2019 and prior for their personal out of pocket costs. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said that there have been many new employees since 2019, some whom took pay cuts to take the position they are in to get the better benefits. Selectman Burdick said the benefits themselves haven't changed just the cost to have them. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien said that he is correct the benefits alone may not have changed but the cost to have the benefits have. HS Administrator Gerlack said the employees are looking for consistency. Selectman Dickey said this shouldn't be a discussion anymore, they should have ended it when they voted on it three weeks ago. Chief Kenney said people are allowed to bring up anything they want at public meetings and discuss it repeatedly. It is their right as an American citizen and under the Town's Policy. Also, Selectman Dickey mentioned Manchester's insurance rates increased. Chief Kenney said they went up in a dollar amount, not percentage that employees contribute. Chief Kenney said contracts are for stability so that people working know what they're going to pay for a long time. When you have up and downs, it creates unions. Chief Kenney also stressed that the Police Department deserves to have a consistent work environment. Selectman Dickey doesn't understand why they have a board if people can continually bring up issues. HS Administrator Gerlack said most employees are here for the long-term whereas the Select Board is termed. Selectman Dickey asked if they could have a longer contract with the insurance company to keep the current rate. It isn't negotiable. Chairwoman Carey said they can't encumber the legislative body for multiple years. They can only do it year to year. TA Hardy said it is a view of the long-term. They have excellent skilled employees and great staffing levels that are workable. TA Hardy has trouble understanding the correlation between the costs of the insurance proposals having dropped but the amount that employees will contribute has increased. Many boards over the years would pass with the reduction and put more work into something else. TA Hardy would have passed on taking more from the employees when there was already an 8.1% decrease in the health insurance plans for 2022. Most employees take jobs based on benefit packages. FA Merrill asked for future reference in hiring if they can tell candidates that benefits would stay at 90% moving forward. Selectman Burdick said 90% is reasonable for employees and it isn't much of a correction. Selectman Burdick still thinks 90% is reasonable and ran numbers showing they would still be saving \$35,000 if every employee got a 65 cent raise. It more than covers everyone's added expense. All Board members stated that they did not have any intentions in the upcoming years on the Board changing the employer contribution below 90%.

TA Hardy sent the Select Board information from the counsel regarding selling the 1913 library. The intent of the original donor moves forward using the funds, from the net proceeds. The form of the sale would be sealed bid. Chairwoman Carey said the funds would be used for the original donor's intent: record keeping and library use. It would go to Trustees of the Trust Fund to

manage. It will need to go to the Director of Charitable Trusts for approval. The concept of the reverter clause is no longer an issue. TA Hardy said the principal use was a public library and secondary as the storage. Selectman Burdick suggested putting part of it into the historical society to fund the preservation. TA Hardy said it moves away from the intent by bringing another organization in. Chairwoman Carey asked if they could put deed restrictions on it. TA Hardy said most of the effort is in the deed restriction, so it is beneficial in structuring how you want it conveyed. The “Cy Pres” hearing is part of the process. TA Hardy will start the process with Jim Raymond and put the dates in place. They will put it in a form for the Select Board to approve. TA Hardy said the connection on the roof appears to be leaking so they will need to repair it. Chief Kenney asked if there is parking and if not, how they would sell it. TA Hardy said the bigger challenge is the access to the building. TA Hardy is uncertain what the DOT will allow that close to the new circle. The DOT said no to the crosswalk to the church parking lot because of the proximity to the future circle. TA Hardy said they could have diagonal parking to add parking. Chief Kenney said it is more of what access the seller has after. PCD Director Easler said any new parking needs to be in the back because of the Village District ordinance. TA Hardy said Towns can ignore their own rules, it depends on the use. PCD Director Easler asked if they could do a lot line adjustment with someone in the area. Chairwoman Carey said they discussed it previously. Chief Kenney asked who owned Depot Road. The Town owns the road, and it has never been discontinued. TA Hardy said one scenario was to add the width of the road to the library land if they discontinue the road. TA Hardy said at next year’s town meeting, the Town will have to approve a warrant article if they want the Select Board to be able to sell town property.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to go into non-public under RSA 91A:3 II (C). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Selectman Dickey motioned to come out of non-public under RSA 91A:3 II (C). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

The Select Board returned to public session.

Motion made by Chairwoman Carey to re-seal twenty reviewed non-public minutes from 2020 in the red folder and to unseal twenty-four non-publics in the blue folder. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, November 4th @ 6PM.

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

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner