

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, November 16, 2023, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Matt Burdick, Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Kate Merrill, & Katie Phelps (virtual)

Guests: Joshua Crawford, Bonny John, Jon Rich - Cybertron, Kaleb and Amy Jacob - Eagle Network, Skylar Jones—Mirador IT, Tom Laliberte and Barbara Randall

Roll Call: completed and guests introduced.

Chairman Matt Burdick called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Consent Agenda Items:

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Nonpublic/Public Minutes for Approval—11/09/23
- Final Sewer Bill/Warrant for 44 Tremont

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey noted grammatical changes to the 11.09.23 public minutes.

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

Scheduled Guests and Hearings: Ms. Bonny John, Director at the Boscawen Public Library, presented the 2024 Public Library budget. The overall budget increased by 0.5%, or \$514. Ms. John noted that insurance costs and supplies will be increasing for 2024. Electrical costs were projected to decrease by 28% due to last year's budget increase. For salaries, there was an increase of 3% for 2024 raises. Given the lean budget, Selectwoman Carey inquired whether the library was able to make progress on projects, such as new media. Ms. John said they were keeping the materials budget at \$12,000 because they will come close to spending it this year. The materials line covers books, movies, and magazines. Ms. John noted for salary increases, they projected to spend less than last year. Ms. John would like to bring all staff up to a reasonable hourly wage. One staff member makes \$15/hr. while the others make less than that. Ms. John stated that most libraries in the area were paying \$17 to \$18 an hour for staff. The 3% increase for 2024 would put all Library staff at \$15/hr. Selectwoman Carey asked how long the staff members have worked at the Library. Ms. John and another staff member have been working at the Library for 14 years, another two staff members have worked for 8 to 9 years, and they have a new employee. All positions were part-time with no benefits or paid-time-off (PTO). Selectwoman Carey inquired about technology. Ms. John said when she took over in 2015, they replaced all the computers. They bought refurbished machines for the public computers and gave staff new computers. Ms. John noted they have bought a few more computers since then, but she did not believe they would need to buy more this year. However, if they do, they have other money set aside. The technology expenses for this year related to maintenance such as buying

ink and/or toner for printers. Ms. John pointed out that she would like to increase the business services and program line so they can focus on new programs to offer patrons. Selectwoman Carey questioned the web services increase. Ms. John said they pay around \$1,000 annually for the downloadable books program through the state of NH. They also have expenses for their website maintenance.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Public Library budget. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Mr. Joshua Crawford spoke about the idea of a town flag. He met with the Economic Development Committee last week to discuss ideas and explain why a flag would benefit the town. Mr. Crawford suggested the town should adopt a town flag as a matter of civic pride. He noted that other towns have adopted their flags in different ways, some with Select Board approval, some at a Town Meeting, or through a committee vote. In most towns, the Select Board adopts the town flag. Many new towns have been redoing their flags to follow the flag design rules set by the North American Vexillological Association. Mr. Crawford presented examples of other town flags in New Hampshire. He suggested that the Boscawen flag should stand out. Mr. Crawford presented the top 25 best town flags in the country and the top 25 worst town flags, published by North American Vexillological Association. He stated that many towns adopt a flag for marketing purposes to establish identity for the town. It can be used in town events such as Old Home Day, the parade, the movie nights, etc. Mr. Crawford emphasized the importance of including symbols representative of the town into the flag, to ensure it holds significance for the townspeople. He presented examples of designs for the Boscawen town flag. At the Economic Development Committee meeting, he presented his original example, called 'The Crossroads of New Hampshire'. He received feedback on how to edit it to better reflect the town. He presented the edited version with the Boscawen town banner included. The green background represented the fertile farmland, rich agricultural history, and farming community of Boscawen. The black and white cross represented the crossroads of US Route 3 and US Route 4; both major routes, one North-South and the other East-West, that crossed the state and intersect in Boscawen. The two stars on the flag represented the two rivers (Merrimack and Contoocook) which were vital to Boscawen's history with the mills. The Hannah Dustin Memorial statue was displayed to reflect a point in Boscawen history wherein Hannah Dustin escaped capture and fled south on the Merrimack River. Mr. Crawford added a design to the flag, based off of Benjamin Morrill's clock mechanism. It was an 8-day wheelbarrow timekeeping mechanism. Mr. Crawford also designed a generic Boscawen town flag with the seal. He explained that while the town seal held significance for the town, it served a better purpose on paper rather than to be flown on a flag. Mr. Crawford presented another design called 'The Clock Makers Guidon'. It was inspired by the Benjamin Morrill clock to make it unique and abstract. The last design had the same gear design idea, but the symbolism was from Boscawen's industrious past from clock makers to the mills series of gears and cogs. The blue stripes represented the two rivers. Mr. Crawford reiterated the importance of adopting a town flag for civic pride. He noted if the Board did not adopt a town flag, it could leave the door open for other local businesses or marketers in town to create their own symbolism for the town. By creating a town flag, it would bring a sense of togetherness to the community, especially when there are disagreements. Mr. Crawford asked the

Select Board for approval to adopt a town flag. He noted if the Board approved adopting a town flag, he would donate a couple flags for free. Chairman Burdick suggested advertising the town flag design ideas to the public to get feedback. Mr. Crawford volunteered to help advertise the design ideas. Selectwoman Carey suggested posting a survey with the design ideas so the public can pick their favorite, or they could submit another design idea. After, the Select Board would bring the final town flag proposal to the Town Meeting in March 2024. She also suggested creating Old Home Day t-shirts with the flag. Town Administrator Katie Phelps and/or Deputy Planning and Community Development Director Kearsten O'Brien will create the survey to publish for the public. Selectman Bevans requested that the town staff member present Mr. Crawford with any questions the public might have.

Department Head Updates: Finance Director Kate Merrill presented the three Technology Services request for proposal (RFP) for the Select Board to decide on. Selectwoman Carey stated the Board wanted to have an idea of the total cost including a la carte services such as after-hour services. She noted they were presented the cost per vendor for a package, but the Board would like to know the additional costs associated. Selectwoman Carey also inquired how often the town used additional services beyond what was offered in the packages. FD Merrill stated the department heads had met and discussed how to budget for additional services. The current vendor does not bill for after-hour services. The Police Department made a majority of the after-hour calls. The vendors were present to answer questions about their packages offered. Selectwoman Carey inquired how the town would budget for their after-hour services. Vendor #2, Cybertron, the town's current vendor, said the after-hour services were built into the package offered. Vendor #1, Eagle Network stated they would be starting as a new vendor so they wouldn't have a basis for how much time would be used. In a complete support structure, they work extremely hard to ensure the systems and network don't crash. If they need to do after hour services for the Police Department, they will respond. Initially, they would start billing for the services, but once they establish a base, they can discuss a package deal further. Vendor #1 noted that they work with similarly sized towns with Police Departments that don't use after hour services. As an example, they did a VM server upgrade for a town and instead of disrupting office hours or doing it after hours, they did it on a holiday. They also have quarterly business reviews with their clients to discuss recommendations and additional services, if necessary. Mr. Skylar Jones, Vendor #3 from Mirador IT, said the proposal included the VIP package which was largely all inclusive but did not cover major projects. The after-hour services were budgeted in the proposal. Selectwoman Carey asked each vendor if they had cyber liability insurance or the ability to add it on if they took Boscawen on as a client. It would be \$1M per claim and \$2M aggregate applicable to data breach, defense, response, and mitigation. All vendors had cyber liability insurance or could get it. Selectwoman Carey inquired what would happen if the vendors had a data breach that compromised the town's information. Vendor #1, Eagle Network, said they would disclose it to protect the town. Selectwoman Carey asked what the time lag would be. Eagle Network stated IT breaches were important and required immediate action. They said if a client had a data breach issue, all Eagle Network staff would be notified. Even their lowest positions such as a dispatcher, have the ability to turn off a mailbox or lock an account. The after-hour antivirus, which was an EDR version, has the ability to lock a computer if it flags ransomware on a machine. Mr. Jones from Mirador IT noted they had the same capabilities.

Most MSPs would have a Security Operation Center (SOC) that monitors the endpoint protection. Mr. Jones noted if an issue occurred, they would first attempt to mitigate the data breach and then advise the town to contact Primex because the insurance company would lead the incident response on the town's behalf. Mirador IT would also have services provided by their own insurance company. Eagle Network noted they provided the town with their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which determined top priority cases. A data breach would be considered top priority in which the vendor owner and top staff would be involved immediately. They would reach out to Primex on the town's behalf and create a plan. Selectwoman Carey asked what would happen if a data breach occurred and compromised the town's information. Cybertron said they would first identify the breach. He noted that he knew the municipality that suffered a recent data breach. He mentioned there were certain protections such as two-factor authentication that were important to cybersecurity. Cybertron would do the same thing the municipality's IT team did. They called the insurance company and law enforcement and started an investigation. Eagle Network added that in their experience, they have seen a reluctance for change in some municipality associates. She noted it was critical to have security against log-ins. They found that the State of NH has money available for YubiKeys, which were about \$100 devices, free of charge for municipalities. Staff could use them if they don't want the Duo two-factor authenticator on their personal phone. Eagle Network would work with the town to secure those devices to ensure safe practices were adopted. Mirador IT said if there was a data breach identified, they would follow the incident response plan. He explained incident responses to different severities of issues. Mr. Jones noted they also supply the YubiKeys to employees who do not want to use the Duo authenticator. He mentioned that Mirador IT has been working with municipalities to increase their cyber security mitigation plans by implementing a cyber security policy. Mirador IT will provide the town with a comprehensive cyber security policy that can be edited. Cybertron said if a breach was identified, they would first shut down all effected equipment and then contact Primex. At that point, Primex would dictate the process of remediation. He noted they would likely bring in a third-party IT company to help gather data and investigate. Cybertron would work with Primex to satisfy their requirements. He noted they most likely would bring in another server, restore the town's backups and utilize the backup until the original server has been evaluated and data has been extracted. Ultimately, it would be up to Primex to determine what would be necessary. Chairman Burdick asked what training could be provided and how frequently it would occur. Eagle Network offered security awareness training as part of the program. She noted within their clients, they see participation rates increase when leaders are supportive and advocate for the training. The trainings come out 1 to 2 times a month and are usually 3 to 4 minutes in length. They give training on a specific topic with an assessment of knowledge quiz at the end. They also have policy templates available to help the town's Human Resources department establish different policies for acceptable use, security, or passwords. Eagle Network also tailors trainings to fit the client's needs such as holding a Lunch and Learn. The training videos offer a variety of different topics on cyber security. Mr. Jones said Mirador IT offered trainings as part of the proposal package. They could conduct them as much as the town would like. Many compliance policies would require at least an annual cyber security training. Mr. Jones said they recommend doing quarterly or monthly trainings. All vendors do phishing testing which provides insight on which users are clicking on bad links and emails. If an employee clicked on a bad link or email, they would be required to complete

training. Cybertron said along with training modules, they also offer quarterly in person training. They like to meet with staff to get the best results and provide feedback on who may need more training. Chairman Burdick asked how regularly the vendors would provide routine and preventative maintenance on the equipment. Eagle Network said their maintenance would be automated through a remote monitoring and management (RMM) system. The patching, monitoring, preventative maintenance, and automation allows the town to get the most out of their systems. For firewalls, the software and firmware updates would not be frequent but when they do need an update, they will push it out to all the appliances. For patching and monitoring, updates will happen through the server using their RMM system. There are different tools. Eagle Network uses a complete support plan structure. They conduct on-site visits quarterly to physically evaluate the equipment. It is important to do a test restore once a year, check the temperature of machines and listen for any noises. Mr. Jones from Mirador IT said they have a comprehensive RMM system in which they use multiple tools depending on the tasks. They have a high level of automation for patching and monitoring. For instance, if there was low disk space, they have a tool that runs and cleans up the disk space. They also archive event logs weekly on the machines which could help with forensics if the town were to ever have a breach. Mr. Jones said a Technical Account Manager and Level I Technician would be assigned to the town's account to perform any manual maintenance. Cybertron had the same standard practices, including an RMM system. The representative pointed out that as the current vendor, the staff sees them more than monthly for on-site maintenance. The on-site interface with staff is beneficial to Cybertron. The Eagle Network representative clarified that they are on-site often with the municipalities they work with. For the quarterly server reviews, there would be a specific ticket that automatically generates to ensure it has been scheduled. Selectwoman Carey asked about setup costs. The Eagle Network representative said as a new vendor working on the network, they would assume the quantities of hardware, servers, and firewalls would be what the town indicated. If they found discrepancies in the hardware, they would discuss with Town Administrator Phelps during the onboarding process. The onboarding fee would be a one-time fee to allow the technicians to take inventory and do documentation. The monthly billing would start once they go live. The onboarding could take as little as 1 to 2 weeks or as long as 3 to 4 weeks, dependent on the town. Mr. Jones said Mirador IT does not charge a set-up fee if the town signs a two-year or longer contract. They would provide the network hardware they would like to see implemented. The onboarding process can be done in less than 30 days but can take up to 45 to 60 days because it has to be coordinated with the different offices. One of the benefits of the vendors equipment would be that they can create network segmentations for the devices so they can live on their own network and not be a threat to the business computers. At the end of the onboarding phase, they would have had a lot of time to document the network and provide recommendations to the town. Cybertron was the town's current vendor so there would be no onboarding process. As far as other expenses, they know they have been replacing a handful of computers every year. They work with TA Phelps every year to budget for new purchases. They implement the new purchases as part of the contract. Chairman Burdick inquired about swapping over from desktops and laptops to docking stations and laptops to save on licensing and equipment. All the vendors were in favor of docking laptops. Eagle Network said a lot of gear requires licensing. It would be more beneficial to do a docking laptop to reduce costs by minimizing licensing for that equipment. Cybertron was not in favor of all employees having

laptops. He said staff that have legitimate needs to work remotely, have laptops and those that don't are strictly using desktops. They address each and every situation on its own merits and provide the best solution. Mr. Jones said they must consider the applications that they are expecting an employee to run. Selectwoman Carey asked about the cost difference between desktops and docking laptops. Mr. Jones said the costs of laptops would be 30% higher and a docking station would be around \$300. Eagle Network clarified that the original question was about taking an employee with two computers down to one. She was not suggesting that all staff with APC should go to a laptop. It would depend on what the computer would be needed for and the applications they would be using. Cybertron said currently, the majority of laptops in use are for people that work remotely. There are only a handful of individuals that have two devices. Mr. Jones noted that laptops do carry a heightened security risk because they're mobile. The Board will review their notes and defer the decision until the November 30th Select Board meeting.

FD Merrill presented the pros and cons list she created on changing the Select Board meeting schedule. Selectwoman Carey shared her perspective, suggesting it may be appropriate to wait until after Town Meeting to change the meeting dates. She noted that Town Meeting was not far away, and they do not know who the future select person could be. She also questioned whether they could switch the meeting dates each week. For example, one week holding a meeting on Wednesday and the next week holding it on Thursday. FD Merrill said the suggestion to switch days each week was not favorable because it could get confusing when planning things out. Selectman Bevans pointed out that they would lose the day before Thanksgiving next year if they changed the meeting dates to Wednesdays and were not flexible. He also noted that in 2025, Veteran's day falls on a Wednesday. FD Merrill said the department heads discussed after last week's meeting and wanted to note that they can't do a lot on Friday's. There are many holidays that fall on Fridays that delay mailing out checks and other office work. The Select Board agreed to defer the decision until after Town Meeting in March 2024.

FD Merrill noted the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) released the new flexible savings account (FSA) limit for 2024. The increase was not automatic and must be requested by the member group. The limit will be increasing to \$3,200 per year, from \$3,050 in 2023. FD Merrill recommended the Select Board approve the limit increase. Many employees have voiced that they will be utilizing the maximum amount. There can be a liability to the town if someone were to leave, for example, if they were to spend more than they've collected. It could also be a positive for the town if the employee did not spend the amount they contributed because the town does not have to return it. Chairman Burdick asked for clarification on the family plan maximum limit. He mentioned the family FSA maximum limit was increased to \$8,500 per year. FD Merrill has not seen an increase with the family plan maximum limit.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve increasing the maximum limit for FSA to \$3,200 per year. Seconded by Chairman Burdick. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill deferred the budget meeting and hearing dates to next meeting.

FD Merrill asked the Select Board to come in on Tuesday, November 21, between noon and 4:30PM or Wednesday, November 22, between 8AM and noon, to sign accounts payable checks and payroll. She will send out a reminder email. FD Merrill noted they are going to try to not send out A/P checks next week since it will be short. They notified all department heads.

FD Merrill asked the Board if Thursday, December 7th, would be a good date for the Administrative Fees public hearing. The Board concurred on December 7th.

FD Merrill received a resignation for acceptance for Mr. Alan Hardy as Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer effective December 31, 2023.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to accept the resignation from Mr. Alan Hardy as Building Inspector and Code Enforcement Officer with regrets and thanks. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill spoke with HealthTrust about adding elected officials to the town insurance. Elected officials would pay 100% costs on the towns insurance plan. They discussed offering an HRA to elected officials. The discussion led to whether it would be worth it to offer to elected officials. If they would be paying 100% of the costs, it would make more sense for them to pay marketplace pricing versus paying the full out of pocket costs. Selectwoman Carey asked how much 100% of the insurance would be. FD Merrill said a family plan would be roughly \$30,000 per year and for a single it would be around \$12,000 per year. Selectwoman Carey asked about the dental plan. FD Merrill was unsure if they would offer it to elected officials. Chairman Burdick asked if having the option would cost the town more money. FD Merrill clarified that there were no costs associated with the option, it was just available if they wanted to utilize it. Selectwoman Carey asked if the Board could opt-in to the HRA and put their stipend into it. FD Merrill was unsure and said they would have to figure out payments because it would be a weekly deduction and the Board gets paid monthly. Selectwoman Carey asked if part-timers could pay out of pocket for the health insurance. FD Merrill said part-timers would not be allowed to. Selectwoman Carey asked if part-timers could opt-in to dental. FD Merrill will get clarification from HealthTrust. FD Merrill noted a decision must be made tonight due to the plan change deadline. Discussion ensued. Chairman Burdick was in favor of offering the HRA to elected officials without contributions from the town. Selectman Bevans asked if individuals could only contribute to the HRA if they were in an active elected position role. FD Merrill clarified that if an elected official left, their HRA would be terminated. Selectwoman Carey asked the start and end date for contributions. FD Merrill will research further.

Selectwoman Carey motioned to allow elected officials to participate in the town Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) with them paying 100% of the costs. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill noted Franklin Savings Bank (FSB) approved the town's tax anticipation note through their committee. The Select Board must sign the official commitment letter. It has the same terms as the draft letter. Selectwoman Carey asked if the town was anticipating utilizing the

tax anticipation note. She further asked if the school has submitted their information to the Department of Revenue Administration (DRA). FD Merrill said they may need to use it. She spoke with DRA today and the school submitted their second form late Monday night. On Tuesday morning, DRA reviewed the revised revenues, and it has been sent to the Department of Education (DOE). The DOE asked for a 2-week turnaround period. FD Merrill noted they may need to hold another emergency meeting, like last year, in order to establish a tax rate and get the bills out. FD Merrill said they will be able to pay the county, but she was nervous about the school.

Chairman Burdick motioned to approve the Tax Anticipation Note from Franklin Savings Bank, in the amount of \$4,000,000 as a revolving tax anticipation note. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

FD Merrill noted that the Joint Loss Safety Committee meeting will be next Tuesday, November 21st, at 1:00PM. The safety manual stated that there will be a Select Board representative present for the meetings. Selectwoman Carey asked if she could attend via GoToMeeting. FD Merrill will ask Deputy PCD Director O'Brien to set up GoToMeeting and she will send a reminder to the Board.

TA Phelps expressed concern about the Board deferring the Technology Services RFP decision until the end of November. It would leave less than a month for a new vendor to come in and get started prior to January 1st. It also defers the Executive budget presentation as IT is included in that budget. She noted that the vendors were under the impression that a decision would be made tonight. Discussion ensued. FD Merrill noted the department heads would like to determine the frequency of trainings once they are in the contract phase with a vendor. Chairman Burdick mentioned that all the vendors were impressive but had vastly different costs. Selectman Bevans noted he was in the service business and if he worked with a customer for a while, he wouldn't just increase their rates. Selectwoman Carey said they have to anticipate setup costs if they change vendors. It was one of the arguments in favor of the current vendor because setup costs range between \$2,500 and \$3,125 depending on the vendor, in addition to the annual fee. FD Merrill said department heads recommended the current vendor because they wouldn't have to pay after hour costs, and they would lock in a 5-year contract until 2028 at the same price. Additional costs would be hardware, licensing, software, and major projects. Selectwoman Carey asked if the town anticipated any major projects. TA Phelps noted they have a major project next year for the Police Department server replacement. That cost will come from the Municipal IT CRF. Selectwoman Carey noted that the docking station laptop discussion should be further reviewed by whichever vendor they choose. She also mentioned that elected officials need IT trainings just as much as employees. Selectwoman Carey pointed out that one vendor offered unlimited help desk support during business hours while the other vendors had telephone support. There was one vendor that indicated knowledge of Avitar software. Selectman Bevans said there was only one vendor that provided a certificate of insurance ahead of time. Chairman Burdick recommended vendor #2, Cybertron Network and IT Solutions.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the Technology Services proposal to move forward with Vendor #2, Cybertron Network and IT Solutions. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairman Burdick opened public comment at 7:50 PM.

292 Corn Hill Road—Mr. Tom Laliberte said he would have liked to see the Technology Services proposals and the different prices. He also recommended that there should have been public comment before the Board made a decision. Selectwoman Carey asked Mr. Laliberte if all contracts should be reviewed by the public or specific ones. He suggested first processing the material and allowing people the opportunity to provide feedback at a meeting before making a decision. Selectwoman Carey noted Mr. Laliberte's request was fair. She noted they have been working on creating a grid so they could compare the different vendors. She stated there was a known conflict of interest between one vendor and the Town Administrator, therefore removing her for the decision-making process. The cost of services was a huge variable. Vendor #1 was about \$55,000, vendor #2 was \$22,000 and vendor #3 was \$66,000. Selectwoman Carey noted the per hour rates varied. One vendor was \$125/hr., another was \$120/hr. and the last one was \$130 to \$200/hr. Mr. Tom Laliberte was not insinuating the Board made the wrong decision. He just wanted to recommend involving the public in future contract decisions that have a big impact financially.

Ms. Barbara Randall asked if the town anticipated the new tax rate to go into effect in the next 2 weeks. It could potentially end up being three bills in 2024. She mentioned people who escrow their taxes could be impacted by the delay. Selectwoman Carey said the Board was concerned about it. Chairman Burdick noted the hope was to try to get it beforehand. Selectwoman Carey said the Finance Director has been in close contact with the school and DRA during the whole process. When it didn't look like the school was moving efficiently, that's when they approved the tax anticipation note. They do not want to use it but if the schools information is not processed timely enough, they may have to use it. FD Merrill noted the reports from the school were due September 1 and one was submitted Monday and the other one was submitted last week. The town has to wait on the school information to be processed in order to set the tax rate. FD Merrill noted another factor was DOE has a 2-week waiting period. No further discussion.

Chairman Burdick closed public comment at 7:58PM.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 30, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

Chairman Burdick motioned to adjourn at 7:59PM. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. All in favor. None Opposed.

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner