

**Town of Boscawen
Select Board
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, December 2nd 2021 at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Matthew Burdick, Paul Dickey, Alan Hardy, Kate Merrill, Sarah Gerlack, Norma Caporale, Nicole Hoyt, Katie Phelps, Kellee Easler, Kearsten O'Brien, Chief Kevin Wyman, Chief Tim Kenney, Shawn Brechtel, Dean Hollins, and Lyman Cousens.

Chairwoman 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 gave Finance Director Katie Phelps a list of corrections that need to be fixed in the SB 11.18.21 minutes.

New Business: Town Administrator Alan Hardy asked for clarification on Department Head attendance at Select Board meetings. In meeting with Department Heads, they discussed that different Towns have different requirements. Chairwoman Carey said if someone has an item on the agenda and/or needs to be present to discuss something, they should be at the meeting. Finance Assistant Kate Merrill asked if there is a requirement to attend at least once a month. The Select Board stated employees should attend one meeting a month to check in. Selectman Burdick suggested the first meeting of every month.

TA Hardy stated Lieutenant Jason Killary requested to put outdoor seating at the Municipal Complex. They have talked in the past about putting seating in for parents while watching their kids. The problem was they couldn't position them on the edge of the paved walkway because of the plowing. Chairwoman Carey suggested fundraising and having those interested in sponsoring a bench 'in memory of' so they aren't taking away from taxpayers' money. Selectman Dickey asked for clarification on how many and what location. TA Hardy suggested 6 to 8 and said some would be out front and some anchored down at the gazebo. Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt stated the gazebo is a bandstand, so they must be careful with how many benches because the bands fill up in there. Town Clerk Hoyt asked if they should include the Penacook Academy Committee in the discussion. TA Hardy suggested having a conversation with the Committee. Town Clerk Hoyt asked if she should address the Committee now or wait. TA Hardy said they won't put benches in until after January, but it would be beneficial to pull them together now to see what they are thinking because the fundraising program is starting. Chairwoman Carey said the last month of the year is the best month to fundraise.

Deputy PCD Director Kearsten O'Brien stated they received their preliminary DRA ratio. This year it is down to 77.2% whereas last year it was at 90.63%. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked the Select Board if they would like an explanation of the ratio. Chairwoman Carey asked for an explanation of the ratio for new members. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien stated the State

of NH does it every year. The ratio is lower because everything is selling well above the assessed value. It will fluctuate depending on how the market changes each year.

Selectman Burdick motioned to accept the Preliminary DRA ratio of 77.2%. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien asked the Select Board to approve the Solar Exemption in the amount of \$15,600 for Map 45, Lot 3.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the Solar Exemption in the amount of \$15,600 for Map 45, Lot 3. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented a Veteran's credit for approval in the amount of \$500 for Landowner B.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the Veteran's exemption in the amount of \$500 for Landowner B. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Finance Director Katie Phelps has an upcoming retirement for an employee that she will need to pay out unused vacation time for. The total amount is \$5,084.27. FD Phelps asked if the Select Board would like to take it out of Contingency or Personnel.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve taking out \$5,084.27 from Contingency for retirement vacation pay out. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented Underwood Engineers ESR 60 to the Select Board for approval and requested them to authorize PCD Director Easler to sign the agreement on behalf of the Select Board.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to authorize PCD Director Easler to sign ESR 60 for Underwood Engineers on behalf of the Select Board. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

FA Merrill said Selectman Dickey suggested closing at noon the day before Thanksgiving, but it was too late. Selectman Dickey is suggesting closing at noon for New Year's Eve. The cost of a half day closure is about \$1,500. New Year's Eve is on a Friday this year.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve closing at noon on Friday, December 31st, New Year's Eve. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien stated the Select Board received a letter of recommendation from Mr. Jeff Abbe and Mr. Gerry Bastarache who walked the trails. The recommendation is coming from the Conservation Committee to make the Dagody Hill trail a connected trail.

Selectman Burdick motioned to approve the Conservation Committee's Snowmobile Trail name recommendation. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Town Clerk Hoyt presented a sewer abatement for 132 N. Main St. They had a \$5,000 bill from Pennichuck. The meter was reading backwards so it was adjusting the wrong way. Pennichuck fixed it and figured out what they used. Town Clerk Hoyt is asking the Select Board to approve an abatement for \$4,904.06.

Selectman Dickey motioned to approve the abatement for \$4,904.06 to the homeowner at 132 N. Main St. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

FA Merrill stated she received the Merrimack Valley School District's revised assessment for the next 6 month payments. It will be \$430,825.66 which is a .09% decrease from the previous 6 month payment.

HR Director Phelps said the Merrimack Valley School Board invited the Select Board to meet collaboratively with them on January 13, 2022. It is the same night as the Select Board meeting that week. HR Director Phelps was wondering if they wanted to hold a brief meeting that night and then meet with them. It starts at 6:30pm but they could arrive a little late. The Select Board agreed to expedite the meeting on January 13th and then go to Merrimack Valley around 6:30pm.

FD Phelps is in the process of putting together a public notice for the Budget Meeting and Hearing. She was wondering if the Select Board wanted to have Go-To-Meeting access like they do for regular Select Board meetings. The Budget Meeting will be held at Boscawen Elementary School which has more space for people to spread out. There will be no public comment on Go-To-Meeting. If people want to participate, they need to attend in person. TA Hardy said last time they had problems with Go-To-Meeting, and it was impossible to hear. If they want to continue with Go-To-Meeting, TA Hardy said they would need to practice and fix the sound quality problems before the meeting. They may try to use the speakers from the monitor directly. He also said they will work with school staff to get a good sound signal. Selectman Burdick asked how many of the public attend Go-To-Meeting for regular meetings. Only one attends weekly. Chairwoman Carey said the Budget Meeting usually has the best attendance. The Select Board agreed to move forward with Go-To-Meeting for the Budget Meeting and Hearing for listening purposes only.

Chairwoman Carey said PCD Director Easler, who is not in attendance, mentioned that Old Home Day has not yet adopted the Rules and Procedures that other committees have. Chairwoman Carey said part of the discussion was trying to get all committees on board to follow a consistent procedure so members of the committee could be notified ahead of the meeting. She suggested sending a notice the Friday before the meeting. Also, all committees should have a checklist of what needs to be done at the meeting and after the meeting. Town Clerk Hoyt said the Rules and Procedures has been on their generic agenda, but she will highlight it. It is still in draft form. Town Clerk Hoyt said they aren't meeting in December, but they questioned January and February because the first Monday of the months are holidays. Chair Polly Dawson wanted to meet if she had enough committee members. Deputy PCD O'Brien said they don't meet on holidays because the office is closed. She said no boards or committees are meeting on holidays because it would require a staff member to come in and if we do for one Committee or Board we would have to do for all. Chairwoman Carey said they

would need to change their Monday's two months in a row unless there is no reason for them to meet. They only need to meet for the approval of the Rules of Procedure. Selectman Burdick said they are looking to talk about other fundraising events for OHD other than BINGO. There are conversations going on to improve OHD for the community. FD Phelps said another thing that came up was having a discussion via email is considered a meeting. Chairwoman Carey said she has seen some Chairs respond stating they cannot discuss materials out of meeting settings. Chairwoman Carey suggested updating OHD committee as well on RSA 91-A. The Chair of any committee should only be communicating about the business of that committee. It is hard for OHD because they started as an independent committee and were casual where they could discuss openly whereas other committees have always been formal.

Chief Tim Kenney asked to review the Fire Department Study with the Select Board. Mr. David Houghton is available to come on December 16th if the Select Board want to ask questions or review the report with him. Mr. Houghton won't be available until January after the 16th. Chief Kenney said there were a lot of recommendations for paperwork such as updating policies, procedures, and manuals for new hires. Everybody in the department has input into the policies but Chief Kenney primarily deals with reforming rules and procedures. Another recommendation was the separation of the Association from the Fire Department, which the Fire Department had discussed in their first meeting held by Chief Kenney as the chair. The Association had business afterwards. The State has the Association's paperwork and hopefully they will be official soon. The Chief of the Department runs the department meetings, and the Association has no election of officers or hiring. Chief Kenney said they need to focus on policy for hiring and how to handle motions. Chief Kenney has no problem with changing the officers who are currently holding position. The officers were elected by members, and they will continue with them until they see a need for change, or something happens while coming up with a policy on how to do it. Another recommendation was how to transition from volunteer to pay. They need support. They don't need full-time staff in the town. Chief Kenney believes the budget they have now allows them to cover firefighters for their calls, trainings, meeting and leaving money left over for big weekends such as snowstorms. Chief Kenney said they mentioned the safety review of the station as well. Primex has never come to the fire department. The department doesn't have working fire alarm systems or security. Chief Kenney said he doesn't believe it will be a lot of money and as far as budgeting it is a capital expense and long-term saving. Chairwoman Carey asked what Chief Kenney's plan in terms of working towards the transition from volunteer to pay. Chief Kenney said the law says if there is a change in structure, it must be done by the legislative body and it takes one year from that date. He doesn't believe it qualifies them from going from volunteer to paid on-call. Chief Kenney thinks it means going from the Select Board, the governing party of the fire department, to a fire ward system. Chief Kenney asked if they should start pay January 1st. Also, he questioned if there could be an issue from November until January 1st of compensation for the guys because that is when they start counting calls. The firefighters should be allowed to express how they feel about the compensation, so it isn't an issue down the road. They need to come up with a fee structure. There is a suggested fee structure and Chief Kenney recommended using it for a year to make sure everything works out. He also suggested a significant increase the next year within the budget. Switching to paid on-call hasn't been addressed to the firefighters yet. Chief Kenney thinks the Select Board should address members. There were concerns about paid on-call being mandatory work time. Chief Kenney agrees no one should be forced to work. Chief Kenney will be addressing members on

Monday. Selectman Dickey suggested having Mr. Houghton come in on the 16th. Selectman Burdick asked if they could move the meeting to that Wednesday so he could be in attendance. Chief Kenney will ask Mr. Houghton if he is available on the 15th. Chief Kenney said they could meet with members on Monday and if no concerns ask Mr. Houghton when he is available with dates. Chairwoman Carey said the best way to address the safety of the facility is to start educating the public. Chief Kenney said they also need to do more planning and CIP.

Department Head Updates: Mr. Lyman Cousens presented the OHD Budget. He stated they had a good year considering what they had to go through considering the restrictions. They cut back on entertainment at Old Home Day. They had 3 performers instead of a ton of bouncy houses. The golf tournament was a huge success and OHD relies on the profit. Ms. Kim Kenney did an amazing job running the event. The committee appreciates the support of the business communities in town. There were 22 businesses that sponsored the golf tournament. Under donors this year, 24 people donated cash or a gift for door prizes at the tournament. Mr. Cousens said they also get the four other primary courses in the Concord area (Canterbury, Pembroke, Beaver Meadow & Loudon) to donate a for sum with carts to the winners of the tournament which represents \$300-\$400 on their part. For this coming year, they are planning to hold their own as far as the golf tournament but there is room for more sponsorships. They plan to fully set up Old Home Day with bouncy houses, entertainment and possibly food. Most likely they will not serve food unless they get food trucks where they pay a fee. The biggest issue they have is more volunteers on the committee. They only have four committee members at best at meetings. Selectman Burdick said there are possible volunteers interested in joining the committee. Mr. Cousens said the parade went well. FD Phelps said Chair Polly Dawson submitted a request on behalf of the committee for \$5,000 towards the fireworks for 2022. It won't go on this budget because it only shows what OHD Committee pays from their own account.

Selectman Burdick motioned to preliminary approve the Old Home Day Budget. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Hardy requested to enter nonpublic to address an issue under RSA 91-A II (C).

Chairwoman Carey motioned to go into nonpublic under RSA 91-A II (C). Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairwoman Carey motioned to close the nonpublic meeting under RSA 91-A II (C). Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Chairwoman Carey opened the public meeting.

Chief Kenney reviewed the fire department budget with the Select Board. In 2021 they froze two positions to cut back on expenses. Insurance was adjusted to the actual cost of \$9,000. Turnout gear went up and they are replacing 3 sets of member's gears. Utilities was suggested to increase to 6% due to the cost of propane and electricity going up. There was a decrease in dispatch. There will be some costs for trainings because of requirements to keep licenses. They didn't have the mini pumper this year and they added the military truck, so operations and repairs increased due to inspections, oil changes and fuel costs. Increase to fire department equipment line so they

can replace old equipment. FD Phelps said they decreased the Life Safety Officer salary by \$1,000 due to actuals for this year.

Selectman Dickey motioned to preliminary approve the Fire Department Budget. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Shawn Brechtel reviewed the ambulance budget with the Select Board. They only increased it by 5% and they only ask for contribution for payroll for employees. Currently they have 1,015 calls which is above normal. Calls for Boscawen alone was 648 as of today. Staffing is better than it was this time last year. The schedule is filled through the end of the year with 0 issues. The only issue is they don't have the option for full time paid positions from the fire department. There firefighter union is doing a wage study for contract negotiations. They aren't including a single fire department in the State of NH. They just posted for 6 positions, and they had 22 applications and 15 qualified. Chairwoman Carey has heard from public people that they have decided to not go into these fields because of the community culture. Eventually, they will need to put a second truck on because the town is growing. They are also waiting on a new ambulance that they ordered last year. It is now due to be delivered in January. They plan to get the second ambulance running in March is everything works out.

FD Phelps reviewed the Executive Budget with the Select Board. Select Board salaries are up to + 5.9% Cola. Town Administrator salary has decreased 4% (\$2,888). Recording Secretary has increased 22% which includes Select Board, Old Home Day, Budget Meetings and Trustee of the Trust Funds. Code Enforcement Officer is a new line. They aren't sure what expenses will be required for the position. TA Hardy suggested a \$5,000 line item to start. Assistant to the Administrator is up 10% Merit and 5.9% COLA. Executive Contracted Service & Agreements is down 3% which includes 50% Land Use Printer Maintenance, Quadriant lease, Monadnock Water, CivicPlus & shredding old documents past their date. Executive Computer Licenses, Software and Hardware is up 44% because of Barracuda Backup, AppRiver (Spam), Sophos (Antivirus). In Computer maintenance there was an increase in \$4,000. They are anticipating a new server in 2022 which costs \$14,000 to go to the IT capital reserve. Executive telephone increased 175% due to switching to voice over IP service plan costing \$650/mo. It is also the Town Admin and Select Board phone plans. Property and Liability decreased by 14%. There is a payment holiday of \$39,020.31. Contingency is recommended to stay at the \$33,000. It is an overall 4% increase for the Executive budget. Selectman Dickey asked why the telephone line is so much. TA Hardy said service charges and fees of the company are high. As they configured the system, each configuration change added up. Selectman Dickey asked if they could reduce the cost or look for a different provider. They don't have separate charges for line calls or long distant charges. The providers of the market have service charges when you build the phone system. The only way would be to get another system.

Selectman Burdick preliminarily approved the Executive budget. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

Ex-Officio Committee Update: Chairwoman Carey said there was a Planning and Community Development meeting this week. Planning Board Chair Mark Varney stated that Vice-Chair of

the Planning Board Fred Regan rendered his resignation from the Planning Board. Planning Board Chair Varney said he regretfully is accepting the resignation.

FD Phelps was asked to bring back the discussion on the Police Department and Public Works employee they were going to fund with ARPA funds. One issue they discussed was whether to fund the benefits out of the budget and then the rest added into the personnel budget. Another idea was starting them later in the year. They have 1/3rd of the PW salary and half of the PD salary in ARPA funds. Selectman Burdick asked if they should fund it out of this year or push it off until next year and hope the other two positions are filled. FD Phelps said they already have half of a year funded. In June, they would get the second transfer of money. Chairwoman Carey asked if they want to commit to the second half of money from the ARPA funds. Chairwoman Carey suggested a single plan for medical insurance. FD Phelps asked if medical insurance and benefits would come out of the budget for 2022. Chairwoman Carey would like to delay the Police Department hire. PWD Dean Hollins said he is okay with delaying his hire as well. They will delay both hires and put one single plan in the budget. Chairwoman Carey suggested looking into a pay study for the future. TA Hardy suggested asking FA Merrill to do a preliminary study.

Selectman Dickey motioned to accept using the ARPA funds to cover the hiring of a Public Works & Police Department employee in June of 2022. Furthermore, a single plan will be provided in their own budget for a 6-month period. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

TA Hardy presented the Comcast Renewal for approval. Selectman Dickey said Brian went around his question about fiber optics. Chairwoman Carey was under the impression that all town municipal buildings would get free Comcast. Selectman Dickey suggested finding out about the fiber optics question first before approving it. Selectman Burdick said Brian stated the policy already changed and he wasn't going to enforce it. TA Hardy will ask Brian what buildings will be provided service. Selectman Dickey asked for them to ask specifically about the fire department.

Selectman Burdick motioned to accept a \$100 donation from the Casey's for the Backpack Program. Seconded by Selectman Dickey. All in favor. None opposed.

PWD Hollins said it is 2 years out for a new F-550 which they were hoping to get earlier. They have issues on the current truck. PWD Hollins would like to shop dealerships and present a truck for the Select Board to approve. The Select Board agrees with shopping around and presenting trucks for approval.

Chairwoman Carey swore in Alan Hardy as Code Enforcement Officer.

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

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

Selectman Dickey motioned to allow Officer Bibeau, Chief Wyman, and Lieutenant Killary to carry over one extra vacation week. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor.

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

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

Selectman Dickey motioned to seal the nonpublic minutes for 30 days. Seconded by Selectman Burdick. All in favor. None opposed.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, December 9th, 2021 @ 6PM.

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

Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner