

**Town of Boscawen  
Select Board  
MEETING MINUTES  
Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 6:00 PM**

In Attendance: Lorrie Carey, Bill Bevans, Katie Phelps, Kate Merrill, Kellee Easler, Kearsten O'Brien, Nicole Hoyt, Tim Kenney, Dean Hollins, Jason Killary, & Gary Moore.

Guests: Kim Kenney, Sasha Strand, Jenny Taggart, Ashley Kurtz, Kimberly Adams, Joshua Crawford, Lori Cronan, Loren Martin, Chief Shawn Brechtel, Tom Laliberte, Barbara Randall, & Ray Fisher.

**Roll Call:** completed and guests introduced.

Selectwoman Lorrie Carey called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**Consent Agenda Items:**

- P&L, Balance Sheet, Check Manifest & Payroll
- Nonpublic/Public Minutes for Approval—11/30/23
- 2023 Safety Manual Update (Signatures)
- Solar Exemption(s): Map 47 Lot 9 Sublot A—\$12,800; Map 81D Lot 98 Sublot 1—\$8,800; Map 183D Lot 23 Sublot T9—\$6,400; Map 81D Lot 76—\$8,400
- Veterans Credit Landowner D —\$500
- Timber Warrant 23.049.04T— \$9,724.64
- Intent to Cut 23.049.10T—Map 94 Lot 23
- Supplemental Warrant 183D 132
- 2023 Avitar Preliminary Assessment to Sales Ratio Study
- 2024 Holiday and Office Closures
- 2024 Merrimack County Budget Info

Selectwoman Carey noted that the 2023 Safety Manual Update had been removed from the Consent Agenda and will be reviewed when all Select Board members are present.

**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:** *Public Hearing—Administrative Fee Schedule*

Selectwoman Carey read the public notice into record: *Notice is hereby given in accordance with RSA 41:9-a IV Establishment of Fees, that: The Town of Boscawen Select Board will meet on Thursday, December 7, 2023, at 6:00PM in the 4<sup>th</sup> Floor Meeting Room of the Boscawen Municipal Complex, 116 North Main Street, Boscawen, NH 03303 to review and update the*

*Town of Boscaawen Administrative Fee Schedule. The Board may open a public hearing to take testimony after the review. Per order of the Select Board.*

Town Administrator Katie Phelps discussed the proposed changes to the Administrative Fee schedule. Under the Fire department, the Hazmat Technician administrative fee of \$10 will change to a \$2.68 per hour admin fee. The total fee will decrease from \$45.00 to \$37.68 per hour. Under Life Safety Officer, the Place of Assembly portion will be eliminated. Life safety inspections completed Monday through Friday, 8:30AM to 5:00PM, will remain at \$100. After hour or weekend life safety inspections will remain at \$500. Under the Executive department, the Board Room rental fee for outside agencies will change from \$25/hr. to \$50/hr., and the 2-hour minimum requirement will be eliminated. TA Phelps explained that the increased fee would cover the cost of the staff required to stay during the meeting and lock up the building. Under the Parks and Recreation department, there will be a new Summer Program registration fee of \$580 per child. This would eliminate the early registration fee, per child and per family, and the late registration fee, per child and per family. In addition, it would eliminate the t-shirt fee per child. Under the Police Department, the special duty pay fee will change to \$60 per person with a \$25 admin fee. The current fee will change from \$75 per hour to \$85 per hour. Under Town Clerk, the certified mail fee will change from \$7 to \$9. For dog licensing and civil forfeiture, the total fee will change from \$32 to \$34. For the returned check fee, the total fee will change from \$32 to \$34. Under the Public Works department, the Hauling Administrative fee for Merrimack County will be \$15 per ton. The Hauling Administrative fee for all other organizations will be \$30 per ton, effective January 1, 2024. The Sewer Consumption charge (per 100 CF) will change from \$9.50 to \$9.98, effective January 1, 2024. The Sewer minimum charge (per quarter) will change from \$57.02 to \$60, effective January 1, 2024. TA Phelps explained that the increase was due to the sewer rate study from Underwood Engineers and keeping up with changing costs in Concord.

The department heads explained the changes to their administrative fees. Fire Chief Tim Kenney noted that the decrease in the Hazmat Technician fee was due to the Hazmat organization not covering administrative fees. The organization only allows charges for taxes related to payroll expenses. Under Life Safety, Chief Kenney explained that the place of assembly cost was removed because they can no longer charge for it. In the Fire Department budget, there will be a small increase in the salary line for Life Safety Inspector in order to pay for the place of assembly inspections. Parks and Recreation Coordinator Kearsten O'Brien noted that the proposed Parks and Recreation fees were reflective of the townspeople's desire to be more efficient with the budget. The current camp fees were \$150 per child and \$300 per family for early registration (before May 15), \$200 per child and \$400 per family for the late registration (after May 15), and a \$5 t-shirt fee per child. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said by changing the fee to \$580 per child, it would cover the cost of the Parks and Recreation program, including field trips and T-Shirts. It would also have no net impact on taxes. Last year, P&R Coordinator O'Brien conducted a survey and 12 parents out of the 72 campers provided feedback which most stated there were not a lot of field trips. Merrimack Valley School District was unable to provide buses for the program to use for the field trips last year. P&R Coordinator O'Brien reached out to five different bus companies and only one could do it. The cost of transportation for 3 field trips within Boscaawen would have cost around \$2,000. P&R Coordinator O'Brien noted the program

budget was limited so they did what was affordable. There were still several field trips last year including Live Free Florals, Crete's Farm, Reptiles on the Move, the Fish Hatchery, hot dog cookouts, and a pancake breakfast. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said last year they also had grant money from the Thornton fund. She noted that the Parks and Recreation program currently costs taxpayers money. It costs \$0.05 per thousand at the current tax rate, so for example, if a home was assessed at \$320,000, the taxpayer would be paying \$16 towards the Parks and Recreation program. With the new fee structure, it would be self-funded. Selectwoman Carey asked if field trips would be held weekly again. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they would try to have field trips weekly, depending on costs of the proposed field trips and the availability of buses. She noted field trip ideas that she researched but the costs were too expensive. P&R Coordinator O'Brien will look into bus costs for 2024.

Town Clerk Nicole Hoyt explained that the Certified Mail fee continues to increase. The electronic version was currently at \$7.18, but it will be increasing as well. They increased the fee to \$9, to anticipate the increase. Selectwoman Carey inquired what would happen if they budgeted too low for the increase. TA Phelps stated they review admin fees twice a year to catch any increases.

Public Works Director Dean Hollins explained that the Hauling fee for outside contractors was increased to cover the cost of the billing process. Currently, outside contractors pick up in town, go to the incinerator on the town's tipping fee, and then the incinerator sends the town a bill, which Finance Director Kate Merrill has to produce an invoice and send out a bill to the contractors.

Police Chief Jason Killary explained the special duty pay fee change. There was a change in the retirement system for officers. For the two older officers in the department, details can go towards their retirement. For all other officers, details don't go towards retirement, so they are less inclined to take a detail shift. Police Chief Killary noted that the town makes money off of details. The town has an account with around \$18,000. By raising the fee by \$10, it would entice more police officers to do details and in return, they can use the detail account to buy things for the cruisers, with non-taxpayer funds. The breakdown of the fee includes \$60/hr. for the officer and \$25 admin fee for the cruiser.

Selectwoman Carey opened the public hearing at 6:16PM.

Kim Kenney, 87 Water Street—Ms. Kenney asked for clarification on how the Parks and Recreation program impacts taxpayers. P&R Coordinator O'Brien clarified that the Parks and Recreation program costs \$0.05 per thousand for taxpayers. Ms. Kenney was concerned that the new fee would impact low-income families and inquired whether there was a plan for children that could not afford to attend. P&R Coordinator O'Brien stated at town meeting last year, they raised scholarships funds for children who could not afford the parks program. Out of 72 campers, they only gave out one scholarship that was applied for. They raised about \$600 in funds. Ms. Kenney noted the number of children could change in 2024 because of the increase in cost. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said other outside organizations charge higher. For the YMCA,

the summer program is \$286/week for members and \$335/wk. for non-members. For the Boys and Girls Club before and after school program, the rates were \$50/wk. for members and \$177.10/wk. for non-members. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said there are not many small towns like Boscawen that offer a summer program. She found that the city of Franklin still had rates from 2021 on their website and they charged \$65/wk. for residents and \$90/wk. for non-residents. Ms. Kenney asked if anyone reached out to the Concord School district in regard to buses. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they reached out to Concord last year, but they were booked. She will be reaching out again this year. Ms. Kenney asked if the state park pass was a one-time fee. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said it was a one-time fee, but she was uncertain on the cost. Ms. Kenney asked how much of the \$580 per child would be budgeted for field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said the field trips would be guaranteed for those children. The total Parks and Recreation budget was \$5,000 for expenses. Ms. Kenney questioned whether there would be fewer field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said the number of field trips depends on the costs. Ms. Kenney asked where the money would go if it wasn't spent on field trips. Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien said it would be applied to park and rec expenses such as forks, plates, napkins, and supplies covering the salaries of the counselors. Ms. Kenney was concerned with the increase and expressed the importance of the program to the children in the community. Selectwoman Carey asked Ms. Kenney for suggestions on funding for the Parks and Recreation program. Ms. Kenney is in charge of the Thornton fund. They used to give scholarship money to PCC and Camp Spaulding. They have also contributed multiple \$500 donations in the past to Boscawen's Park and Rec program for art and craft supplies. Ms. Kenney noted if the fee was \$580 per child, they wouldn't be able to fund that many scholarships. Only Penacook or Boscawen children can receive the funding.

Sasha Strand, 45 Queen Street— Ms. Strand voiced her concern about the Parks and Recreation fee. She has been a childcare provider for over 30 years and both of her children attended the Parks and Recreation program. She noted the program could get a lot of scholarships for field trips if they called places and stated they were a non-profit. She works in Educational Support Services (ESS) and refers a lot of families to the summer program. Ms. Strand said that the pricing would be too high for the low-income families she works with. She has had parents reach out about the proposed increase. Ms. Strand asked how the town would determine who would be awarded the \$600 scholarship. P&R Coordinator O'Brien stated it would be a process to be determined with the Select Board. She suggested it would be similar to the elderly exemption process that they currently have in place. Ms. Strand asked when the decision would be made and if payment plan options would be available. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they could discuss a payment plan with the Board. Ms. Strand suggested renting a van from Enterprise for the field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien stated Primex insurance requires a certain certification to drive a rental.

Jenny Taggart, 33 Queen Street—Ms. Taggart was not in favor of the proposed increase for the Parks and Recreation fee. She explained that her family relies heavily on the summer program. Both of her kids attend the program and her husband and herself work full-time. The \$580 fee per child would be a financial burden for Ms. Taggart's family and others with multiple children. P&R Coordinator O'Brien explained that last year it cost \$300 for 2 children and for those with 3

or 4 kids, they paid the same price as 2. The increase would even out the cost, so all families are charged equally. Ms. Taggart noted it was a huge increase and the budget doubled last year. P&R Coordinator O'Brien clarified that it did not double last year, the only increase for 2023 was the t-shirt fee to cover the portion of the fees. In 2022, they increased the cost to \$150 per child, \$300 per family. Ms. Taggart hoped the Board and town would reconsider the increase because it would be a financial burden on many families. She spoke to people in the community, and they have voiced they have to reconsider where they send their children in the summer.

Shawn Brechtel, 7 Terrace Hill Road—Mr. Brechtel asked for clarification on the field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien stated if they can cover the cost in the proposal, then field trips would be secured for 2024. Mr. Brechtel questioned whether buses would be a problem. P&R Coordinator O'Brien clarified that the proposed fee of \$580 would cover the cost of buses. Last year she found a bus, but they couldn't afford it. There would have been no art supplies available to campers. Mr. Brechtel asked about the total Parks and Recreation budget. The total budget was \$34,000 including salaries. Mr. Brechtel asked if there was a cap on the number of campers. Last year there was 72 campers, 4 of them were part-time. Mr. Brechtel questioned whether they would make money this year. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said if they don't have 72 campers this year, they won't make money. There won't be a capped price for families, each family will pay per child. Mr. Brechtel wasn't thrilled about the increase, but he understood that there would be something more than last year. P&R Coordinator O'Brien mentioned that she was looking into field trips outside of Jamie Welch Park as well as events such as the bounce company from Old Home Day coming for the day.

Fire Chief Kenney asked for an estimate on field trip costs. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said the cost of mileage to go to Pustizzi Farm and Richardson's was around \$1,500 for two buses and the hourly cost for the bus driver. Last year they charged \$0.45 a mile. For example, it would most likely cost around \$3,000 to go to Newfound Lake. Finance Director Merrill clarified that the \$580 fee per child was an offset, it would not be in addition to the \$5,000.

Ms. Kenney suggested that with the purchase of a State Park pass, they would only need to pay for the bus to bring them there and back. It would cost \$35/hr. for the driver plus \$0.45/mi. Additionally, if they didn't have a lifeguard on duty that day, and there was a last-minute cancellation, they would still have to pay a minimum for the bus driver. The bus company that P&R Coordinator O'Brien found was from Barnstead. They waived up to a certain amount and counted mileage from Barnstead to the camp, to the field trip, back to camp, and back to Barnstead. She noted with 72 campers, they would have to get 2 buses. Ms. Kenney suggested some people in the town may be willing to sponsor a field trip.

Ms. Strand asked if the town followed the childcare licensing guidelines. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they do not have to because they're exempt and a private program. Discussion ensued. Ms. Strand said from experience, the lifeguards at Wellington State Park call out and they don't find a replacement. Ellacoya State Park is two miles down the road, so she would call them as a backup.

Ashley Kurtz, 326 Queen Street—Ms. Kurtz inquired about how many kids would need to be enrolled to offset the program. She noted there will be a lot of families that cannot afford to send their children to camp. Ms. Kurtz further asked what would happen if they lost half of their campers. Finance Director Merrill said the money was built into the budget, so the revenue would be there no matter the number of kids. Ms. Kurtz asked if parents would be reimbursed if there are no field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they would need to adjust their manual, but there is room to discuss with the Board. Ms. Kurtz asked what the cost would be if field trips were not included. P&R Coordinator O'Brien would need to review the budget to see what would be needed for expenses. Ms. Kurtz explained that the Parks and Recreation program was one of the few programs offered in town solely for Boscawen residents. By increasing the fee, it would really impact the families that utilize the service. She suggested families may give up the weekly field trips, if they know it would be reliable and affordable daycare.

Kimberly Adams, 7 Prospect Street—Ms. Adams currently sends her daughter to the Parks and Recreation program and her other two boys attended as well. Ms. Adams said that she would rather pay for no field trips so her daughter can continue to attend. She mentioned the counselors do a great job and her daughter loves going every year, but they cannot justify spending \$580 on childcare.

Joshua Crawford, 22 Cornhill Road—Mr. Crawford inquired whether there was a demographic on kids that need to attend because their parents work full-time versus those that attend but don't have to. P&R Coordinator O'Brien did not have a demographic report. She mentioned a lot of families were stay-at-home or work-from-home parents. Mr. Crawford suggested lowering the expectations of field trips. Some years are lean, but it is more important that kids can play with their friends and have affordable childcare. He felt that the field trips were a luxury rather than the experience of going to camp and having childcare paid for. P&R Coordinator O'Brien said they receive a lot of feedback from residents about taxpayers paying for services they don't utilize. She asked Mr. Crawford if he would want to pay for a service that doesn't benefit him. Mr. Crawford said the town provides childcare for parents in the summer. If they want to send them to camp, they have to pay the price. If parents want to pay less, field trip expectations should be lowered, or they could incorporate a membership program and they pay more to get services.

Lori Cronan, the Parks and Recreation program Director, was in favor of eliminating the field trips and allowing the kids in need, the ability to go. She stressed that due to the increased price, some children won't be able to attend. Ms. Cronan inquired whether the fee would go back down if they removed field trips. P&R Coordinator O'Brien stated it would be the Board's decision. Selectwoman Carey stated when the Parks and Recreation program started, Mr. Ed Maloof advocated for the program because during the summertime, many kids were left as latch key children. It was a program that provided a safe, structured environment with adult supervision, and reduced issues in the community. She asked Ms. Cronan for her feedback based on experience and what she feels the program fills within the community. Ms. Cronan said there was a vision for the program, to create a safe environment for the kids to play with friends and use their imagination. The program isn't designed to dictate when and how kids play. Field trips

would be nice to have, but Ms. Cronan would rather eliminate field trips, so that all kids can attend.

Ms. Kenney suggested reaching out to the community about sponsoring a field trip if they decide to remove field trips from the cost.

Mr. Brechtel suggested having a regular fee to sign up for the program, and charge additionally for children who sign up for field trips. Ms. Strand mentioned that Franklin's program was designed with that fee structure. Mr. Brechtel also suggested that if the cost was lowered, it would allow other families to contribute more to offset the costs. Selectwoman Carey requested a wish list of needs for the Parks program, so the community can provide donations.

Loren Martin, 225 Water Street—Ms. Martin stated that the \$580 fee per child was a reasonable price for childcare. She read a lot of negative feedback about the program on social media but pointed out that the program only cost \$12.50/wk. last year. The increase would be about \$73/wk. She noted there would be no other programs that are that affordable. Ms. Martin acknowledged it was a big increase and suggested it could be phased in or a discount could be provided for families. Overall, she stressed that it was important for the people to decide whether they want to pay for field trips or not.

Ms. Kurtz responded to Ms. Martin's comment. She stated she understood that it was a reasonable price for what they're receiving. However, when looking at other facilities, including the previous PCC, there was an actual building children could be in. When it rained, PCC had a gym area and a pool across the street. Ms. Kurtz said the Boys and Girls club has a gym, theater, and game room. Furthermore, they have access to every city pool, all parks and take the kids on field trips. Ms. Kurtz said it was important to consider what the Parks and Recreation program offers to the children versus other programs. As of now, the program offers a building with a bathroom and kitchen. There is limited share, and they use blow up pools and easy ups. She was not complaining about the services. For \$150 she stated it was reasonable, but to pay \$580 and not have field trips, it wouldn't be worth it compared to other camps offered. Ms. Kurtz said the public complaints were not about the service, but about the continuous increase over the years while taking away field trips. She suggested if there was going to be an increase, there should be an explanation to parents about what makes up the cost, what will be added and what will be removed to make it more affordable. Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien said she established a Capital Reserve Fund last year for the Parks and Recreation building with the hope to expand the building. This year, they completed the lead and asbestos testing and for this year's proposal, they plan to allocate the same amount of money. Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien noted in order to see how much the camp costs to run, they would need to refer back to the Parks and Recreation preliminary budget discussion. Ms. Kurtz said if they are looking to make the Parks and Recreation program similar to Boys & Girls club, where they offer more, it would make sense for the \$580 fee. In her opinion, they don't need a new building for the program. The kids are content with playing dodge ball in the field. It is about the family's needs. Ms. Kurtz questioned whether the increase was for the kids or to fulfill another desire for the program.

Tom Laliberte, 292 Cornhill Road—Mr. Laliberte suggested phasing the increase over the next few years for the Parks and Recreation program fee.

Selectwoman Carey noted the next step in the process would be after the final budget goes to public hearing. If the public would like to advocate for a portion of the budget, they should attend the public hearing for that budget.

Selectwoman Carey closed the public hearing at 7:04 PM.

Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien presented different proposals for the Parks and Recreation fee. She noted that she did not have an issue with rates whether they increased or not. The reason she is proposing this increase to the board was to offset the cost. Last year, there were a few campers that only attended a few weeks out of the full 8-week program. Proposal 1 was to have part-time campers pay a weekly rate of \$72.50 for one week or \$145 for two weeks. Proposal 2 was to increase the rate to \$225 per child which would include the t-shirt fee and \$15 field trip fee. They could also alter it to include \$440 for two children, and \$580 for three or more, with a late fee for signups after May 15<sup>th</sup> which would be \$275 per child, \$460 for two, and \$655 for three or more. Proposal 3 was to increase the rate to \$225 per child and \$440 for a family, if signed up before May 15<sup>th</sup> which included the field trip and t-shirt fee. The late sign-up would be \$230 per child and \$470 per family.

TA Phelps mentioned that if the Board was going to consider adjustments that the public hearing would need to be reopened and continued to a specific date and time to allow those not in attendance this evening the opportunity to speak to it. Selectman Bevans shared that when he was on the Advisory Budget Committee years ago, he fought to keep the Parks and Recreation program open. At the time, they wanted to get rid of it. He believed that children should have something to do, and it keeps them off the streets. Selectman Bevans was not in favor of raising the fee to \$580. He suggested proposal #3 would be a good compromise and they could charge a separate line for field trips. Selectwoman Carey agreed with the public comment that businesses and individuals in town may sponsor a field if they know the costs and date. She recommended advertising the information now so they can secure field trips. Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien stated the issue was they did not have a finalized date for school ending and counselors have not been secured. They aim for an April registration start to ensure parents can secure childcare in time. Parks and Recreation Coordinator O'Brien noted the reason the increase was proposed was to address controversy within the budget. Selectwoman Carey reiterated Proposal 3 for the record. Discussion ensued.

Selectwoman Carey reopened the public hearing at 7:15PM.

Selectwoman Carey continued the public hearing on the Administrative Fee schedule to Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 6:00PM.



*EDC Recommendation*—Ms. Barbara Randall, Economic Development Committee Member, recommended on behalf of the committee for the Select Board to put forth building a pavilion at Jamie Welch Park. Ms. Randall stated the committee believed the town would benefit from the structure as well as allow the town to finalize their obligations for an educational kiosk as outlined as part of the bridge removal grant. If accepted by the Board, they would explore raising appropriate funds through public fundraising and private donations to augment the money already allotted for the project. Ms. Randall inquired whether the Parks and Recreation Capital Reserves fund could be used to fund the pavilion. The Parks and Recreation fund was to raise money to improve the Dorval House. PCD Director Kellee Easler said if the pavilion was attached, it may be covered. TA Phelps suggested researching how the funding was established and what the purpose was to ensure it would be covered. Selectwoman Carey noted EDC recommended to use the funding already in existence to close out the educational piece on bridge removal and pair it with private funding to build the pavilion. TA Phelps mentioned she has been working with Ms. Elaine Clow on the project. Ms. Clow has been working on the language for the educational piece. TA Phelps would like to present the educational piece first, so they know the cost and what would be left over in funds for the pavilion. Discussion ensued. Selectman Bevans suggested deferring the decision until next week’s meeting. All concurred.

**Department Head Updates:** Police Chief Killary presented the 2024 Emergency Management budget. The total budget decreased 5% (\$550). There was a slight decrease in the number of meetings for plan updates. Police Chief Killary explained that the Emergency Management plan was updated this year, and the goal was to also complete the Hazard Mitigation plan. Both plans are completely grant funded but must have funding to show there would be appropriate matching funds, in the event they can’t match them with staff time. They pay an hourly rate for meetings, and it is applied to their match fund. Last year, two meetings with minutes were budgeted and this year they have already completed one. Selectwoman Carey inquired whether there are funds available for this year that could be encumbered for next year. Discussion ensued. Chief Killary will reach out to Finance Director Merrill to encumber the appropriate funds for plan updates.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Emergency Management Budget. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Police Chief Killary presented the 2024 Police Department budget. The total budget decreased 2.4% (\$18,580). For salary line items, there was a 2.9% wage step increase for eligible employees and a 3% cost-of-living-adjustment (COLA), approved by the Board. It increased the individual salary line items by 6%. Police Chief Killary explained that the department lost lower paying officers and had to replace them with higher paid officers. He referenced line item 4210114, Patrolman (ND) and clarified the individual would not be getting a 25.2% increase. The line item was adjusted 25.2% to account for a new person. They replaced a patrolman coming out of the academy with an officer with 10-year experience, so the salary increased. The other line-item adjustments account for years of service. Selectwoman Carey asked if they eliminated a position. Chief Police Killary decided not to fund one of the 8 positions. He clarified that he was not stating they don’t need the position, but there was a lot of change within the Police Department, so he wanted to build a stable foundation first. There are new officers in

Boscawen and people in new roles. The overtime (OT) budget increased \$2,000 to cover the costs of higher paid officers as their OT rates are higher. Chief Killary noted they did not spend all the OT funds this year. They could have used it all within a month, but he did not want officers burning out or to have turnover. Once they had enough officers to cover shifts, they started using more OT. Police Chief Killary corrected the Police Holiday Pay line. There will be no change in budget, it will remain at \$17,000. The preliminary budget reflected an 11.8% decrease (\$2,000). FD Merrill calculated a 2.1% decrease overall for the budget. The telephone line was reduced by \$1,000. For this year, they were below what was budgeted. The Police uniform line decreased \$500. There were a lot of individuals who bought uniforms this year. Additionally, they changed dry cleaning vendors which could save around \$3,000. The Police dispatch line increased 48.2% (\$13,536) because every 5 years the county updates software and hardware. The fuel line item was increased by \$1,000 to anticipate full staff and the political climate in the Mideast. Selectwoman Carey inquired about the Police Department income. FD Merrill estimated it was around \$1,500 for pistol permits, accident reports, and a reimbursement for a psychological evaluation.

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

Fire Chief Tim Kenney presented the 2024 Fire Department budget. For the Fire Chief line, the 8% increase was due to the 3% COLA increase, step increase and longevity. There was no change to staff wages. The administrative line item remained the same even though they were over budget this year. Fire Chief Kenney noted the overage for 2023 was due to new software for Capital Area that will communicate and automate with the report writing. The radio maintenance line was decreased by \$2,000 because the old radio only needs 50 watts which was cheaper. The hose appliance maintenance line had not changed but there will be updated hoses and nozzles. The turnout gear maintenance line increased \$2,500 to replace 2 sets and 4 pairs of boots at \$4,659 a set. Chief Kenney suggested he could offset the increase if the Board allowed him to utilize the leftover salary money. Discussion ensued. Chief Kenney could reduce the line to \$3,000, a reduction of \$7,500, if he buys two sets of gear this year.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to approve Fire Chief Kenney to move a budget item within his budget to make a purchase this year to reduce the budget for next year by \$7,500, using existing funds. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Fire Chief Kenney noted the utilities line decreased by \$285 with the anticipation that electricity costs will go down. Line 4220560: Dispatch, Central NH Hazmat, REPC, and Capital Area Coordinator increased 3% (\$988) due to the formula they use to calculate pay. Line 4220571: Forest Fires was reduced by \$1,000 because they have not spent \$5,000 in 5 years. Line 4220700: Equipment increased 17% (\$500), to update equipment such as gas meters. The EMS line item was not funded because they still do not have licensed personnel to purchase the equipment. Selectwoman Carey inquired about line 4220660: Truck Operations and Repairs. Fire Chief Kenney clarified that not all bills are in. Overall, the budget would decrease by -1.9%.

Fire Chief Kenney presented the 2024 Life Safety budget. He noted that the line items increased in order to cover the inspector fees. Previously they were paid through the place of assembly fee. Line 4240110: Life Safety Officer increased 33.3%. Line 4240571: LS Meetings, Training and Travel decreased by \$300 because it was not being used. The office supplies line was not budgeted. FD Merrill stated for actuals, \$1,500 was paid out for Life Safety Officer. The other line items were not used. The total budget increased 4.8% due to the slight increase in Life Safety Officer. Chief Brechtel from Penacook Rescue Squad asked about the EMS expenses line. Chief Kenney said they have money to buy a new bag, but they do not have licensed personnel to purchase equipment. Chief Brechtel asked how they purchase gloves. Chief Kenney noted he has been paying personally for the gloves. Selectwoman Carey noted it was important to reflect the purchase in the budget, so taxpayers are aware of the expense. Mr. Brechtel suggested including a budget for EMS expenses so there won't be a big increase in future years. He recommended using it to purchase the gloves.

Chief Brechtel presented the 2024 Penacook Rescue Squad budget. The total budget reflected a total of \$273,049, a total increase of 10%. Penacook Rescue Squad requested the money from the town to cover payroll expenses, so trucks can be staffed 24/7. In addition, there were COLA and step increases. Chief Brechtel noted that they have six members in Paramedic school which will increase their pay significantly.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to preliminarily approve the 2024 Fire Department, Ambulance, and Life Safety budget. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

**Selectman Bevans motioned to transfer \$7,500 from Line 4220110: FD Staff Wages to Line 4220422: FD Turnout Gear Maintenance. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Tax Collector Hoyt presented a Prepayment of Taxes Policy per RSA 80:52-a. The town has accepted prepayments in the past; however, she could not locate where it was voted on in a warrant article or by a vote of Select Board. Collector Hoyt noted many residents make monthly prepayments, so that when the tax bill is generated, the credits are put towards it. The RSA states that the collector cannot accept more than two years' worth of taxes in advance.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to allow taxpayers to prepay taxes no more than 2 years in advance of the due date of the taxes. No interest shall accrue to the taxpayer on any prepayment, nor shall any interest be paid to the taxpayer on any prepayment which is later subject to rebate or refund. The policy is adopted with the approval and consent of the Town of Boscawen Select Board. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Tax Collector Hoyt presented a payment plan request for taxes for resident C. The resident requested a \$40/mo. payment plan. Furthermore, once it is paid, she requested the Board to review it again to assess if any interest or penalties could be waived.

**Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve the Property Tax Payment Agreement for Resident C in the amount of \$40/mo. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Selectwoman Carey mentioned that there will be a staff holiday celebration at the Fire Station on Friday, December 15th, at noon. She encouraged staff to attend if they have the availability. It will not be paid by taxpayer money. Selectwoman Carey requested department heads to get a headcount and determine any allergies.

Deputy PCD Director O'Brien presented the Town Flag survey responses. On Facebook, there were 150 votes and 59% were yes, with 40% being no. They posted a google form on the town website and received 38 responses, 71.1% said no and 28.9% said yes. FD Merrill calculated the total number of answers: 99 people voted yes and 88 voted no. Selectman Bevans was in favor of a town flag if Mr. Josh Crawford was willing to make it. Chief Kenney noted the elder tree could be used in the town flag. He found out that in the front of the 1883 Boscawen history, it explained what the tree represented and where it came from. Chief Kenney said it related to the town's routes overseas in England. Discussion ensued. Deputy PCD Director O'Brien will take down the survey. Selectwoman Carey deferred the decision until next week's Select Board meeting.

Facilities Director Gary Moore presented a MetTel Service agreement. TA Phelps received an email from Mark Salame from MetTel stating they were reaching out in regard to the six (POT – Plain Old Telephone) lines that were at risk of being decommissioned in a few months. They would like to switch the lines to a wireless device to avoid sunset of service for the lines. Chief Kenney mentioned that it could most likely be a scam. TA Phelps said they will contact MetTel directly to confirm and find out more information.

Facilities Director Moore gave an update on the generator project. On Friday, December 8th, they will be bringing in a crane and putting the new generator into place. FD Moore will oversee the project. In the following two weeks they will meet to shut the power off and connect the new generator. Selectwoman Carey asked what will happen with the old generator. FD Moore said it would go to the contractor that quoted the job. They consider it in their quote as a trade-in. No further discussion.

TA Phelps noted the Tax Collector budget discussion has been deferred to next week's meeting.

Finance Director Merrill presented the closing paperwork of the TAN for signatures.

**Selectwoman Carey motioned to allow Selectman Bill Bevans to sign the Equal Opportunity Notice of the loan request. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

FD Merrill noted there was a concern brought to the Board last week regarding less participation in the Fire department because they were looked down on. Chief Kenney asked FD Merrill and TA Phelps to conduct a survey at the Fire department to get feedback. FD Merrill presented the findings. The majority of the members said that they do not feel that Chief Kenney looks down on them. A member does feel looked down on and referenced lack of respect and attitude. They felt that people were spoken to in a harsh way in-person and over the radio. They were surprised that there have been no complaints from any members of the public or the police department. No one felt that any officer looked down on them. No one felt mistreated by another member. No one felt that leadership encouraged a negative workplace. All members felt that their ideas and input were listened to or mostly listened to. All members felt like Chief Kenney has tried to, and has, improved the department. A couple members mentioned that change can be hard and that they might not always agree with the change. Every member felt confident in Chief Kenney's ability to run the department. Most members said that the first year of paid on call went great. One member found the system confusing, another said they did not like the system only because they were not in it for the money. There was a suggestion made to consider something for longevity of members. Many members said that they felt like Chief Kenney and the department were aware and working on the areas of the department that could be improved. Funding makes it difficult to improve some of the areas of the department because they are costly such as new and/or larger department, extractors, showers, etc. Multiple members said that the department provides training, but they can always benefit from more. Other suggested improvements included more productive meetings and working on communication within the department. There was a suggestion that Chief Kenney should allow a setting where it is comfortable for people to question things. Another recommendation was to vote on members that are officers. With that said, for those in positions of authority (Captain, Lieutenant, etc.) if they don't show up for the department, the opportunity should be provided to someone that will. There was an expectation made clear that officers should be attending department related activities frequently. Lastly, to discuss with staff why the command vehicle was needed. It was mentioned that the Chief would be liable for driving to scenes in his own vehicles, but other members also drive to the scene in their own vehicle. They would like to know the difference. FD Merrill noted she went last year with Deputy PCD Director O'Brien to discuss safety equipment. One of the biggest things was portable radios which has since been bought with ARPA funds. They asked again this year what would be important. The top suggestions were a new or expanded station (more storage and room to work), showers, SCBAs, pagers, extractors, exercise equipment, power tools, bigger boat motor, and rooming quarters. Chief Kenney responded to the feedback. He clarified that putting in showers at the fire station was not voted on at town meeting last year. At that time, he asked for \$100,000 for the next 10 years to update the entirety of the fire station. During budget season, it was cut down to \$50,000 and at town meeting it was voted on to not reduce it to any lower than \$50,000. In reference to the command car, Chief Kenney said the roads were paved a few years ago and there has been a huge traffic problem. They are not putting out multiple flaggers per the fire department's request so they can move back and forth. Chief Kenney noted

it was the same issue with the telephone upgrade this year. Chief Kenney's personal vehicle only has one light with no sirens. In order to break the law, he would need 360-degree lighting and audible sirens. He noted that he brought the RSA to review. Chief Kenney asked for the command car so that the town takes liability in the event that something happens. Currently, if he were to get hit, he would have to pay out of pocket. The command vehicle would have a Knox box key, 5 gas monitors, first bag, and e-fib machine. Chief Kenney mentioned instant command cannot be applied to a grant without signature of instant command. The town's instant command is accountability and control of form IEP's, environments, and firefighters. Chief Kenney said running instant command out of his truck would not be wise because there would be no way of keeping track of accountability. They do have support from the Capital Area and Concord, but it is not guaranteed. Chief Kenney noted he has a command board that has checklists, company information and can write down what people be aware on the fire ground, in the building and outside the building. There will be a personal flotation device in the vehicle to make water rescues, so they don't have to wait for a fire truck. Chief Kenney addressed the concern about using the vehicle for personal use. He said there was no guarantee as he is allowed to take vacation. Unless they convert to 24/7 coverage, the vehicle will not be available. Chief Kenney stressed that there was no Fire Department, Monday through Friday during the daytime. The funding gives him the ability to start making improvements. Selectwoman Carey questioned further discussion on the showers. Chief Kenney received one bid for \$22,000 which included two shower stalls, sinks, and a toilet. He noted the bid to repair the old Police department was \$38,000 but it did not include the roof. No further discussion.

TA Phelps presented updates to the 2024 Executive budget. She removed the Commercial Street project for \$5,000. Additionally, she adjusted the executive portion. The total decrease for the executive portion was 1% and there was a 5% increase overall, \$17,905 for the general government budget total. Selectwoman Carey clarified that the town was no longer paying for Select Board members phone, mileage, or gas expenses. TA Phelps researched the property liability insurance deductibles and found that Primex does not offer flexibility. The deductible was \$1,000. TA Phelps noted she is considering reducing the legal line items to 2023 budget figures and if there is an overage, they can go to contingency. TA Phelps has been working on a utilization of legal counsel policy which should help control overuse or redundancy. Selectman Bevans was in favor of reducing the legal budget. Selectwoman Carey noted there will be two ongoing issues next year for legal. TA Phelps will update the 2024 Executive budget.

TA Phelps received a verbal resignation from Ms. Rhoda Hardy as a member on the Advisory Budget Committee effective immediately.

**Selectwoman Carey motioned to accept the resignation from Ms. Rhoda Hardy as a member on the Advisory Budget Committee. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

TA Phelps gave an update on the Municipal Office ice rink. Mr. Stanley Balch plans to put up the rink between Christmas and New Years, weather permitting.

TA Phelps gave an update on the Community Action Program bus route. Community Action would like to have a bus come through the Boscawen area. There was an issue finding a location that would allow for the bus to turn around. River road is no longer an option. They are looking at Depot Street because they can turn around at the park. TA Phelps said Depot St. used to be a state road and she and Dean Hollins are ensuring they the right of way measurements and will also reach out to the property owner prior to installing a sign.

**Selectwoman Carey motioned to allow the Community Action Program bus to stop on Depot Street. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

Chief Kenney requested the Board to approve authorization for TA Phelps to draft a letter for Capital Area to apply for a \$50 million grant to upgrade the communication system. Chief Kenney has a recommended letter to input on a letterhead. He asked if the Board would be willing to sign the letter. TA Phelps will gather the signatures from the Select Board members.

**Selectwoman Carey motioned to approve a letter in support for the Capital Area Compact grant. Seconded by Selectman Bevans. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None opposed.**

TA Phelps will also send a copy to Penacook Rescue Squad Chief Brechtel.

PCD Director Easler mentioned there will be two special meetings this month. On Tuesday, December 19, the Planning Board will meet in the library at 6:30PM. The Energy Committee will be meeting on the same day at 5:30 PM.

Selectwoman Carey mentioned the U.S. Ambassador for Trade, Kathryn Tai will be visiting Boscawen on Monday, December 18 in the afternoon.

Selectwoman Carey opened public comment at 8:27 PM.

22 Corn Hill Road—Mr. Joshua Crawford discussed the town flag proposal. He saw the feedback received on Facebook and felt that the public was under the impression it would cost the town money. He clarified that the purpose was to not cost the town money. He created the designs and is willing to provide them to the town for use. He will also donate some flags if the town decides to choose one of his designs. Mr. Crawford stressed the importance that if the town flag is adopted or brought to town meeting for a vote, it should be clarified that it is for private citizens to use, private businesses to make merchandise, and to create civic engagement and pride. Selectwoman Carey suggested the flag would be a great addition to Old Home Day. They could make t-shirts. The town flag discussion will continue next week when all members are present.

225 Water Street—Ms. Loren Martin commented on the general government budget. She suggested leaving the litigation budget as is and reducing the town counsel line back to \$30,000, given how much they spent in litigation last year. The reason being the town is working on a policy to reduce the cost for calls to the town counsel so it will be more likely to save there than

litigation expenses. TA Phelps noted a few cases are ending so they don't anticipate as much next year. Ms. Martin noted that she misspoke at the last meeting regarding contingency. For the record she clarified that overlay cannot be spent on it and it would have to come out of contingency for any unanticipated funds. Ms. Martin asked a few questions about the Fire department budget. She was confused with the percentage increase for the Chief position for the step increase and COLA. FD Merrill said the Fire Chief falls under the same manual as town staff. Chief Kenney will receive the 3% COLA and 5% longevity for 2024. Ms. Martin asked for clarification on Line 4220422: Turnout Gear Maintenance as they moved funds but in 2023, they did not expend the budget. Chief Kenney clarified that he will be buying two sets now and two sets at the beginning of next year. Ms. Martin had a question about the Police Department budget. Previously they spoke about the administrative fees and details and that the income was pistol permits, accident reports and reimbursement from the state. She asked if the detail money should report to that line item. FD Merrill noted the actual money made stays in a special detail account. They may transfer money from the detail account to the General Operating account to offset what the general fund pays for such as rate per hour for officers, taxes, retirement, and a portion for cruisers. FD Merrill noted there is no cost to the town and that they actually make money. However, the money made is held in a separate fund. Ms. Martin asked about the tax deeded properties and radio maintenance lines in the Facilities Budget. Chief Kenney noted they have a radio system in town for emergency services. There is \$2,000 but they only use it for emergencies. TA Phelps clarified that tax deeded properties referred to properties that the town takes any expenses related to which would be offset by the sale of the property.

Ms. Martin noted that the Board stated they would be making a decision at tonight's meeting on the assessing contract. Selectwoman Carey stated the decision was deferred until next week's meeting when all members are present.

Ray Fisher, 200 Water Street—Mr. Fisher had concerns with the Fire Station. He was under the impression that the town voted that the fire station showers could not wait. Mr. Fisher felt that the showers had to be done because at town meeting last year, it was stated that people had to take showers after calls and didn't want to expose their families to any chemicals. He suggested putting the showers in the bathrooms. Mr. Fisher was not in favor of putting the showers upstairs. He noted the Chief may want firefighters to sleep upstairs at the station in the future. It would not be safe to walk upstairs in turnout gear to take a shower when people are sleeping. Mr. Fisher commented on the fire station updates. He mentioned he saw the flag and lights were fixed but nothing else was done this year. Mr. Fisher said the cement base used to be pressure washed every year. Chief Kenney clarified that the base has never been washed. He pressure washed the southside of the building and took pictures, but he has not completed the northside of the building. They also retaped and painted the inside of the station, and two offices were finished. Mr. Fisher mentioned that he was not against Chief Kenney. He was against turning the Boscawen Fire Department into something similar to Salem or Nashua. He felt that the taxpayers and town could not afford it. Mr. Fisher agreed that the Chief goes to some calls alone, but most times firefighters are not far behind him. Chief Kenney referred to Chapter 7-18 and 7-19 of the Town of Boscawen Master Plan. He noted that Mr. Fisher participated in the creation of the Master Plan in 2001 and 2002. The department summary stated for short-term needs (2001-2006)



there was none and for long-term needs (2006-2011), add a full-time employee and provide living quarters within the station. Living quarters would include a shower. Chief Kenney noted that it has been 12 years, and he has not asked for an additional person. He has been following what was put on the Master Plan in 2001. Chief Kenney mentioned the town as a whole has not followed through with anything on the Master Plan. The Joint Loss Committee and the RSA for the State of NH Department of Labor (DOL) stated that the town was responsible for providing safety equipment which would include a shower. Mr. Fisher said he attended a public hearing in the summer in which they discussed a command car. The Chief wanted it to be low mileage and painted red with lights and a radio. Chief Kenney did not recall the public hearing. Mr. Fisher noted Selectman Bevans did not know that it was a take home car. Chief Kenney explained that he responds to a majority of the calls from his home, mostly in the middle of the night. He noted he does not use it for personal use, only to serve the Town of Boscawen. Mr. Fisher mentioned that it was posted in the Newsvine and stated it was against the law for Chief to respond to fire call in his own private vehicle. Chief Kenney stated it was not against the law for him to respond in his own private vehicle. Chief Brechtel noted that the discussion earlier was about meeting a standard for lights and a siren in order to break the law in response to a fire call. Mr. Fisher reiterated he did not want to see Boscawen turn into Salem or Concord. Chief Kenney inquired why Mr. Fisher felt that he was turning the department into one of those towns. Mr. Fisher noted they don't have any meetings. Chief Kenney clarified the firefighters meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month downstairs after truck checks and review necessary tasks. Mr. Fisher asked why everyone was not included in the meetings. Discussion ensued. Selectwoman Carey noted the Human Resources Director and Town Administrator went to the fire station to do a formal investigation. They interviewed 17 firefighters and concluded there were no issues. FD Merrill mentioned that all firefighters stated they felt heard or mostly heard when appropriate.

Mr. Fisher noted he would like the Facilities Director to determine with Chief Kenney where the showers will be and when they will be installed. Selectwoman Carey mentioned they received one quote from upstairs and are working on another quote for Mr. Fisher's suggestion of putting them downstairs in one of the bathrooms.

Selectwoman Carey closed public comment at 8:56PM.

Selectwoman Carey noted grammatical changes to the 11.30.23 public minutes.

**Next Meeting:** Thursday, December 14, 2023, at 6:00 PM.

**Selectman Bevans motioned to adjourn at 8:57PM. Seconded by Selectwoman Carey. Roll Call Vote. All in favor. None Opposed.**

*Respectfully submitted by Hannah Gardner*