TOWN OF BEDFORD TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES October 12, 2022 10 Meetinghouse Road

1. ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Town Council was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Participating were Bill Carter (Chair), Lori Radke (Vice Chair), and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Sue Thomas, Dave Gilbert, and Kathleen Bemiss. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

Chris Bandazian was absent.

Chairman Carter opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Chairman Carter.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dennis Tokac, 12 Butterfield Lane, stated that he was there a month ago looking for the Town Council to implement an ordinance for noises, disturbances, nuisances, etc. Over the past month, he's talked to the Police Department and the Planning Board and he's looked at surrounding towns to find out how they address similar issues that he's had to deal with. Some towns have ordinances and some don't. His situation hasn't gotten any better. He asked the Town Council to think about implementing a "noise" or disturbance ordinance. He addressed the Planning Board during their workshop. They listened to his concerns not just for himself, but for a lot of property owners in Town who would like a little piece of mind; that would like to live in the great town that they have, and not be disturbed by people who were inconsiderate and insensitive, disrespectful to their neighbors. They were interested in the situation, but they felt it would be more prudent for him to work with the Town Council, because there would be some zoning regulations they would have to amend or implement and that would take a prolonged period of time. He doesn't expect a quick fix, but he was looking to keep the focus on the situation and hopefully they could come up with something that could benefit not only him, but the rest of the town. Property values are at a premium and his property value was dwindling gone down, because of his situation with a crowing rooster next door. The rooster is there all the time from sun up until sun down and it's really disturbing. He wanted to continue the discussion on looking at implementing an ordinance that would protect them from people that have no regard whatsoever for the noise and disturbances that they create.

4. NEW BUSINESS

a. Transfer of funds for completion of 3-phase power on Chubbuck Road

Jeff Foote, Director of Public Works, stated that the DPW was proposing this project for three major reasons. First, upgrading the existing power lines from single phase to 3-phase was the first step towards allowing for the construction of a 1.04-megawatt photovoltaic solar system on the capped landfill, which would produce enough electricity to offset all of Bedford's municipal electrical consumption needs for all town-owned

facilities including the Safety Complex, Town Office Building, Library, Highway Garage, Transfer Station, and all recreational field lighting, sewer pump stations, tennis and basketball court lighting. For all intents and purposes, Bedford could be a net zero community by 2024. The return on investment with current Federal incentives and rebates is 9 years for the utility upgrades and the PV system. Second, three-phase power at the landfill would allow the Town to pursue electrical compaction of municipal solid waste versus the current laborious task of manually compacting it with a diesel backhoe. Third, construction of a solar field on the capped landfill was good for the environment, and would save taxpayers more than \$10m over the expected useful life of the system. Moving forward with a landfill PV proposal would allow the Town to supply clean, renewable solar energy that would substantially offset electricity costs at all Town facilities. The project would serve as a positive example to the community and region of the economic viability of renewable energy. For over a decade, the Energy Commission has explored the viability of ground mounted solar development on Town property, conducted an initial inventory of Town-owned properties, and determined that the capped landfill at the Transfer Station was the only location for ground mounted PV development of any significance. In July 2021, the Department applied for and was successful in obtaining a Congressionally Direct Spending Appropriation federal grant for \$500,000 towards the extension of the 3-phase power to the capped landfill from New Boston Road. In December 2021, Eversource completed a system impact study and determined the cost to extend 3-phase power was "not to exceed \$910,000". Some utility pole replacements by Consolidated Communication would bring the total cost for the 3-phase power extension to \$1m. They have the \$500k Federal grant, and needed another \$500k. If they choose to move this project forward, the Department and the Town Manager identified budgetary line items they felt they could repurpose towards the 3-phase utility extension.

Account Description	Org/Obj	Amount
Transfer Station Capital Reserve	2400-57311-28036	\$182,296
Highway - Regular Wages	10050774-51110	\$75,000
Winter Maintenance - Overtime Road Conditions	10050776-51435	\$25,000
Winter Maintenance - Equipment Rentals & Leasing	10050776-54230	\$25,000
Transfer Station - Part-Time Wages	10070780-51200-00780	\$25,000
Health Insurance	10010336-52210	\$167,704
	TOTAL:	\$500,000

Councilor Radke questioned the \$167,704 for health insurance. Mr. Foote explained that it's from positions not being filled. Councilor Radke wanted to know if the health insurance was just from DPW, and Mr. Sawyer responded no, it's the Town as a whole. Unfilled positions account for that availability of funds. Councilor Radke wanted to know that was the entire amount in that line item that was available. Mr. Sawyer responded no, there were additional funds that they could have used. Councilor Radke thought that was a lot of money leftover at the end of the year. Mr. Foote stated that they have 3.5 open positions, so three of them wouldn't be eligible for health insurance and for most of the year they had at least three or more positions open. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's all vacancies across all departments all year-round that didn't have health insurance and are still vacant. They probably have 10 vacancies that have been vacant most of the year. Councilor Radke thought it seemed abnormally high this year. Mr. Sawyer stated that it's about what they have been averaging since COVID. Filling the Fire, Police and Public Works vacancies had been extremely hard as well as the new positions that were created

this year. They haven't filled the Accreditation Manager or Assistant Town Manager positions, so it's across the board all departments.

Councilor Bemiss stated that last time they met there was a larger discrepancy with PSNH coming back saying it was going to be \$1.1m or \$1.2m. Mr. Foote stated that the first estimate was \$1.5m. Eversource went back and completed the study and whittled it down to what they thought they could construct that for, and the project price came down from their initial estimate. Since then, there was a Federal regulation, the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). The Town would be eligible for 30% direct rebate and monies from the Federal government if they moved forward with a solar array at the capped landfill. That wasn't available when they came to the Council in June. The consultant also increased their estimate of the project, because things were more expensive, but the offset from the over \$1m they would receive back for the construction of the solar at the landfill, almost \$1.1m, brought it down. In June, they had a 13-year payback, and now it's 9 years. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if there was any methane gas coming out of the landfill. Mr. Foote stated that it was not quantified. Councilor Bemiss explained that some towns use that as an energy source. Mr. Foote thought it was minimal, but he would check into it.

Councilor Gilbert quote the staff report, 'It is my understanding that Eversource is now in communication with the NH Public Utilities Commission to extend the deadline to December 2022', and wanted to know if that was still happening. Mr. Foote stated that to the best of his knowledge, it is. When they were before the Council in June, they had a June 17th deadline. He noticed Eversource that they weren't going to meet the deadline and asked for an extension. The person he sent the email to was no longer at Eversource, and never heard back. He had quite a bit of conversation with their public relations officer and he's doing his best to work with the PUC. The deadline was mandated by PUC, so projects couldn't be in a queue too long. Apparently, there was nobody in front of them or behind them, so extending it a few months was not going to affect the project. Eversource was doing their best to work PUC to extend that deadline until they make a decision.

Councilor Thomas stated that at the Energy Commission Councilor Bandazian felt comfortable that it was going to be extended. Mr. Foote stated that everyone he deals with was more knowledgeable and are all very comfortable that it's not going to be an issue. Councilor Bandazian has spent a lot of time and effort on this; their consultant has too. The two Zoom meetings they had with Eversource were very encouraging.

Councilor Greazzo mentioned the 9-year payoff, and the loan listed says 20. Mr. Foote explained that after a certain year there was revenue assigned for that. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if the revenue covered the remaining 11 years, and Mr. Foote responded yes. Councilor Greazzo stated that there were a lot of different numbers and wanted to know if PSNH was back down to the \$910k, and Mr. Foote responded yes. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if that was a guarantee, because he would hate to start it and then they said they were wrong. Mr. Foote stated that they said \$910k for June 17th. He sent them an email saying they weren't going to meet it, and they were working to extend that until they were in the queue; when they have the money from both the Federal government and the Town government. He got an email from the Federal government that said they needed to know by October 14th. He didn't realize there was a deadline and DPW received the email from the Department of Energy sometime last week, so this was great timing. Councilor Greazzo stated that the report mentioned that it would offset all of

the Town's electrical consumption and wanted to know if they had a number of what the Town consumption was that would be completely covered or just offset most of it and they would still have some obligation. Mr. Foote stated that their energy agreement with EDF, which expires next month, their contractual obligation was 1.2 megawatts per year and this produces less than that. He thought as they make improvements to the facilities such as introducing LED lighting at Sportsman Field, lighting improvements at the Library, all of those things add up. He thought they would be close to being a net zero community. Councilor Greazzo thought they could get it under the number. Mr. Foote thought they would be very close. Councilor Greazzo stated that given the near doubling of electricity rates, this looks more attractive, and he just wanted to make sure all of the numbers were in order, otherwise it's one of those things you think you are getting, but you're not.

Chairman Carter thought they needed to make the first step to get there. Councilor Greazzo stated that they couldn't know that the voters would approve a bond for the array itself, so the way he focuses on it was they were getting 3-phase power for cheap money and then the compactors he would like to utilize would use the 3-phase power regardless if they had a solar array or not; it' more of infrastructure. If they get the solar array, they get the solar array, if they don't, they still had the opportunity to upgrade the facility, get some compactors. Mr. Foote stated that if they have the 3-phase to the site, they would have companies wanting to build that solar field. That was what always killed the project, having a single phased stop at New Boston Road. This estimate was somewhat conservative. He didn't know all the incentives, but the minimum rebate was 30% direct cash back to the municipality. If they employ U.S. made parts or some fraction thereof, it increases to 40%. They were trying to be truthful and conservative with the return on investment. They could realize another \$200k or \$300k if they use U.S. made products that meet the standards set out by the Federal government.

Councilor Gilbert wanted to know if they move forward with the project, what kind of disruption it would do going in and out of the Transfer Station. Mr. Foote responded very minimal. There were 30-40 utility poles that would be replaced and 6 new additional poles, because the line carrying 3-phase was heavier than single phase. If they drive on Chubbuck Road today and look, they will see some utility poles with a white and orange ribbon around them; those would be replaced. There were a few other spots where they would see a stack where they would be introducing new utility poles. It's not going to look that much different and it wouldn't interrupt the serviceability of the Transfer Station.

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council authorize the Town Manager to approve transfers within the 2022 budget as identified in this staff report provided that said lines do not over expend the general fund budget in total for extension of 3-Phase power to the Transfer Station and further authorize the Town Manager to execute the necessary agreements to complete the project. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0.

b. Discussion of the Transfer Station Saturday hours of operation

Mr. Foote stated that in June, the Council authorized the Department to alter the hours of operation at the Transfer Station on Saturdays from 8:30am-5pm to 6:30am-3pm. The Transfer Station is open 46 hours per week. He showed a graph that showed the volume

of traffic from May 10-14. On Saturday, May 14th, 1,496 trips were made to the Transfer Station between 8:30am and 5:00pm. On Saturday the 17th (September) and Saturday the 24th (September), 1,408 and 1,516 trips were made to the Transfer Station. It's about making sure they were providing the service. People were still using the Transfer Station on Saturdays. He mentioned an incident on Saturday, August 13, 2022 that made it to social media. On that day, they had a new employee and that was his first Saturday. One of the employees was on vacation, another was on bereavement leave, and the Foreman position was vacant. It was all backfilled by Highway people. In the past and what they've done since, at 2:45, 2:50, or 2:55, somebody would go up and close half the gate and stay there with the gate to allow people with bagged trash to continue to utilize the Transfer Station. They don't want someone showing up at 2:55 with a trailer full of debris that takes them a ½ hour to unload. Then they are paying time and a ½. He's had some compliments and he's had some complaints, but change evokes that sometimes.

Councilor Radke wanted to clarify that if someone showed up at 2:55, they wouldn't be allowed in. Mr. Foote explained that they are allowed in. Depending on how busy they are, they would close half the gate at 2:45 and someone would man the gate. If someone shows up and they've got bagged trash they are waved through. At the same time, the scale house attendant begins to reconcile the cash drawer. They continue to allow people with non-payable items to pass through. Councilor Radke wanted to know if a person showed up at 2:55pm and had trailer full of stuff that needed to be weighed, they would be turned around and Mr. Foote responded absolutely and always have been. Not just on Saturday; every day of the week. Councilor Radke thought they should put somewhere that the scale closed at a certain time. Mr. Foote stated that it's on the sign. It's on the website too. It's been there for at least a decade.

Chairman Carter wanted to know if a couple times during the year such as the longest day of the year, on that Saturday, they could change a couple of Saturdays to 8am – 5pm instead of going permanently to 6:30 – 3:00pm. Councilor Thomas thought it would be confusing. They just got everybody to know that 3:00pm closing and then its 5:00pm. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know what day was Hazardous Waste Day. Mr. Foote stated that it's on a Saturday. Chairman Carter thought they could keep the Transfer Station open until 5pm. Mr. Foote stated that Hazardous Waste Day closed at 3:00pm. Councilor Radke stated that if there was a time when they needed to do that they could.

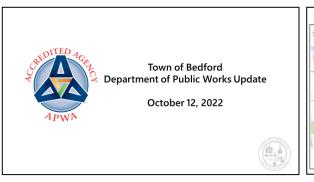
MOTION by Councilor Gilbert that the Bedford Town Council set the Saturday transfer station hours as 6:30am to 3pm. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0.

c. Department of Public Works update

Mr. Foote stated that he's received a lot of congratulations about the accreditation from people; one from Texas, Florida. They need to start putting the symbol on their emails.

Mr. Foote stated that contractors were short on personnel. Typically they would construct more and get more done, but he contractors were struggling with the same staffing issues.

Mr. Foote went through a Powerpoint presentation.





Councilor Greazzo wanted to know how the road striping program went this year. Mr. Foote stated that it was reduced, because the company couldn't get here to stripe a lot of the roads. They have cut back. Where they can reduce it they will. Safety was paramount.

Councilor Bemiss wanted to know if he had any calls or concerns about lack of water where there used to be water on Meadow Road. Mr. Foote stated that as an engineer in the road business, they don't like water. They did nothing to alter any of the crossings at that location. They were in a significant drought this summer, so that was likely where any concerns came from. Most of the people on that road were happy when there was less water. He didn't recall any communication relative to water. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know when they were doing the water line extension if they would be stubbing to properties that weren't hooked up to water yet. Mr. Foote stated that water would be offered to every developed parcel that the water line extension was being proposed. Mr. Sawyer stated that they wouldn't just be stubbing; they would be physically connecting those properties to public water. Councilor Bemiss wanted to know even if their wells were not contaminated. Mr. Foote responded that that was correct. Mr. Sawyer stated that as long as they agree to accept the service at no cost, which is what they were offering them through the grant. They would take on the annual water bill, but they wouldn't have the maintenance cost of a well or treatment systems. As far as he knows, everyone along that route was looking forward to it. Unfortunately, there was a 40-44 week delay on pipe. which was driving the delay in the project. Mr. Foote stated that they were trying to get that on the street as soon as possible. Mr. Sawyer stated that a couple of those properties were the Town Office building and the Stevens-Buswell building. Those would be connected to public water. They haven't had potable water there ever.







d. Appointment of a Facilities Information and Communications Committee

Mr. Sawyer stated that the Council's Facilities Committee recommended that a Facilities Information and Communication Committee be formed with a variety of Bedford residents to help the Council inform the public of their facility needs and proposed solutions. The Committee is proposed to be comprised of 9 members of the public with a broad diversity of skills and interests. The primary charge of the Committee is to communicate in a timely and unbiased way to the public: 1) Why the project is needed, 2) What the project consists of, and 3) What the benefits of the project would be. It is expected that the Committee would work closely with the Facilities Committee to: 1) Develop an outreach plan, 2) Write articles, 3) Create social media posts, 4) Develop a project FAQ, 5) Present to community organizations, and 6) Attend and present at public meetings. The Facilities Committee has been asking people to join this Committee and there were 7 names identified for Council consideration as a slate. The hope was to attract two more people. The people identified meet the definition of having a broad variety of interests.

Councilor Thomas stated that if anyone knows of a name that would fit the bill, please let them know, so they can contact them.

MOTION by Councilor Gilbert that the Bedford Town Council create the Facilities Information and Communication Committee with the charge and slate of names as presented in the Staff Report dated October 5, 2022. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0.

- e. Other New Business
- 5. OLD BUSINESS
- 6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Public Session September 28, 2022

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council approve the minutes of the September 28, 2022 Public Session. Seconded by Councilor Gilbert. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 5-0-1 (Radke abstained).

7. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

1) Fire Apparatus – Bedford's new Tower 1 has arrived and will replace the tower that had been in service for almost 25 years. The Fire Department has a tradition of a push-back ceremony where the firefighters push the vehicle back into the facility. All the firefighters were training on the vehicle and it would be put into service as soon as everybody was trained on it. It is a significant upgrade in technology over what was available 25 years ago. The big difference is the bucket, which allows them to get on top of roof structures in a way they've never been able to do before. The bucket also provides a level of safety and security for firefighters that they haven't had before. He thanked the community and the Council for their support to be able to acquire pieces of equipment like this. They do it the right way through Capital Reserves and saving for these projects over time, so that they were not impacting the budget significantly in any one year, and they don't have to bond and pay those extra bond costs.

Councilor Graezzo wanted to know about the equipment it was replacing. Mr. Sawyer stated that the existing Tower 1 would be sold. At this point in time it probably couldn't be certified to be used in fire service. They've band-aided it together the last several years. It might be used by a tree company and it may be that they take the tower off of it, but use the rest of the vehicle and put a crane on top of it. It would be interesting to see how it gets used, but it will likely not be a fire service that would take ownership of it.

- 2) The State of NH has announced emergency energy assistance to qualifying households with incomes between 60% and 75% of the state median income:
 - A one-time credit of \$450 for heating assistance.
 - A one-time credit of \$200 on electric bills.

75% NH State Median Income eligibility:

- For a family of 1, a maximum gross annual income of \$48,711
- For a family of 2, a maximum gross annual income of \$63,699
- For a family of 3, a maximum gross annual income of \$78,688
- For a family of 4, a maximum gross annual income of \$93,676
- For a family of 5, a maximum gross annual income of \$108,664
- For a family of 6, a maximum gross annual income of \$123,653
- For a family of 7, a maximum gross annual income of \$126,463
- For a family of 8, a maximum gross annual income of \$129,274

To apply for assistance or to learn more about the application process contact Southern NH Services at: https://www.snhs.org/ or (603) 647-4470.

- 3) Drought Drought conditions in Bedford has improved to "Moderate Drought." NHDES urges: Limit outdoor water use to every other day and watering 8pm 7am, suspend power washing, washing cars and washing surfaces.
- 4) October 13 Thursday Theater at the Library, Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris, 2 PM, please register through the Library website.
- 5) October 13 Thursday Theater at the Library, Infinite Storm 6:30 PM, please register through the Library website.
- 6) October 15 Clean Up Bedford Fall Event, 9 AM 1 PM. Blue bags can be picked up at the Transfer Station, Town Office Building, Library, Safety Complex, and The Educational Farm at Joppa Hill.
- 7) October 19 The Bedford Fire Department Open House, 5-7 PM at the Safety Complex, 55 Constitution Drive.

- 8) National Fire Prevention Week October 9-15, 2022, "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape" is the theme this year. Create an escape plan that includes a designated meeting place.
- 9) October 19 Teen Movie Night at the Library, Hocus Pocus, 6:00 PM, please register through the Library website.
- 10)October 23 Unlocking the Mystery of Pulpit Rock, 11 AM 1:30 PM. Register at on the Piscataquog Land Conservancy website: https://plcnh.org/event/unlocking-the-mystery-of-pulpit-rock-2/
- 11)October 27 Button Up Bedford, The Bedford Energy Commission and NH Saves will present a free home energy workshop on how to improve the energy efficiency of your home Town Meeting Room, BCTV, 10 Meetinghouse Road, 7 PM. Doors open at 6:30 with light refreshments.
- 12)Bedford Goes Red for National Red Ribbon Week October 23-31 "Celebrate Life. Live Drug Free" is the theme this year. BeBOLD is asking local Bedford businesses and all Bedford community members to display red lights and/or red ribbons on your home or place of business. Free ribbons at Cohen Closing & Title.
- 13) National Prescription Drug Take Back Day Saturday, October 29, 2022, Bedford Safety Complex, 10 AM and 2 PM.
- 14)Trunk or Treat Bedford Parks & Recreation is hosting a safe, family friendly event on Saturday, October 29th from 3-5 PM, with a rain date of October 30th at Bedford High School, 47 Nashua Road, in the lower parking lot.
- 15) Trick-or-Treating is scheduled for Monday, October 31st from 6–8 PM.
- 16) The State of NH will hold a General Election on Tuesday, November 8, 2022, 7 AM to 7 PM, at the Bedford High School Gymnasium.

8. COUNCILOR COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Councilor Gilbert stated that the EFJH had a plethora of pumpkins. You can also carve it onsite. He thought it was \$10 each or check the EFJH website.

Councilor Radke reminded everyone that on October 29th is the volunteer appreciation breakfast. The save-the-date went out and invitations will go out to all the volunteers tomorrow. She thanked everyone for their support during her medical leave.

Chairman Carter stated that the Student Senate met. They are back in session at the high school the 1st Wednesday of every month. This Saturday, 9-1, CUB clean-up day. In the first three events they've picked up close to 2½ tons of trash.

9. NON-PUBLIC - RSA 91-A:3

10. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION by Council Thomas to adjourn at 8:09 PM. Seconded by Councilor Radke. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford