

Board of Selectmen

Chuck Cunningham - Chairman
Steven Lewis - Vice Chairman
Dale Harmon
Russell Pinkham

Town Manager

Daniel Bryer Jr.



**Town of Boothbay
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
6:00 PM**

MINUTES

Recorded meetings located at <https://townhallstreams.com/towns/boothbay> for more in depth discussions.

Present: Dale Harmon, Russell Pinkham, Chuck Cunningham and Town Manager, Dan Bryer Jr.

Chuck called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Hearings:

Municipal Warrant – Dan has added something regarding the ordinances since the last meeting but all the rest is the same as it was the last time they saw it. It's just a basic Warrant with nothing unusual.

Municipal Budget – There was a 6.71% increase from last year. The majority of that is building and grounds. He moved things around and went over everything with Tracey, the Deputy Treasurer and they got it down to an increase of 6.53%. Advertising is going up and we are going into a Presidential Election year and we had to account for that.

Chuck commends Dan on locking in the fuel price this year. Dan said he is looking to do the same with electric rates and is looking into a company that will give us solar credits if we enroll in their program. He can't really get an exact number for the expenses from the bathrooms and the Clifford Park Pavilion since this will be the first year having them. He estimated the amounts.

Public Comment: None

Approve Minutes: None

Reports:

Dan went to a meeting Monday at the Rotary regarding a storage shed for Clifford Park. They agreed to purchase one for the storage of the youth athletics supplies. It will be an 8'x12' and they will put a plaque recognizing the Rotary on it. The Boothbay Civic Association has purchased two sets of bleachers and the Legion has agreed to give money for a flag pole and a solar light. Lions Club has already donated the score board. Everyone has come together to help. Dan thanks the Rotary and public for putting the money in.

The Butler Road Project is under way. McGee Construction is ahead of what we asked their timeline to be. We are still cleaning up on Shore Road. That will be a while. We'll clean up to our right of way, which is all we can legally do.

We have a Special Town Meeting Warrant to be presented to the Board for March 27, 2024 so we can take out a bond until the FEMA and NEMA funds come in. It could be eight to twelve months. Everything is about documentation. We need itemized invoices and pictures. Dan did hear that we have the largest number in public damage in the region. Our estimate is quoted at 2.7 to 3.2 million to repair damages. Hopefully that will push us to the federal limit. Dan asked if everyone could please use the back roads as much as possible and stay off Shore Road as much as they can. Rob Ham asked if they think it will be repaired by summer and if it isn't he believes it should made one way. Dan agreed that most likely it won't be finished and they will make it one way. He wants to make sure first responders can get through safely

if needed. Russ asked if there is any news on Route 27 and Dan hadn't heard an update. We will have construction all over the place this spring, Route 27, Butler Road, Route 96 and Shore Road.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Byron Cortez – Pride Month Proclamation Proposal – Byron and his husband moved to Boothbay two years ago and they have a home in Farnham Point. It is a great community and everyone has been very welcoming. He noticed that we are the only community on the Mid-Coast that doesn't celebrate Pride. He is asking for help to celebrate Pride to let people know everyone is welcome, everyone is included and we are a progressive community. He is asking every town on the peninsula to do it. He is asking for a proclamation that the Town of Boothbay is supportive and all inclusive, with the option to fly the Pride flag over the Town Hall or to petition to paint a crosswalk in Pride colors. Dale believes they need to wait for a full Board to make a decision. He is worried that if they make one proclamation more people will come and want it for different days or events as well. Dale is not trying to be negative or condescending. Byron realizes every town or city has wrestled with that same thing. He said they don't have to do all 3 things, they could choose to do just one. Chuck believes we are welcoming and inclusive without having done a proclamation and he shares Dale's concerns as well. It's a very big decision. Byron did meet with Southport already and they approved it. Dale would like to hear what the community has to say about it as well. Chuck agrees. Desiree Scordia, resident of Boothbay commented that she has Pride flag stickers on her Jeep and she can see the kids visibly relax and smile when they see them and know they are supported and safe.

Byron is very happy that it has been such a great transition. The added benefit is to let the world know we are ready and a welcoming community. They can be themselves when they come here on vacation. Dale doesn't want to inadvertently cause conflict by making the proclamation. Byron is very understanding and realizes they have to put serious thought into it.

Pam Mancuso, resident of Boothbay is opposed to the gay flag and Pride. She just thinks that we should stay neutral. She feels everyone feels welcome in this town and there are some conservatives and Christians who don't agree with it. Shri Verrill, resident of Boothbay heard three requests. She would love to see a rainbow crosswalk because it would be beautiful and might make people slow down when you are crossing. It would have multiple benefits for the community.

Shri Verrill from Sunrise Ecologic – Update on the Municipal Resolution:

A year and a half ago she entered into a contract with the State of Maine to help the towns of Boothbay, Boothbay Harbor, Southport and Wiscasset to enroll in a state program to identify, prioritize and fund local climate action projects. They have identified the top six priorities on our resolution we would like to pass tonight. This is the final step to enroll in the Community Resilience Partnership. We might need to amend the one sent to include roads as well, critical infrastructure to protect roads, etc. Once this is signed the town can get approved for the Community Action Grant because the residents of Boothbay and Boothbay Harbor worked together to form the Community Action Team. This will only be the first of multiple grants that will be available to help the towns.

Dale makes the motion to sign the amended Town of Boothbay Municipal Resolution Document declaring we want to move forward with this. Russ seconded. All in favor.

Chuck recommended that it should be included in the next version of the Comprehensive Plan.

Shri introduces Abby Jones who will be the contact for Boothbay for the Boothbay Region Climate Action Team and Co-Chair Evan Hindenberry. They are designated through the Municipal Resolution to be the Community Resilience Partnership and will coordinate with the Boothbay Region Climate Action Team. Lenore Emhoff is the Boothbay Harbor contact.

Outside Organization Requests-

Boothbay Region Ambulance Service: Robbie Ham, Chairman of the Board of Directors and Dan Gardner, the new Chief are presenting to the Board. They worked very hard on the budget this year. Wages are a big change being at 90% staffing. The calls have been stabilizing, it's been a busy winter with more people staying year round. Chuck asked about the increase in benefits and Dan explained they need to offer more benefits to attract more staffing down here because there is such a staffing shortage.

Originally they only had medical but now they added vision and dental. They have thirty nine employees on the roster, eight full time. The per diem employees do not get benefits. They worked hard getting contracts for services to the amounts they wanted.

The State of Maine has now declared EMS an essential service. This will open things up for them to apply for more grant money. Their request is for \$499,904.55 a 6.58% increase from last year.

Pam Mancuso from Boothbay got up to speak. She appreciates what the Ambulance Service does for us but thinks that nonprofits shouldn't be coming to the Town with this much of a request for town funds. She believes we need to start saying no to the nonprofits. It is taxpayer dollars, she appreciates them wanting to give benefits to their employees but a lot of other companies would like to do the same and they don't come to the town for money.

Veggies to Table – Anna Tract is presenting to the Board.

They are based out of Newcastle and serve all of Lincoln County and beyond. They grow high quality produce and flowers to donate to people in need in the community. Around a fourth of what they grew last year was donated to Boothbay. They have donated 11,700 pounds in produce to the Boothbay area since they started. They are requesting \$1500.00 from the Town of Boothbay. Chuck asked why they aren't asking Boothbay Harbor for money, there packet only listed Alan and Waldoboro. They are requesting \$1000.00 from Boothbay Harbor but it must have been after the packet was printed. He feels that they give to more places in the Harbor so he doesn't understand why they are asking more from Boothbay. They are in a moment of organizational growth so they are reaching out for more funds this year. Abby Jones stood to say that she has been at the YMCA when the food has been dropped off and there are no questions asked, people are allowed to take what they need. It is a wonderful thing. All places serve all towns. Pam Mancuso asked if they have other funding. They do fundraisers and are applying for grants.

Boothbay Region Health and Wellness Center, dba The Community Center – Gerry Homer, the Community Center Board is presenting.

He explained the downfalls of social isolation and how wonderful the Community Center is for the whole community. They have volunteer transportation to take people to appointments that they need to go to. They have a durable medical equipment program that has medical equipment free for people in need. They started the emergency highly reflective street number sign program which is in full gear since they received money from the McEvoy Foundation. They are able to give out the signs for free. They have a drop in activity center and meeting room for social contact, coffee, conversation, board games and self-improvement classes. They even plan field trips. They adopted a budget for 2024 which includes a sizeable increase in the fundraising amount. They have had 1700 Boothbay resident visits. They are asking for \$22,500.00 this year, up from \$16,500.00. Dale commented that it is always busy and a wonderful place for people to go and socialize. Chuck believes Gerry's leadership will help them immensely.

Boothbay Region Chamber of Commerce – Kristen Florez (Barker) is presenting for them.

They are asking for funding to help with the Boothbay Lights Festival. It is a festival that spans six weeks, from the Saturday before Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve. They have the Gardens A Glow, The Gingerbread Spectacular and the North Pole Express and it brings thousands of people from all over. The Board of Directors and Chamber Members Put up the pot buoy tree every year. They have over 2,000 wooden buoys that they hang on a structure on Pier One to form a tree. The Early Bird Sale brings the community together for Christmas shopping and the Lighted Fire Truck Parade is a lot of fun every year. The Boothbay Fire Department did take home the Dalmation Cup last year. They also help organize Santa and Friends where the Balmy Days' Novelty brings them to the dock. The 35th Annual Lighted Boat Parade was the best show in years this past year. All participants get a \$50.00 gas card. They orchestrated the return of the free shuttle from Boothbay Harbor to the Botanical Gardens for the Gardens A Glow. They actively support all businesses whether they are members or not. They did a pot buoy selfie contest. To enter they have to take a selfie with the pot buoy tree and a photo of a local receipt. The Boothbay Lights Festival is crucial to bringing people in during the off season. Chuck asked what the money will be used for. Most of it would go to vinyl signage and banners. Printing costs for vinyl signage is very high. They would also like to do more targeted advertising. Russ is wondering why they are asking for money from the town now. The Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens is in charge of their own

advertising and they help with the shuttle costs. Boothbay Harbor gives \$4,000.00 as a sponsor. She said this would make Boothbay a sponsor as well. Dale said to put it on the warrant and let the people decide.

Boothbay Harbor Memorial Library – Joanna Breen, the Executive Director and Desiree Scordia, Trustee are presenting to the Board.

The budget has increased this year, their staff positions have changed. They have had less volunteers and this is the first year they have been fully staffed. Their personnel budget is up and should stay flat for years to come. They are asking for a 4% increase from last year which is basically a cost of living increase. All services at the Library are free and they are very conservative with their spending. They have a chess club, a homeschool connection, a grandparents group and school clubs. After school on Wednesdays, early release day they have snacks for the kids. They also have a homebound program and they will deliver books to those that can't leave their home. They put an extra \$5,000.00 in the budget this year for the 100th Anniversary to get pretty banners. The Library was dedicated after World War I, a committee was established in 1924 to determine what would be a good honor for World War I veterans. It isn't just the town library it also serves as a war memorial to the town's soldiers of the first World War. They get to do everything they do now because of service members.

Boothbay Region Health Center – Patty Seybold, former Treasurer is presenting to the Board.

Chuck recuses himself because he is a board member. Patty is now serving as a chairman on the Grants Committee. This is a medically underserved area. A lot of people that go to the Health Center haven't seen a doctor in years and are in bad shape. They now have a lot more patients in the 25 to 40 year old range. They are asking for an increase from \$10,000.00 to \$12,500.00. The reason is they have unreimbursed medical care in the amount of \$100,000.00 dollars. Fundraising fell short by \$50,000.00. They also need to get more staff, they lost a full time provider for a family reason and they would like to hire another full time provider. Housing has also been an issue in the hiring process. There are more Boothbay residents using their services. They offer family care, primary care, same day care and urgent care services. They have one of the country's leading research programs in Alzheimer's treatment. All Lincoln Health physicians are referring patients with cognitive issues to them.

School Warrant - This Warrant is for the Boothbay – Boothbay Harbor CSD Referendum Election that will take place on Wednesday, April 24, 2024 at the Town Office from 8:00am to 6:00pm. Our staff will handle the actual vote so they need to sign the Warrant. Dale makes the motion to sign the Warrant for the School Referendum Election. Russ seconded. 3-0 in favor.

Public Comment: Evan Hindenberry commented on Byron Cortez's request. He understands it is extremely difficult and sometimes there our little compromises that need to be done. He was fascinated and humbled to see the Board of Selectmen at work.

Bruce Bowler commented that he sees on the ballot every year, "Selectmen recommend" under the Outside Organization requests and he feels it should say, " Selectmen offer no opinion." Dale feels that under the Outside Organization requests the verbiage should be removed because they don't always feel that way about every request. Dan agreed to remove it under the Outside Organization requests on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Shri Verrill thought it would be helpful to know what the budget is for Outside Organizations. Chuck explained that the voters decide what the amount will be. It's appropriated through taxes and the money comes from the undesignated fund. What is voted in at May Town Meeting sets the mil rate. The recommendation is for the Town to have the amount to cover three months of bills in undesignated funds.

Review Warrants and Sign:

Dale made a motion to review the warrants and sign them upon review. Russ seconded the motion. Vote: 3-0 in favor.

Adjourn Meeting:

Dale made a motion to adjourn. Russ seconded the motion. Vote: 3-0 in favor.