

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2022
10 Meetinghouse Road**

1. ROLL CALL: A meeting of the Bedford Town Council was held on Wednesday, May 11, 2022, 10 Meetinghouse Road. Participating were Bill Carter (Chair), Lori Radke (Vice Chair) and Councilors Phil Greazzo, Sue Thomas, Bill Duschatko, Dave Gilbert, and Kathleen Bemiss. Also present was Town Manager Rick Sawyer.

Chairman Carter opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Led by Chairman Carter.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Councilor Radke suggested that they be limited to two minutes because they had a full agenda and they had heard them before. Chairman Carter responded that he was going to give them their time. He limited it to three minutes the last time they were here.

Mr. Sawyer suggested moving up the presentation of the dog before they take public comment. Chairman Carter agreed to move the Top Dog presentation as the next item.

4. PRESENTATION

a. Town Clerk Presentation of the Top Dog

Sally Kellar, Town Clerk, introduced Scottie who was voted by the Town employees as this year's Top Dog. His owners are Kathryn and Francois Lemay. Scottie enjoys running around in the snow, loves people, cheese, hot dogs, and sticks. She presented the Lemay family with a gift of personalized dog bowl stating that he was Top Dog with treats. Councilor Radke also presented a bag of treats from the Council.

Ms. Kellar reminded residents to register their dog before the end of May, so they don't get fined or get a visit from the Animal Control Officer.

Ms. Kellar reminded residents that the last day to change your party affiliation before the upcoming State primary in September was May 31st.

Ms. Kellar stated that candidate filing would take place June 1st – June 10th.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Deirdre Menard, 69 Bedford Center Road, stated that they got together and put a letter together and emailed it to the Town Council, so they wouldn't take up any time today. They wanted to lay out what they researched, what they thought, and wanted them to look at it and consider it. She wanted to know if it was too late to consider that; was the decision being made today. Chairman Carter stated that they would be going into

discussion later on now that they have a full board. It would be the pleasure of the Council to move forward or not to move forward. Ms. Menard stated that since they won't have another opportunity to speak, she stated that they continue to be deeply concerned about it and the Council was well aware of the issues that they've already raised.

Jerry Hanaur, 20 Highland Farms Drive, Library Trustee, stated that they sent a letter from the Library Trustees to the Town Council and read the letter:

The Trustees of the Bedford Public Library want to emphasize the strong need to expand parking for the Town center and for our Library. Since Bedford does not have a traditional downtown where residents may gather with their neighbors, the historic center including Town Hall, the Library, BCTV, and the Bedford Village Common serve that purpose. With over 6,000 visitors per month currently and over 10,000 visits per month normally, our Library is the hub of the center. In fact, the Library's mission statement includes 'developing and maintaining the Library as the cultural and meeting center of Bedford.' Unfortunately, the role of the Library in the Town center itself is compromised by a lack of parking. The Library now limits large community group gatherings in its meeting rooms, because parking does not allow for simultaneous events. We expect that requests for the use of the two meeting rooms with a combined capacity of 95 people will return to their pre-pandemic level. Many of the groups that use our meetings rooms are civic organizations actively working to improve the quality of life in Bedford. The temporary COVID lull aside, the coming warm weather will also reveal the shortage of parking spaces. Our children's programs, our summer reading program, and the use of the Town Hall with its group and camp activities, will all increase parking demand as the weather warms. A recent study by the Town Planning office calculated a need for Town center parking of up to 102 additional spaces. The need for expanded parking has been repeatedly been acknowledged by past Town Councils. To date, the Town has set aside \$159, 375 specifically for Library and Town center parking expansion. Now, with the availability of ARPA funds, the needed expansion can be realized. The Department of Public Works has created a working plan. The Trustees have always planned to ensure the changes made to the parking area are esthetically pleasing and enhanced rather than detract from the appeal of the Town center. A landscape architect has been consulted to ensure screening of the additional spaces. In response to concerns of the expansion was too large, the conceptual plans have been modified to reduce the number of parking spaces by 10. This plan was shared with the Town Council at its last meeting two weeks ago, April 27th. The Trustees are committed to appropriate landscaping for the expanded parking lot. Should funds appropriated by the Town be insufficient for these improvements, we have identified several grant opportunities and foundations including the Bedford Public Library Foundation as funding sources. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information needed by the Town Council to affirm its decision to fund the expansion of parking for our Town center and for our Library.

Catherine Weeks, 214 County Road, read the following statement:

I'm speaking this evening in favor of the Bedford Town Library parking expansion project. This is a project that has been in the works for 27 years when the land was bought specifically for the purpose of a parking lot. This is not just a parking lot for the Library, but for BCTV, the Craftworker's Guild, and the Town Hall where so many important events for this Town our held. The new one-way traffic pattern would make the area safer and allow better visibility than the current 2-way pattern on the narrow hill. It will also be safer and more convenient for the staff and patrons having the tent next to the building. The current lot is need of improvement and Bedford has simply outgrown it. We should not spend money on a temporary fix and push this expansion project off when the funds are available and approved now. As a board member of the Library Foundation and current president of the Friends of the Bedford Library, I am invested in making our Library the best it can be. I ask for your support and allowing this parking expansion to proceed.

Moe Redmond, 81 Bedford Center Road, stated that she moved to Bedford, because of its small town feel. She wants to keep it small town. She thought that moving forward after the pandemic, many people were going to join zooms. She didn't think they were going to go away. She didn't think that the gatherings were going to be quite as big as what they would like them or expect them to be. She really wanted to keep their downtown area with some green space and keep Bedford smaller. Kids don't park, so a lot of the plans for the

children's groups are going to be at a certain age were going to be 'drop off'. She thought the kids would be better off with more green space rather than the tent being close to the Library and only having a little bit of space.

Susan Dell, 13 Privet Hedge Lane, read the following statement:

I moved to Bedford in 1976 knowing no one and being pregnant with my first child. Initially very lonely, I volunteered at the original Library and made my first friends in Town. In fact my first trip out of my home with my brand new baby girl, was to visit Fran Wiggin and her colleagues at the Library. Over the past 46 years, I have watched the Town grow and change and it was not always comfortable to make room for a greater population, bigger buildings, the loss of farm land to suburban neighborhoods, and even the understanding that Bedford needed a high school. Throughout this time, the Library has been central to my life and I have watched with interest and more than a little wonder how the services it offers have widened and diversified to make room for things both familiar as well as well as those that are new and different. Simultaneously, our Town center, which houses a very active Town Hall, BCTV, meeting rooms for our Town government as well as our Library have become a more important central part of our Town. But they all come with a price, and that price today is the need for increased parking for our Townspeople. Yes, it will be replacing green space with an asphalt parking lot, but it won't mean losing attractive and carefully organized plantings. Yes, it will mean moving the frequently used tent from the grassy area of the former Johnson property area to the area outside the Children's Room, but it won't be a disappointment have better access to electric power and to bathrooms. Yes, there may be times in the day when parking spaces are empty, but it doesn't mean that the spaces aren't needed when important community events take place as years of important data from Library personnel demonstrate. I live in the Mews, a homeowners association for those who are 55 and over. I speak for my neighbors who depend on convenient and plentiful parking spaces so they can access the government of our Town, the media heart of our Town, stimulating cultural events of our Town, and the joys of our Town Library. Especially if they aren't comfortable with technology or they simply want a place to visit during some lonely hours at home. With empathy for all, I urge you to use the funds currently earmarked for this parking lot expansion to serve the greater good of the community we all love.

Nicholas Vestrelli (sp), 69 Bedford Center Road, stated that it's about a half million dollars and they haven't been provided any data about the need for it. The data collected by the Library shows in 2009 they had 153,000 visitors. In 2019, they had 133,000, 20,000 fewer. The same with the Children's program. The attendance is in decline. It declined 25% in the 10 year span. He understands people think that there's growth in the Library, but the numbers don't show it. The calculations from the Planning Department that they need 100 new spaces was a little misleading, because they assume they would be using BCTV, the Bedford Village Common, Craftwork's Guild, Library and Town Hall all at the same time. He didn't think anyone had ever seen all those buildings being used at the same time. The activities, the hours they take place, is different. The Library was only open four hours a day on Saturday and Sunday, and the Town Hall is used most of the time during weekends, so there's not too much of a conflict. When there is, it could be resolved in a much smaller way with cooperation and coordination. People might not be comfortable with technology, but they could definitely bring out the application, which is a paper form, and that could continue and the Library could just input it in the system. They could coordinate all different events. He pointed out that the money that was going to the Library was 10% of the ARPA money that the Town received. The Library still hadn't provided any data. They had all of this time when they were told that people didn't agree with it.

Carol Davis, 17 Checkerberry Lane, read the following statement:

By Yankee standards, we are "newcomers" to Bedford. We moved in during the blizzard of '78, if anyone remembers that far back. We have been very happy to participate as members of this wonderful community,

and greatly appreciate the hard work of our Town's officials and employees. I am wearing two hats this evening. Some of you may know me as the President of The Craftworkers Guild, which has the privilege of leasing the Oliver Kendall House at the bottom of the Library parking lot. We deeply appreciate use of that building, and we work hard to be good tenants there. Just as an aside, it tickles me to be able to use that building and carry on the tradition of crafting there, because Oliver was a craftsman himself and we thank you for that too. Regardless of how you proceed with this project, The Craftworkers Guild will benefit from it in two ways: First, everyone needs to be able to walk safely in the parking lot and on its walkways, which is not currently the case due to significant deterioration of the surfaces since it was last maintained. Secondly, the project as I understand it, provides for a modern underground utilities conduit, which will enable the Kendall House to have reliable telephone service for the first time in several years, and internet service for the first time ever. It might surprise you to know that I am not going to ask you to support the additional parking on behalf of The Craftworkers Guild. Our current operating schedule mostly fits quite nicely within the average weekday usage pattern where people constantly come and go, moving in and out of parking spaces during the day. I know that it's been said at a previous meeting that the spaces directly in front of the building are rarely full, but I'd like to clarify that two of these spaces are reserved for handicapped parking, and the others are held for visitors from the community, since we ask our own members to park at the end of the regular rows unless they are loading or unloading a vehicle. Now I'm going to take off my Craftworkers' hat and make the rest of my comments as just another ordinary resident. With all due respect to the neighbors and abutters who have presented their observations and opinions over the past few weeks, I am in a good position to do the same, since for the past dozen years or so, I regularly spend countless days and hours at the Kendall House and am perhaps in the best position of anyone to observe what goes on in that lower parking lot. This is what I've seen. Firstly, during many weekday mornings and early afternoons, traffic circulates through the lot as people come and go. You can usually count on finding an empty space when you need one. Next, when there are adult and family programs at the Library, such as on many Sunday afternoons for example, there frequently no parking spaces available, and we routinely see people drive through the lot and right out again. Next, the Town Hall with a 200 person capacity has almost no safe or reasonable parking during Library hours. This makes scheduling events there difficult or practically impossible. You may remember several years back before COVID, when they tried to sponsor community participation craft activities and due to restrictions in use of the Town Hall due to parking, we couldn't have groups there. We actually had to have people come in by appointment. It made it made it difficult and haven't been able to do it since. It was too challenging. COVID concerns have diminished use for the past two & a half years, so observation of recent usage doesn't make a good baseline for establishing need. You have to go back before then. Finally, I heard a comment previously and again just recently about Library usage numbers decreasing over time. In recent years, I think this is accurate and probably predictable if you consider only patrons who borrow books, use public access computers or reserve a room. What it does not take into account is many of us use the facility without actually checking in or being counted. Two obvious things come to mind in that regard: the walk-in study groups after school and the people who actually attend meetings there as opposed to the individuals who book them, just to mention two. You have asked for data to prove the need. I understand the good sense in that; I'm a data person myself. The problem becomes, however, how do you quantify what is not happening, because of programs that are not being offered or meetings that are not being held because of the parking issue and COVID. I have seen firsthand the juggling, program and building use restrictions that have been going on that help manage the demand for parking at this time and leading up to this time. You have three adjacent public access buildings with meeting space technically available and an open recreational area in the Town common, but the available parking barely accommodates use of one of them at a time for any good-sized gathering. The lack of adequate parking in the center of Town is a significant community issue. It inhibits public engagement and participation when people avoid coming out, because they know parking will be difficult, unsafe, or impossible to find. It's especially a burden on the elderly, and there are still a few of us around; quite a lot of us actually. I would also suggest that it might be considered wasteful not to be able to make better use of such a valuable and costly resource as public space to gather in, in community with our neighbors, for recreation, public business and the common good. The need is significant, and it's never going to cost less than it does right now.

David Clark, 62 Bedford Center Road, stated that he was not an abutter. He's been here since 1982, so he's in his 40th year. He has fought for the high school back in the 80's, and the Library and the Fire Department, and the Safety Complex always trumped the high school. He felt that the Library has always gotten everything and more that it asked

for from the Town. He sees that it's a beautiful facility and he's very aware of what goes on there, because he walks every day and he walks through the parking lot at different times of the day. He wondered if the current number of parking places factored in the gazebo parking. Ms. Van Arsdale stated that she believed that it factored into the number of spaces that were usable within the whole center, but it didn't factor into just the Library spaces. Mr. Clark stated that to him, that was another 18 places. He stated that there were three islands in the current parking lot with white pines that weren't going to last long. He knew that they could get another 12 places in those two islands and there is a light pole that could be moved back, so there were 12 available places; that's another 30 places. He had asked for a compromise and factor those 30 extra spaces into the whole blueprint. He loves the landscape plan, but he's worried about the direct abutter who was Elaine Tefft on Meetinghouse Road. There's no guarantee that landscaping was going to happen. The funds weren't there. Fundraising could plant a lot of trees, but it's probably \$100k landscaping project. He didn't know if people were going to be that generous. He thought just because the funds were available now; it didn't mean they needed to build such a monstrosity. The new parking lot expansion was way over the top. His feeling was once green space was gone, it was gone forever. He saw no reason why they couldn't expand and build something that's maybe half of the size of what's currently being proposed. They heard that they took away 10 places, and that's nothing compared to the total size and scope of the entire project. He didn't see the need and he wasn't hearing the numbers or hearing raw data, and he walks through that parking lot every day at all different times and different days and he's never once seen it filled. They were talking about old people needing more parking; if you park them all the way down by the gas station, they were not going to be able to walk up that hill. That's ridiculous to expect that someone was going to walk all the way up there. He talked to a young mother who brings her kid to the children hour events and he asked what she thought about the parking and she said she didn't want to have to park all the way down there. She said that it wasn't full; it's not overfull. He hoped that they could reach some kind of a compromise. He thought it was very doable; he didn't think they had to blacktop the entire property.

Deidre Menard, 69 Bedford Center Road, hoped whether it's done today or not done today that they read what they wrote. They put a lot of thought and time into it. They did a lot of research. What she hears when she talks to people who live there who aren't affiliated with the Library is they couldn't imagine a parking lot the size of what they had in front of Flight Coffee and Primary Bank. They couldn't imagine the trees potentially being gone that shield them from a view of Route 101. She thought for all of the folks who were not aware that this was being considered right now, if and when it starts to happen and that's all cleared out and they don't get those trees and that screening, people were going to be really appalled. Everyone she's talked to that isn't affiliated with the Library was shocked and appalled. Her house faces the Library, so she's invested in this; she looks at it every day. If it's really is needed, all the traffic that was going to pour out of that spot because everyone is doing something there at the same time was going to be crazy. Once it happens, everyone will be saying what have we done and that's her prediction and that's her concern. Pave it, because you've got; spend it, because you've got it. That really concerns her when there was so little left to the historic heart of Bedford.

Elaine Tefft, 7 Meetinghouse Road, stated that she kept hearing statements that weren't true. They weren't there, so they don't know. She was there and has been there for 53 years. The Library was a place where you go to get books. She loves libraries and is a

proprietor at a private library. She has two libraries in her house. The Library was not a community center. The Library was an educational book house that was going to be sharing what they have with everybody. Stevens-Buswell was a community center. She thought attention needed to be paid there. She found it distressing that they say that property was bought so they could have extra parking. She stated that that was not true. The Johnson property was not bought for parking. There were two people in Town who had first refusal on that property. She spoke from firsthand experience, because of what her husband's profession was; he was an attorney. When they were approached it was explained that the Library would be enlarged; they needed a bigger building. That's what those people gave up their right of first refusal for. She knew that for a fact; she was at that meeting. Bob and Elizabeth would be spinning in their graves if they thought that it was being represented as they were going to sell it so they could tar paradise and put in a parking lot. She hopes they don't do that. They were supposed to have gorgeous landscaping when the Fire station moved out, but it was never done. She's not complaining about the landscaping or the kids running around or the back side of the tent. She loved to see people playing there. She thought they were torturing the land and the center unnecessarily. They don't need it. It's a Library; it's not a community center.

Amy Jenkins, 24 Bedford Center Road, stated that she had been in Bedford since 1966, so over 50 years. She's seen many changes in Town, but mainly the change that impacted her and her neighbors the most was the upgrading of Route 101. They all know that it was a 2-lane highway and now it's four. It started out as a railroad cut. They see what happens when the Town gets larger. Her house was flanked on both sides by major roadways; Route 101 runs behind her house, so the back of her house, mainly bedrooms, faces the 4-lane highway and the front of the house faces Bedford Center Road. Bedford Center Road was still a busy road. She was secretly upset when it was finally announced that Route 101 was going to become a 4-lane highway. This upgrade had been discussed by the Town and the State for at least 10 years, maybe more. Keeping an open mind, she sat through the meetings held by the State. As she listened, she realized that the highway needed to be upgraded as a matter of public safety. It had been discussed for at least 10 years by the Town and the State and now it needed to become a reality. She wasn't happy about that, but she understood. She felt the same way about upgrading the Library parking lot. It's a matter of public safety. A matter of public safety that it be updated to accommodate a growing town. They've been through a pandemic that's got to affect their numbers. The Town was growing and they had to face that and the Library would grow along with it or cease to use it; they've go somewhere else. If you look at the logistics of the current parking lot, there was a bottleneck between the upper and lower lot that was awkward. People that were coming and going from the Library were in some fashion crossing that bottleneck every day. If you drive down that, especially if it's slippery, it's a problem and has scared her on more than one occasion. They were fortunate that the Bedford people were very courteous. The bottleneck was a blind spot when they are driving in to access either of the parking lots. It's not safe for Library patrons. She believed that that was also a matter of public safety. She felt that the Town was now in the same position that the State was in when they finally decided to upgrade Route 101 as the funds became available to the State to update Route 101. Funds were now available to Bedford to finally update the Library parking lot. This had been discussed by the Town for many years and now it was finally time to do something about the situation that was unsafe. This was also a matter of public safety.

Pam Van Arsdale, 23 Church Road, stated that with all due respect, it was a community center. There were all sorts of groups that meet at the Library; it's full all the time. It's reading groups, knitting groups, animal lovers groups. She just wanted to say that it was the center of the center. There would be some green space left. They were not using all of the green space. She couldn't say and stress enough that the Trustees were very committed to making sure it was attractive, screening and plantings and she thought they could do a good job with that. She thanked the Town Council for their consideration.

5. NEW BUSINESS

a. Authorize the sale of 4 Sunset Lane

Councilor Thomas recused herself from the discussion and stepped down.

Mr. Sawyer stated that in January the Council authorized the sale of 4 Sunset Lane by sealed bid, which was advertised in March and the bid opening was completed on April 28th. The bid document had a minimum acceptable bid price of \$1.3m. Two bids were received and opened on April 28th with the high bid being \$1.5m by Matt Skeffington of MS Athletic LLC. If they have any questions or they want to talk about the bids in any detail they can go into non-public session to do that.

Councilor Greazzo wanted to know when the property was purchased and for what purpose. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Town purchased the property in 2014 for the purpose of building a Fire substation. The Council also decided in January that it was their decision to try and build a Police station and Fire substation together and that site wouldn't be big enough to accomplish that. Councilor Greazzo stated that he asked because it went with the discussion about the parking lot. Sometimes the Town buys stuff and has intentions and doesn't necessarily fit in the future. Mr. Sawyer stated that those funds, if accepted, were not appropriated in this year's budget. They would come in as unanticipated revenue. They would fall typically to Fund Balance and the Council could appropriate those in next year's budget. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if they were able to dedicate those funds to a future Safety Complex, so that they weren't spent some other way. Mr. Sawyer stated that they could propose that as part of next year's budget into a Capital Reserve account. Councilor Greazzo wanted to know if that was something the Council would be amenable to adding that to the motion. Councilor Duschatko wanted to know if they would do it before they had the money. Mr. Sawyer didn't know that they could bind the next Council in that manner. They can include it that that's their intention. You can't bind Town Meeting where that would be taking place in March.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council authorize the Town Manager and Town Attorney to complete the sale of 4 Sunset Lane to Mr. Matt Skeffington of Auburn, NH for bid price of \$1,500,000.00 in accordance with the Town bid document. Seconded by Councilor Duschatko. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0.

Councilor Thomas rejoined the Council.

b. Discontinuance of Employment Licenses

Mr. Sawyer thought that this was an antiquated requirement. The State allows towns to charge fees for employment service companies and temp agencies. In Bedford, they would have to pay \$15 a year. On average they collect about \$75 a year. It costs them more than that to bill those companies, receive those payments and complete the transactions every year. He didn't see any need to regulate a temporary employment agency any differently than any other company in Bedford. Maybe at some point in time there was a good reason to do it, but he didn't know what that could be today.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council discontinue the issuance of Employment Licenses in the Town of Bedford effective May 11, 2022. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

c. Appointments to the Historic District Commission

Chairman Carter stated that they had one interview tonight and had a recommendation to move Kelly Tope up to a regular member.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council appoint Kelly Tope as a regular member of the Historic District Commission with a term to expire in 2025. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

MOTION by Councilor Radke that the Bedford Town Council appoint Elaine Tefft as a regular member of the Historic District Commission with a term to expire in 2025. Seconded by Councilor Thomas. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 7-0.

d. Other New Business – None

6. OLD BUSINESS

a. Discussion on the Library parking lot expansion project

Chairman Carter thanked everyone who had come out over the last few meetings on this. The more they know about this the better it was for them to render their decision.

Councilor Radke wanted to clarify that there was no action required. She believed the action was done in November. Unless there was a motion that was made, but if there were no motions made, there was not action required. Chairman Carter confirmed that there was no action required from them.

Councilor Bemiss understood that this was discussed by the previous Council in November and in no way was she trying to undo what they have done. She thought at the time they probably made a decision based on the facts that they understood. This started when she became aware of it April 5th. She's been asking the Library for some statistics. If they were going to run this as a business, they need numbers. April 5th they weren't able to give her any data on whether or not the parking lot had been full. April 13th she again asked for that information. April 27th she again asked for that information. Here

it was May 11th. In that period of time, she would have thought that there would be data regarding the number of times that that parking lot was full to capacity over a 2-week period. She has driven by there and through all of the lots on an hourly basis when she's home and it's always more than half full. She wasn't questioning the integrity of the Library. She's questioning do they need it; do they need to spend 10% of the ARPA funds on a parking lot that they don't know if they need. Currently, the Bedford School District requires students to be within .5 miles, otherwise you have to walk to that bus stop. Right now the Town Offices have a sidewalk from the Town Office to the Library and that was between .35 and .4 miles, so clearly within walking distance to another 70 spots. She thought that with all of the controversy that happened around the Master Plan and people being very verbal about what they wanted: the retention of the Town community, the retention of green spaces. She thought that this flies in the face of the Town Master Plan. She thought just because they don't do it now, doesn't mean they don't do it in the future when they have some statistics that show that they need this many parking spots this many times a month. They don't have that information now. She mentioned the comment that there was nothing to do, because they already decided. She used the analogy that maybe she decided to build a new deck at her house, but now her well pump blew up. She has to reallocate that money. She thought they needed to spend the money on either the Fire or Police station, because that's the priority right now, not a parking lot.

Councilor Duschatko stated that that on April 5th there was meeting of the Historic District regarding the parking lot. There were no minutes released on that meeting. The 2nd meeting was scheduled for May 3rd, which was postponed until June at the request of the Town. He wanted to know if the Historic District Commission had any control over the design and other features of the proposed parking lot or was it something that they could basically ignore as a municipality. He wanted to know if anybody had any idea what happened on the April 5th meeting. Councilor Bemiss stated that she was there and the Board was under the instruction that they were just fact finding and they were not able to make any recommendations or decisions, because it was municipal property, so it didn't have to go before the Zoning, Planning or have Historic District Commission approval. She believed if it had to go before those three boards for approval it would never pass. Councilor Duschatko stated that the May 3rd meeting was postponed to the 7th and wanted to know why there was a meeting on the 7th of June. Chairman Carter stated that that was there regularly scheduled meeting. Councilor Duschatko wanted to know why the parking lot discussion was moved to the 7th. Councilor Radke thought they wanted to wait to hear more from the Council. Mr. Sawyer stated that nobody was going to pursue a project if it had the potential of being defunded by the Council. He stopped having engineering spend any money on the project until they got a decision from the Council, because there was an uncertainty if the project was going forward. The project was before the HDC for review and comment. Councilor Duschatko stated that it was just a courtesy.

Councilor Thomas stated that she has been there a number of times when there was no parking at night, so it wasn't the regular Library hours, it was because there were meetings in all three places. She would discount any parking at the Town Office. It's only a half a mile, but usually the parking was full at night. She didn't necessarily feel in danger of being mugged in Bedford, but she would, at sunset, be in danger of being hit by a car in Bedford. She had a very good friend who died being hit by a car while they were running. She didn't see the Town Office parking spaces as parking spaces. With all of the things she's been involved in, she's been there a lot and has had to drive around. She had driven

in front of Mr. Clark's house and has parked on Bedford Center Road. There were times where it does fill up.

Councilor Greazzo stated that he's been there for meetings or at the Library for meetings also where the parking lot was full. He didn't disagree that some additional parking may be need, but he thought what was proposed might be a little too much. Looking at the parcel on the GIS, it's pretty large. It could probably could be reconfigured. The driveway that went to the house leads out to Route 101. Maybe that could be a good exit for traffic issues instead of directly everybody back out onto Meetinghouse Road. People that wanted to go on Route 101 South could exit from that way. Maybe some of the traffic they have on Meetinghouse Road was because people were circling looking for parking. He didn't disagree that some parking would be an improvement at the site. The amount that they have and the way that it's laid out was not suitable for the people that live there. They don't appreciate that, but thought there could be some compromise.

Councilor Radke stated that she listened to the last meeting and everyone's comments. She thought the most compelling person that got up at the microphone was Chris Bandazian and his comments. She didn't realize how much things were held back, because of the parking. Programming and events were held back because of the parking. He really put it in perspective; it was from the heart. Being married to the Librarian, he knew firsthand how much was held back. That to her was a very compelling piece of testimony. She disagreed with Ms. Tefft. The Library is a community center. BCTV is a community center. Town Hall is a community center. They had to think of it as a whole piece. They keep focusing on the Library. They need to think about those other buildings. They may all be used at the same time, but that's why they put the money into it. That is why they spent the time and energy year after year upgrading those facilities, so they can be used. It's time to use them. She would love to see Town Hall used every day and every night with a parking lot that could fulfill that possibility, absolutely. That's what it's there for. The Library, let's use it. They could probably use BCTV more for meetings if they had the capacity for people to park. The Library Trustees and the Library Foundation; she knows they were going to do everything in their power to make sure that a landscaping was going to be there. She knows that there wasn't enough money that they have already allocated for that. She knows how hard they work on fundraising efforts and she didn't doubt that they would come forward with some beautiful landscaping. That's their home. She couldn't imagine them not doing that. She believed they would come forward with a nice landscaping plan or the funds to help get that going. She looked at the parking spots like insurance. Insurance is great. You may never use it, but you were going to want it when you need it. When they have all of these events going at the same time, it's nice to have that parking so they aren't parking at the Town Office and walking up. She's on the Historic District Commission and she's glad that they went back to the drawing board. They took away 10 spots. They listened to the people. They came back with another idea.

Councilor Bemiss stated that she also appreciated Chris's information that he presented. She would have liked to have seen how many programs had they not been able to do in that amount of time. She would like to see the project stopped. Do some data and see how big they need this project if they need it at all. There was no rush to go forward with it at this point.

Councilor Thomas stated that they have the money now, because of the ARPA funds. The parking lot was not going to get any cheaper. It's just going to get more expensive, because everything, especially asphalt, gets more expensive by the minute. They have the funds this year. They have things to do. She manages the funds for her company. She knows what it is, but you can't just stop a project because they have other projects. You have to find a way to balance what needs to be done and spend your money in the best way possible. Saying let's put it off, they could, but it's going to be more expensive and the ARPA funds would be gone. She thought the time had come.

b. Other Old Business – None

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Interview Minutes – April 27, 2022

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council approve the minutes of the April 27, 2022 Town Council Interviews. Seconded by Councilor Duschatko. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0-1 (Radke abstained).

b. Public Session – April 27, 2022

MOTION by Councilor Thomas that the Bedford Town Council approve the minutes of the April 27, 2022 Public Session. Seconded by Councilor Gilbert. Vote taken – Motion Passed – 6-0-1 (Radke abstained).

8. TOWN MANAGER REPORT

- 1) PFAS Contamination – NHDES held a virtual public forum on May 4th, which was available through the BCTV website 'On Demand' and on through the DES YouTube page. The State announced an agreement with Saint-Gobain that provides for point of entry treatment systems and a few public water connections for properties south of Country Road and East of Liberty Hill Road. (A slide was shown on the screen showing the impacted areas). There has been no firm timeline when residents would start getting letters or being contacted by Saint Gobain's consultants for when those treatment systems would be installed. He hoped it would be on or before June 1st. They announced that the remaining area within the Saint Gobain consent decree area, an announcement would be coming forth in the future about what solution would be provided there. Saint Gobain had a responsibility to submit that solution by April 30th, which they said did happen, and it's now under review by the State. For a lot of people that have been on bottled water for three years, there was still no answer. When the first phase of treatment was provided the State required water lines to be extended to those impacted properties. The State made the statement during the May 4th meeting that they no longer require water lines to be extended. They now find point of entry treatment systems to be an acceptable solution. They have to remain patient for the solution for the rest of the shaded area. In terms of the rest of the community, the Town has submitted a grant application to the State that would provide reimbursements up to \$6,500 for those outside of the Saint Gobain responsible area

(shown on screen). They were waiting for State approval. It would require DES and the Governor and the Executive Council to approve that. Also on May 4th, the State announced for the first time that in addition to their \$1,500 grant, they are considering a higher grant reimbursement and may make it so the Town did not have to do their own grant program. They already have everyone's data and the staff to run reimbursement programs. They were waiting on a decision to hear what that might mean. The Town of Merrimack and the Town of Bedford submitting identical grants. They worked together to both request \$6,500 per household, because they believe whole house treatment systems could be installed for that price. The \$1,500 grant that the State announced was for point of use system (under the sink) and the \$1,500 would cover the installation of one of those. The State made it clear that if they get the \$1,500 grant, you can't also get the \$6,500 grant; it has to be one or the other. Anyone contemplating a whole house treatment system shouldn't apply to the State for their \$1,500, because they would lose out on the \$6,500.

Councilor Duschatko stated that he understood from the meeting, the Town was referring to it as a grant, but everybody else should think of it as a rebate. They would have to do the work and then apply to get their money back. Mr. Sawyer agreed. It's a grant to the Town, but it's a reimbursement to the homeowner. They would have to have a reading above any of the four PFAS chemicals that the State regulates. They can't just get it if you would like to have one and they don't have a reading above the State limits. Councilor Duschatko stated that he understood it as it's only for point of use and you couldn't apply it to putting in their own water line extension. Mr. Sawyer stated that they could. The way the Town's grant was written it would be if they wanted to do point of use, point of entry, or if they are able to connect to a water line, they could receive reimbursement. Councilor Duschatko stated that he was referring to the one that was mentioned the other night. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Town's would let you do any, the State would allow you to do any as well, but they would only get \$1,500 and it would cost you much more than that if you are connecting to a water line. It would cost more than \$6,500 in most cases to connect to a water line. None of the grant are approved; none of the reimbursement programs are approved and none of the details are released by the State or the Town. They were hoping early summer/late spring they would be able to announce that the Town received theirs and the program would be in place very quickly. They were hoping the State would be in a similar time frame. He appreciated all of the Bedford residents who asked questions.

- 2) If you have received a request for well testing from Golder Associates, Nobis Group, or the State of NH, it is critical that you sign the agreement and return the paperwork as soon as possible. Bedford has a lower than average response rate. Anyone with questions should give his office a call. Dawn Boufford or he could help walk them through that if they are confused about those letters.
- 3) During the Month of May we celebrate International Firefighters' Day on May 4th, National Police Week May 11-17 with the theme of "Honor, Remembrance, and Peer Support", National Peace Officers Memorial Day on May 15th, National EMS Week May 15-21 with the theme of "Rising to the Challenge", National Public Works Week May 15-21 with the theme of "Ready and Resilient". There is no question that these themes represent our employees in these roles very well and I thank them for their service and commitment to Bedford.
- 4) Registration for Camp Witzel summer camp and other summer camp programs are now open and information is available through the Recreation page of the Town Website <https://bedfordnh.myrec.com>

- 5) Please register your dog(s) prior to June 1st in order to avoid any late fees for 2022.
- 6) The Bedford Historical Society Annual Clothing Drive is now until May 26th. Donations can be placed in the U-Haul bin placed in front of the Stevens Buswell Building during the day. It goes in support for the Historical Society and primarily they were fundraising for the completion of the Stevens-Buswell Community Center.
- 7) The Bedford Library Foundation Annual Russell Leen Lecture Series will virtually host author Ed Webster on Sir Ernest Shackleton's 1914 Endurance Expedition to Antarctica, which is one of history's most famous survival stories on May 12, 2022, 7:00 PM. Please register in advance on the Library website.
- 8) May 15 – Cinema Sunday, “Rear Window”, 1:30-4:30 PM, Bedford Library. Please register in advance on the Library website.
- 9) May 21 – Bedford Garden Club Spring Plant Sale – Saturday, May 21, 11am -2 pm, Bedford Village Common, 15 Bell Hill Road.
- 10) The Bedford PTG Color Blast Fun Run will take place on Sunday, May 22nd at 9:30 AM at the High School and running down Nashua Road to Hamilton Way. Please avoid the area if you are not participating.
- 11) May 29 – Police Department Bicycle Rodeo at the High School, 10:00 – Noon.
- 12) May 29 – Memorial Day Parade, 1 PM, Bedford High School to McKelvie Intermediate School via County Road with a theme of “Freedom through Unity”.
- 13) May 31 – Last day to make party changes prior to the September 2022 Primary.
- 14) Registration period for running for a State office is June 1st – 10st. Councilor Radke added that those filing for State Rep can go to their local town clerk. Those filing for the Senate, Governor, Congress, you need to go to the State Capital.
- 15) May 29 – Bedford Library Closed for Memorial Day.
- 16) May 30 – Bedford Town Offices, Library, Transfer Station, & BCTV closed for Memorial Day.
- 17) June 4 – Bedford High School Graduation, 10 AM.
- 18) June 25 – Household Hazardous Waste Day, 8:30 AM – 3 PM, Highway Garage, 19 Chubbuck Road.
- 19) June 25 - The 100th Anniversary of the formation of the Bedford Fire Department is being celebrated with a traditional muster at Legacy Park, 11 AM.

9. COUNCILOR COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE UPDATES

Councilor Greazzo referred back to the Library parking lot. He stated that since the Council didn't have a will to halt the project to get some more data, his thought was to reconfigure it. The Johnson lot was large enough that the parking lot could run perpendicular to the existing parking lot rather than parallel to it leaving green space up at the Library where the residents would like it to be and the Library gets the same size parking lot. He would also like to see the incorporation of that driveway as a one-way exit out onto Route 101 to alleviate some traffic out on Meetinghouse Road.

Councilor Bemiss stated that the Conservation Commission had a walk through at the Hardy Road site today. There were 40+ residents in addition to 10 board members and engineers. It was a phenomenal turnout. The compost committee met this week. Bedford is now composting at the Transfer Station. There are bins as well compostable plastic bags that you can fill and put in the bins. They will save taxpayer dollars, because they are taking that food waste out of the regular garbage. The committee will be encouraging that program. BCTV was working hard and approaching to have closed-caption on all of

the programming that's being viewed on BCTV. She has been working with them to have a two or three minute informational blurb on each board before those board meetings take place instructing the community members what the mission of that board is and what to focus your comments on. Bedford radio 105.1 has an amazing program in the afternoon run by one of Bedford's high school students and she is a rock star.

Councilor Gilbert stated that they lost a good friend and a great person who had done a lot for the community and a lot for the Educational Farm at Joppa Hill. David Moore passed away last Sunday. In his memory, they are having a memorial service for him at the Farm. A memorial beginning at 1:00 PM and the actual service would be around 2:30 PM. There will be some food and drinks. It will be this Saturday, May 14th. David did a lot for the Farm. He and Michelle were the driving force behind the gardens that they have and the high tunnel. He was their treasurer.

Councilor Radke stated that at the HDC meeting on May 3rd, they was a request for an extension of an approval that was granted May 12, 2020. There was a request for a site alteration for installation of retaining walls, walkways and a patio on 42 Church Road. They also had one that was tabled.

Chairman Carter congratulated Officer Michael Monahan who was promoted to Captain. He stated that he's going through the Citizen's Police Academy right now, which Captain Monahan was running. He talked about the Academy. The High School Senate put on their agenda to add a Council member as a non-voting member and he volunteered for that. He went to their last meeting. Its two reps from each grade in the high school along with some parents. They talked about composting. Even though CUB day had passed, you can pick up bags at the Transfer Station and pick up trash.

10. NON-PUBLIC – RSA 91-A:3 II (d)

MOTION by Councilor Radke to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:3 II (d) consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community, and RSA 91-A:3 II (I) Consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present. Seconded by Councilor Thomas.

ROLL CALL VOTE: Greazzo-aye, Thomas-aye, Duschatko-aye, Carter-aye, Radke-aye, Gilbert-aye, Bemiss-aye.

The public meeting ended at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dawn Boufford