

TOWN OF BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE
Regular Meeting
March 25, 2021 – 7:15 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM
Meeting ID: 882 4359 0062

Board of Finance Members Present: Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally (arrived at 7:20), Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

Board of Selectmen Present: First Selectman Sandra Pierog, Selectman Robert DePietro, Selectman Robert Morra and Selectman Kimberly Miller

Board of Education Members Present: Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Michael Stankov

Others Present: None

1) CALL TO ORDER

E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:17 P.M.

2) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

E. Bradley called for public participation, but there was none.

3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. February 18, 2021 Regular Meeting

E. Bradley requested the matter of the approval of minutes to the end of the agenda, and the Board agreed with unanimous consent. After discussion of other matters, the minutes were taken up for discussion, with R. Tuthill noting that the strikethrough version of the document should have no bolded text for replacement language. The minutes were then approved with unanimous consent.

4) NEW BUSINESS

a. Presentation and Discussion of Board of Selectmen's FY2022 General Government, Capital and Debt Budgets

J. Kelly opened the Presentation of the FY2022 budget with highlights of the accomplishments of the town for the FY2021, especially highlighting the deft navigation of the town through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis as well as the implementation of multiple new programs and initiatives. He then highlighted the changes to the grand list that have occurred over the past year, noting the 0.81% total growth across the previous fiscal year, with most if the increase in the total coming from a 12.7% increase in

personal property. It was also noted that the valuation of real estate in Bolton has seen a .002% decrease in assessed value across FY2021 due to the number of structures in Bolton with crumbling foundations, a known problem at this time. He then contrasted the changes in the grand list with the 4.61% increase in total town expenditures in the same period of time.

J. Kelly next presented the proposed budget for the Town Proper for FY2022, first noting changes to staff compensation: these changes include, but are not limited to, a 2.75% increase in wages for most staff alongside a significant 17.0% increase in medical insurance costs. The Fire Commission's budget was raised to a greater percentage than that of the general 2.75% increase for wages to incentivize volunteerism among town residents, while the library received additional funding to hire an additional full time staff member.

J. Kelly next noted the Top Five Increases in the budget by dollar value, which were Personnel Services (mostly driven by the aforementioned medical insurance increases), Recreation, Town Building Operations, Library Services, and Fire Commission. The Board Members spent some time asking questions concerning the nature of the budgetary increases in Town Building Operations, Library Services, and the Fire Commission, and S. Pierog noted the small decrease in the budget allocation for the Planning and Zoning commission.

The presentation next shifted to focus on Bolton's Debt Outlook, with J. Kelly drawing attention to the fact that debt is level for the next several years after which there is a significant drop in expected debt payment in 2028 and again in 2032. Individual debt category expenditures remained largely the same from FY2021, with increases in Bond and Note Payment offset by reductions in Long-Term Debt Interest driven by a payment of the principle on existing bonds.

On the topic of Bolton's Capital Improvement Plan, the proposed plan would have a non-bonded cost of \$581,000, of which \$516,584 is requested from the taxpayers pending approval of the reallocation of previous year funds. This value is split between the expenditures coming from the Capital Improvement Fund (CIF), which handles projects over \$20,000 dollars in cost, and the Capital Reserve Fund (CRF), which handles all projects with a value of less than \$20,000. Per the Charter, the CRF must have 1-4 mills allocated to it each year, with each mill translating to ~\$450,000 for FY2022, while there is no such requirement for the CIF. The \$516,584 taxpayer ask for FY2022 includes \$25000 from the CIF for the replacement of windows at Bolton center school and renovation of the Library conference room. Meanwhile, planned projects that fall under the jurisdiction of the CRF total \$491,584 and include but are not limited to revaluation of the assessor's office, natural gas infrastructure expansion, and several improvements to the high school.

The FY2022 CIP also includes several projects that the BoS intends to bond for, including a replacement to fire engine assets, several repairs and renovations to town hall,

a series of major renovations to Bolton Center School including but not limited to HVAC improvements, roof remodeling, remodeling of the library, and improvements to science labs; the construction of a track at the high school's and improvements to the soccer fields. The total bonded cost of these various projects totals ~\$3,800,000, with the precise number and date of bonding to be determined after some final variables on the roof repairs and town hall renovations were finalized.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the board members spent some time discussing the various projects that were proposed for the FY2022. It was noted the J. Kelly, S. Pierog, and K. Heckt would all be in attendance at the next BoF meeting, and would thus be able to answer any questions on the plan as presented at the next meeting as well.

5) ONGOING BUSINESS

a. Charter Revision discussion

It was noted that the public hearing regarding the charter revision changes current under consideration by the BoS was currently in recess, and the BoS would be taking public comment until the 6th of April. The recording and minutes for the public hearing are not yet posted, but will be posted by the 6th of April when the next regular meeting of the BoS convenes. The Board members discussed whether or not to send a collective letter or memo to the Board of Selectmen regarding the proposed changes to the charter currently being debated, but chose to refrain from sending a letter until the proposed revisions were finalized.

b. Consider and possibly act on Fund Balance Policy changes


E. Bradley asked J. Kelly for clarification on several items related to the proposed changes to Fund Balance Policy. E. Bradley noted that policy strives for a ratio of net annual debt service expenditures to total budget expenditures of 6-8%, and asked about the origins of this value and its consistency with other communities. J. Kelly indicated that this was a common value used by surrounding municipalities and is a standard range to aim for and be achievable going forward. E. Bradley next asked if these policy changes would have any impact on the significant bonding that the town expects to do over the next several years, but J. Kelly and S. Pierog both noted that this policy should not have any negative impact and adoption could lead to improvements in bond rating.

R. Tuthill asked if a full version of this policy would be made available to the BoF, and J. Kelly confirmed that it would be. B. Munroe asked if the town's relationship with bond agencies would be improved by increasing the contribution the town made in this year's budget, to which J. Kelly noted that the primary method by which bond agencies would gain confidence in the town would be the adoption of this policy.

6) ADJOURNMENT

E. Bradley adjourned the meeting at 9:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Stankov". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Stankov, Board Clerk

Please see future minutes for revisions and corrections to these minutes.