

**BOLTON BOARD OF FINANCE  
SPECIAL MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 30 , 2021– 7:15 pm  
VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM WEBSITE PLATFORM  
Minutes**

**Board of Finance Members Present:** Chairman Emily Bradley, Vice-Chair Robert Munroe, Ross Lally, Charles Danna Jr., Kristen Gourley, Robert DePietro, and Richard Tuthill

**Board of Selectmen Present:** First Selectman Sandra Pierog and Selectman Robert DePietro

**Board of Education Members Present:** Superintendent of Schools Kristin Heckt, Anne Decker, Christopher Davey, Rhea Klein (joined meeting at 7:50 p.m.)

**Staff Present:** Administrative Officer Joshua Steele Kelly, Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, and Board Clerk Linda McDonald

**Others Present:** Bentley Memorial Library Director Elizabeth Thornton

1. Call to Order: E. Bradley called the meeting to order at 7:18 p.m.
2. Public Participation: C. Danna commented he attended a virtual discussion last night sponsored by the Bentley Memorial Library on crumbling foundations which included 51 participants. He said he found the discussion to be very informative.
3. Ongoing Business:

a) Discussion of FY 2022 Budgets:

E. Bradley welcomed Library Director E. Thornton to the meeting and asked her about the budget proposal to make a part-time position at the library full time.

E. Thornton responded one long-time staff member retired this past summer and the position was re-envisioned to focus on technology and programming. She explained there has been demand for technology and increased use of social media and the library needs extra assistance. This past year, all programming has been online and has increased. The library has a Facebook account, presence on the town's website, and provides a newsletter to patrons. E. Thornton noted the position is currently 25 hours per week. She said the reason for the request for this position to be full-time is that she wants to be able to continue with online needs when library re-opens and this would be impossible to do with the position at 25 hours. She said the patrons love the curbside service, downloadable items, and still like to browse the stacks.

E. Thornton noted the library has been providing delivery service to seniors during the pandemic as well. She said the person hired in October has never worked in the library when it is open and would be unable to provide the online and technology services at their current levels, in addition to other duties once the library re-opens. Other part-time employees have their own duties. She informed the board members that the Bibliomation network has converted to web client and the new hire was able to get the online training set-up and operating for the employees.

E. Thornton said, currently, she is the only full-time employee, and things take triple the time to complete with COVID measures in place. The needs of the library have changed.

E. Bradley thanked E. Thornton for her comments. Discussion continued on the FY 2022 budgets.

J. Kelly said the Board of Selectmen (BOS) looked at last year's budget and reduced several line items in the FY 2022 budget before sending the budget to the BOF.

S. Pierog said the BOS reduced the special administrative services line item by \$11,000. The remaining \$25,000 in this line item was moved to capital and non-recurring. The Planning and Zoning Commission (PZC) was reduced by \$1,600. She commented that the BOS has not yet determined what the giveback amount to the Town will be.

Discussion followed on town spending during 2020 with the pandemic and its influence on determining the FY 2022 budget. A two-year averaged budget cycle lookback was suggested and discussed.

S. Pierog commented there is \$8,000 for hardware and software upgrades in the Communications budget. There will be a \$5,500 annual fee to run the software after that.

Superintendent Heckt and S. Pierog provided updates on the status of employee health insurance options.

Superintendent Heckt reported the BOE hopes to have a definitive answer next week after the BOE meeting. Procedurally the BOE has to discuss the MOA's in executive session and then come out and vote on them because they are official changes to negotiated contracts. She added the BOE still does not have the official rates from the partnership plan.

J. Kelly reported he has heard only positive things directly. The Town is requesting all of the different union groups sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) and submit it back to the Town. Tomorrow is the deadline for submittal of questions or return of signed MOA's. J. Kelly said he will be following up with each of the union presidents tomorrow.

J. Kelly noted the increase in the Refuse Services line item was due to an increase in tipping fees as well as the increase in the amount of trash disposed. He said the Mid - NEROC consortium has fees that are rising.

S. Pierog said the Town building operations line item was increased because the Town had to move to a new alarm monitoring system provider that is more expensive.

E. Bradley said at the special meeting on Thursday April 1, 2021 the board will take a look at the initial view of next year's budget with everything put together at this point. No action was taken.

b) Consider and Possibly Act Upon Fund Balance Policy Changes:

Members reviewed and discussed proposed changes in the Debt and Fund Balance Policy, focusing on the sections of the policy relating to unassigned balance percentage target and replenishment of reserves fund balance.

In response to feedback from the board, J. Kelly said he will get some real numbers, using the current fiscal year as a staple and create a calculator within excel to allow the members to adjust percentages to see how much the Town would need to pay in the next fiscal year if the BOF were to adopt with 10%, 5%, 15%, whatever the case might be. He will email this to the members.

In response to the discussion, J. Kelly said his reason for bringing forward this policy the bond rating is the perfect example of immediate payback for having a good policy in place. He said he would not be recommending this to the board unless he believed, from a professional perspective, that this was the right thing to do. He said bond rating agencies are not looking at this as some kind of superficial exercise in order to get towns to squirrel away more money that is never going to be touched. He said they want to see that in place because it speaks to the financial vitality of the town; it speaks to the town's ability to pay off its debts in the event there is a catastrophic event; and it speaks to the town's ability to handle any such catastrophic event that might come up. So, having those monies set aside, while 10% is maybe too much to handle right now, that does not mean that the town should not strive to have a percentage of reserves that are seen across the country as being an ethically and financially correct number to aspire to for an undesignated fund balance.

E. Bradley said it is important to have something in place before next spring's bonding projects.

R. Munroe noted a change would be adding on significant ongoing additional annual expense to budget. The fund balance percentage has to be attainable.

No action was taken.

4. Adjournment: E. Bradley adjourned the special meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Special Meeting – April 1, 2021 7:15 p.m.

Special Meeting (if necessary) – April 6, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Special Meeting (if necessary) – April 7, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Next Regular Meeting: April 15, 2021 Regular Meeting - 7:15 p.m.

Public Hearing – April 27, 2021 – 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Linda H. McDonald, Board Clerk

*Linda H. McDonald.*

PLEASE SEE THE MINUTES OF SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS FOR THE APPROVAL OF THESE MINUTES AND ANY CORRECTIONS HERETO.