

**TOWN OF BOLTON
FINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
7:15 P.M., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024
*TOWN HALL/ZOOM***

Finance Committee Members Present at Town Hall/Zoom: Chair Ross Lally, Member Rhea Klein, Member Ashley Phelan, Member Robert Morra, Member Amanda Gordon, Member Tyler Egner. Absent was Member Chris Connelly.

Staff Present Via Town Hall/Zoom: Chief Financial Officer Jill Collins, Town Administrator Jim Rupert, Board Clerk Mary Johnston, Board of Education Superintendent Kristin Heckt (7:38 p.m.), Selectman Rodney Fournier (7:17 p.m.)

Others Present Via Town Hall/Zoom:

1. Call to Order

R. Lally called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

2. Public Participation: None

3. Approval of Minutes

3a. November 21, 2024, Regular Meeting

R. Klein MOVED to approve the November 21, 2024, Minutes. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6:0:0.

4. Elected Official and Town Staff Reports

4a. Tax Collection Summary

J. Collins reviewed the Tax Collection report and stated 106.89% has been collected this fiscal year. J. Collins reported two mailings of checks has been done and one more batch will be sent next week. J. Collins will provide a spreadsheet to the Committee detailing what was mailed with the amounts. J. Collins stated she will make an adjusted entry after all checks have been mailed, which will make the percentage go down. J. Collins reported the mailing of checks could go to July before complete.

4b. Town Update

J. Rupert reported that revenues, interest and expenditures is business as usual for this time of the year and no issues to report. R. Lally pointed out that the grants received from the state for running elections has been used. J. Collins reported there were three transfers in November. A. Gordon expressed concerns with engineering costs. J. Rupert explained how engineering costs are handled and the grants the Town receives that are applied to these costs. R. Lally asked about the bid for the greenhouse demolition. J. Rupert replied bids have been received and are being reviewed. J. Rupert pointed out that the scope of services is expanding for the project.

4c. Board of Education Update

K. Heckt reported 31% of the budget has been expended compared to 27% at this time last year. K. Heckt stated there have been savings in insurance and unfilled positions. K. Heckt reported on the continuing issues with the heating equipment at Bolton Central School and the importance of replacing the entire system. K. Heckt stated the amount needed to cover the costs is \$18,231.

4d. Other

None.

5. Ongoing Business

5a. Tax Issue

R. Lally stated he hopes there is a process in place before the Grand List is signed off and sent to the State. R. Lally stressed the importance of having checks in place and a backup has been made of the file. A. Gordon stated the Board of Selectmen need to discuss policies that would solve the issue.

5b. Communication

A. Gordon stated she would need the data to put together a one-page brochure on the budget process and the schedule of all the budget meetings.

5c. Discussion on the questions for Auditor

A. Phelan discussed the questions she submitted to the Auditor and the response received from the Auditor. A. Phelan reported on why the Fire Department was not included in the audit and how she felt the Fire Department should be consolidated into the Town's budget for transparency. J. Collins pointed out the Fire Department has their own EIN. Discussion was held on the Fire Department's budget and how they are audited. R. Morra suggested having a member of the Fire Department attend a Finance Committee meeting to explain their relationship. J. Rupert reported the Fire Department has a contract with the Town for emergency services and explained their role. R. Lally will invite the Fire Department and the Chair of the Finance Commission to attend a future meeting.

A. Phelan stated the next question was on the need for policies and procedures which the Committee understands is important to implement in the long term.

A. Phelan stated the next question was on independent contractor and felt the Committee needs to do a deep dive review of the contract. J. Rupert stated the contract has been reviewed by the Town Attorney and the changes will be made after the first of the year.

A. Phelan reported the next question was on the policy when the amount spent goes above the contract. J. Rupert added this is something that does not happen on a regular basis. R. Lally asked if this process was in the policy manual. J. Rupert stated he will review the policy to see if this process was included in the manual.

A. Phelan stated the Auditor asked to clarify the financial relationship between Bolton Lakes and the Town. R. Lally will reach out to the Auditor for more information and add this item to the January agenda.

A. Phelan stated the Auditor made a comment about simplifying the budget and suggested the way the Columbia student funds are handled. R. Morra pointed out that fund is unique and J. Collins added this a separate account. A. Phelan stated does this account need to be separate. R. Morra added, when this fund was established, it was meant to be separate, and it cannot be closed until paid in full. T. Egner asked how many students are from Columbia. R. Klein replied there are eighteen high school students from Columbia. K. Heckt added that RAM will be an option for Columbia students next year. R. Lally stated the Auditor mentioned the process the Town does bonding, and short-term loans could be handled internally instead of a third party. This could be a cost savings to the Town.

6. New Business

6a. CAPA Meeting Dates

The CAPA meeting dates were set for Wednesday, January 8, 2025, and Wednesday, January 22, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment

R. Morra MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:19 p.m. A. Gordon SECONDED the motion. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 6:0:0.

Respectfully submitted by Mary J. Johnston

Mary J. Johnston

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

SEE ATTACHMENTS UNDER SEPARATE COVER.