

**TOWN OF BOLTON  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
7:15 P.M., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 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. Absent was Member Chris Connelly. Member Robert Munroe resigned effective November 19, 2024.

**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, Selectman Rodney Fourier

**Others Present Via Town Hall/Zoom:** Newly recommended Finance Committee Member Tyler Egner

**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. October 17, 2024, Regular Meeting**

R. Morra MOVED to approve the October 17, 2024, Minutes. A. Phelan SECONDED. A. Gordon stated the time in the Minutes Heading should read "7:15 P.M. instead of "7:00 P.M." A. Gordon ABSTAINED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:1 with the noted correction.

**4. Elected Official and Town Staff Reports**

**4a. Tax Collection Summary**

J. Collins reported the tax collection report still shows the over payment which has not gone back yet. J. Collins stated her reports show cash on hand and that the reports are on target. J. Collins reported revenues are as expected at this time of the budget year but interest rates will be increasing slightly. J. Collins reported there are no issues with expenditures. Discussion was held on the election budget and the grants received from the State. J. Collins reported two small transfers were made to Payroll in October. J. Collins reported on the Interest Reports and General Fund Month End balances, which are looking positive.

**4b. Town Update**

R. Lally asked about the procedure for the demolition work on the Notch Road building. J. Rupert replied the Request for Proposals will be posted next week and bids will be due back on December 18, 2024. The contract will be awarded no later than December 24,

2024. A. Gordon reported \$1.4 million needs to be allocated before the end of the year. R. Lally added these are ARCA funds.

#### **4c. Board of Education Update**

K. Heckt reported 21% of the budget has been expended compared to 20% last year. K. Heckt shared that the school district is not fully staffed. K. Heckt reported the district will need to purchase 120 computers with new Microsoft Windows Operating Systems. K. Heckt reported the IDA Transition Support Activities Grant and IDA Extended Support for PARA Educators Stipends Grant was expended by September 30, 2024. R. Lally stated the Board of Selectmen's budget should also include computer purchases. R. Rupert replied the Town has a technology plan and the computers scheduled for updating should be easy to identify. A. Gordon asked about a \$24,000 grant that had been expended. K. Heckt replied they received Small Town Write to Read Grants that had to be expended by September 30, 2024 and both grants were for the new required K to 3 Reading program required by the State. K. Heckt was happy to report they are happy with the program selected. R. Morra stated there are no surprises with the reports. K. Heckt reported on the heating and water heater issues at Center School. J. Rupert explained the transformer was struck by lightning which caused the issues. K. Heckt asked if this Committee was handling CAPA. R. Lally replied yes and will be on the January 2026 agenda.

#### **4d. Other**

None.

#### **5. Discussion regarding answers to audit questions**

R. Lally reported A. Phelan and himself met with the Auditor and J. Collins. A. Phelan stated she found the Auditor extremely helpful to talk to and very transparent. A. Phelan stated she will put her recommendations in a summary report. R. Lally agreed with A. Phelan and will take the Auditor's advice on some procedures. A. Phelan stated her report will be on the updates to policies and procedures. R. Lally added the Auditor would like a head start on the information he needs for the tax issue. R. Lally stated the Auditor requested additional information with arrangements with contractors with regards to the Internal Revenue Service. J. Rupert added the other issue was the school activity calendar and the money from the self insurance dental plan.

#### **6. Ongoing Business**

##### **6a. Tax Issue**

R. Lally stated A. Gordon would like to do a final write-up on the tax issue. R. Lally stated there is a need for policies and procedures and there is proof there were some checks done on the sign off of the Grand List next year as part of the budget process. A. Gordon stressed the importance that the team works together and all agree on the numbers. R. Morra agreed it is a good time to establish a process to avoid issues in the future. J. Collins reported that checks will be mailed in December. Discussion was held on the process of issuing checks in batches and how this is not feasible with the computer system. R. Lally stated this discussion is for the benefit of the public so they understand the process. J.

Rupert added the administration is continuing to look at ways to streamline the check issuing process. J. Collins reported staff is working hard to get the checks out. R. Morra thanked staff for working to issue the checks.

## **7. New Business**

### **7a. Draft of 2025 meeting calendar**

R. Lally presented the draft of the 2025 Meeting Calendar to the Committee.

A. Gordon MOVED to approve the 2025 Meeting Calendar as presented. R. Morra SECONDED. J. Collins suggested adding January 15, 2026, meeting to this calendar. After discussion, A. Gordon AMENDED her motion to approve the calendar as presented with the addition of Thursday, January 15, 2026. R. Morra SECONDED the amendment. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0 AS AMENDED.

### **7b. FY 2026 Audit Budget**

R. Lally presented the FY 2026 Audit Budget for consideration. After discussion on the proposed budget, A. Gordon MOVED to allocate \$45,000 for the FY 2026 Budget for auditing services. A. Phelan SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

### **7c. FY 2026 Finance Committee Budget**

R. Lally presented the FY 2026 Finance Committee Budget for consideration. R. Morra questioned the amount proposed for Payroll and wondered if it was adequate. R. Lally wondered if the amount should be increased.

R. Morra MOVED to raise Payroll from \$2,000 to \$2,300 and Advertising remain at \$200 and Office Operating remain at \$500 for a total of \$3,000. A. Gordon SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY 5:0:0.

### **7d. Discussion and possible appointment of new Finance Committee member**

R. Lally stated Member Robert Munroe resigned from the Finance Committee effective November 19, 2024. R. Lally introduced the newly recommended Finance Committee Member Tyler Egner. T. Egner reported he moved to Bolton a few years ago, has a degree in Finance, has a landscaping business, worked in real estate and feels he has well-rounded background to serve on the Finance Committee. A. Gordon asked T. Egner to share his thoughts on taxation. T. Egner explained that he learned about how important taxes are for the operation of a town. T. Egner stated he knows the town needs taxes, but should watch how the money is spent. T. Egner is open to new ideas and new thoughts in investing for the future. R. Lally shared the Finance Committee is responsible for the Town's Bond Rating and the importance to taxation. R. Lally stated recruiting new businesses is important and T. Egner agreed that is crucial to the Town's finances. A. Phelan stated she is appreciative of having someone new in town willing to be engaged. R. Morra and R. Klein agreed with that comment.

R. Morra MOVED to appoint T. Egner to serve the unexpired term on the Finance Committee to November 18, 2025. A. Phelan SECONDED. MOTION CARRIED 5:0:0.

### **7e. Planning for budget presentation**

R. Morra stated the format used for last year's budget presentation was a good base to work from, but the one thing he sees the mil rate discussion could be different on who makes the presentation. R. Lally stated the explanation will be simpler but the sell will be harder. R. Morra pointed out people are looking at the bottom line. A. Gordon stated it was discussed to have the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Education give their own presentations at the Finance Committee meeting. R. Morra would like to have comments back from both on this suggestion. K. Heckt asked if they would give their own presentations at the Public Hearing after presenting to the Finance Committee. R. Lally stated it is more of a perception change and explained how this could happen. R. Morra stated the issue is public participation during the budget process. K. Heckt asked if a blurb in the Bolton Bulletin on activities/audio of the Finance Committee for the public to view. R. Lally felt this was a good idea to increase the ways to inform the public. A. Gordon stated the importance of telling the story and the budget as the strategic plan. A. Gordon felt the Board of Education does a good job with their story but would like the Town to improve their format. R. Lally agreed that the Board of Selectmen needs to share more of their vision during the budget presentation. A. Gordon and R. Morra pointed out the cooperation between agencies that should be highlighted in the presentation. A. Gordon asked that the budget calendar for next year be advertised in the Bolton Bulletin. R. Lally added that flyers of the budget calendar be made available around the Town.

#### **8. Adjournment**

R. Morra MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 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.